

- I) V1 INTRO: *We then, as workers together with Him* also plead with you not to **AS WE BEGIN**
- II) Paul made it clear that he was laboring in ministry, presenting the gospel
He called himself *an ambassador of Christ*, representing God's kingdom (5:20)
AMBASSADOR
- III) In the time of Paul, an ambassador was an elder acting with authority
As God's ambassador he was given responsibility to represent the kingdom
Also, as an ambassador he was to live a life known for being dignified
- IV) This would answer the charges lodged against him as being crazy
He was beside himself, but it was for God! (5:13)
AS AN AMBASSADOR
- V) He represented both the **message** and the **values** of the kingdom of God
He was given authority to deliver the message of salvation
This means he lived in a way that **was worthy** of the message, role, and calling
APPLICATION
- VI) Paul is saying he represented God's character, values, and message to humanity
Because of this he aspired to deliver the king's message accurately, and faithfully
- VII) As an **ambassador** he presented the message of **the kingdom** he represented
The message entrusted to him to deliver was the gospel
This gospel message is called **the word of reconciliation** (V19)
- VIII) This message of reconciliation reveals how God sent Jesus to save the world
(V19) God was **in Christ** reconciling the world to Himself
God's message is of grace and forgiveness, **and all** are welcome to come to Him
- IX) This was all built on Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross
Though He was perfect, He became the sin offering that God accepted
As a result, when we were saved we received His righteousness
- X) V21 **Is powerful**: it tells us that God dealt with Jesus **as though He was sin**, itself
- XI) He was **completely** and **absolutely** identified with it
Gal 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by *becoming* a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”

- I) In His complete identification with sin, He became the perfect sin offering
The offering was to be in perfect health, and Jesus satisfied that requirement
1 Pe 1:18-19 you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (Dt 17:1)
- II) As the perfect offering, Jesus took something that was not His: **our sin**
- III) **He then gave us** something that was not ours: **His righteousness**
Phil 3:8-9 I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, **the righteousness** which is from God by faith
- IV) This incredible news so thrilled Paul that he could not contain himself
He had already said: The love of Christ compels us! (5:14)
- V) This **is part** of what motivated him to do the work of ministry
It is also what motivated his young protégé Timothy
- VI) Together they were laboring in the Lord to faithfully preach the gospel
BEGIN STUDY
- VII) V1 Notice how he says **We then** as **workers together** with Him
This would refer to Paul and Timothy, as well as **any other workers** in the ministry
MINISTERS ARE WORKERS
- VIII) Notice how he speaks of Timothy and himself as **workers**
Worker: They, together **exerted energy** as they labored in the work of the gospel
- IX) Ministry is **work**, and can be referred to as labor
Ro 16:12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have **labored in** the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who **labored much** in the Lord.
1 Co 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I **labored more abundantly** than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.
Heb 6:10 For God is not unjust to forget your **work** and **labor** of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

- I) Paul is saying they labored diligently, growing weary in their difficult and hard toil
- II) Paul and Timothy **labored together** with God in proclaiming the gospel to them
He had said this in his first letter
1 Co 3:9 For we are **laborers together** with God
WHAT WAS HE SAYING
- III) He and Timothy are participating **in God's work** of grace **towards them**
Paul was laboring in the work of teaching them to live for Jesus
NOTICE
- IV) He and Timothy are working, not only with one another, but also with God
Mk 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, **the Lord working with them**, and confirming the word with signs following.
1 Co 2:4-5 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: **That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.**
- V) As **co laborers** with God, Paul echoed the heart of God **towards lost sinners**
HIS CRY
- VI) Do not receive the grace of God **in vain**: (Without effect; of no purpose)
- VII) They were saved by grace and gifted by grace
Eph 4:7 To each one of us **grace was given** according to the measure **of Christ's gift**
1 Pe 4:10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms
- VIII) This exhortation has a personal element to it
These are people who were members of the church that he had planted
He had preached to them, taught them, and cared for them
- IX) Though he had done so, and many were really saved, some have not responded
THE EXHORTATION
- X) If they did not receive grace, they would not be reconciled to God
They needed to make sure of their salvation
- XI) His point is, when you receive (accept) God's grace, your life demonstrates it
If you are reconciled and have imputed righteousness, it will be obvious
APPLICATION

- I) This exhortation is very important and timely, in our day
Point: To not understand that grace changes our life **undermines grace**
- II) The grace of God is the message of the gospel, the ministry of reconciliation
 To receive the gospel of grace in vain would be **to hear it and not respond** to it
 He had just written 2 Co 5:17
- III) They needed to understand that **grace changes everything**
 Because we are new creations, we live entirely new lives
 Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.
 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ
- IV) They were not to make the grace of God grounds for remaining in sin
- V) He may be exhorting them against an *external* response to the gospel, only
 This reminds me of the parable of the sower and the seed
 Mt 13:20-22 He who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

REMEMBER

- VI) Many were open to the false teachers: Perhaps some had been entrapped by them!
THE FACT IS
- VII) Not everyone sitting in church knows and understands the Gospel clearly
 The same message can be understood in different ways
 Not everyone is receiving the same insights and inspiration
- VIII) For some, the message is one of life and is appreciated
 For others, it is something that is casually listened to, without importance
In vain would then speak of without the **accompanying effects of grace**
- IX) In light of the grace of God, they need to know that God is willing to receive them
 He is open to giving them mercy, which would occur at the acceptable time

- I) God shows mercy because He has given Jesus, and is willing to forgive and save
To establish the urgency of his appeal, Paul quotes Is 49:8
- II) V2 For He says In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in **the day of salvation** I
The Corinthians were Gentiles, so this is an offer of salvation to **them**
God offers salvation, so **now** is the accepted time: it is not safe to neglect it.
- III) It is of utmost importance to respond **when God calls you**
Lu 13:24-25 Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I
tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and
closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading **Sir open the door for us**.
But he will answer, **I don't know you** or where you come from
POINT
- IV) Salvation is not to be put off, for a more **convenient time**: That time **is now**
We cannot predict the future: we have no promise to live another day
No one knows what tomorrow will bring, so we need to prepare for eternity **now**
- V) Eternity is in the balance, and Paul and Timothy have taken the gospel seriously
It is so serious that they have been careful to live blamelessly before man
He did not want anyone to reject the gospel because they rejected his lifestyle
- VI) V3 We give **no offense** in anything that our ministry **may not be blamed**
Offense: Something that causes someone to stumble
- VII) Paul is saying that he and his fellow workers labored honorably before people
We are careful to live in such a way that we do not stumble others from believing
We want to live in such a way that our lives are attractive to the unsaved
- VIII) **Remember**, the false apostles are attacking every element of his life
He makes it clear that he isn't living in any way that undermines its message
One of the ways to undermine the effectiveness of the gospel is to not live up to it
- IX) He was careful to not stumble others lest his ministry should be discredited
Titus 2:7-8 In everything **set them an example** by doing **what is good**. In your
teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be
condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because **they have nothing
bad to say about us**.

- I) All believers are to live in a way that properly adorns the gospel of grace

Phil 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner **worthy of the gospel** of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel
- II) God is holy, his word is holy, and His messengers are to live holy lives

SADLY
- III) Some pastors use profanity in the pulpit or go out drinking with church members

They call this liberty in Christ, **and as a result** they stumble innocent believers

Eph 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.
- IV) It is interesting how, though speaking of the gospel of grace, he speaks of hardship

Even though God gives grace in life, **we still endure difficulties**

We experience hardship even when living a sold-out life to Him
- V) Paul speaks of his ministry and invites comparison to **the false teachers**

This would provide a sharp contrast between himself and the false apostles
- VI) He begins listing the hardships he has been enduring

The things that he has endured were things that he was prepared for, by Jesus

Jn 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace.

In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.
- VII) V4-5 But in all things we **commend ourselves** as ministers of God

Why does he list the afflictions that he has endured? To establish credibility
- VIII) **Albert Barnes:** Ministers often do a great deal more good by their example in suffering than they do in their preaching.
- IX) As a minister, **he set an example** of how a believer responds to difficulties

This is how God prepares the minister to deepen the reality of his own teachings

HE USES THREE WORDS: IN, BY, AND AS
- X) V4-5 **In** Patience, tribulations (troubles), in needs, in distresses (pressed)

He begins with what he has endured at the hands of opponents

In **patience** (endurance): He has patiently endured sufferings inflicted by men

- I) In **tribulations**: Troubles; persecution, distress, affliction, pressure
 In **needs**: In times of hardship (beatings, imprisonments, persecutions)
 In **distresses** (calamities): Being pressed; being in anguish; in danger
- II) V5 In stripes: beatings and in **imprisonments**
 After casting out a demon in a young woman in Philippi and jailed
 Ac 16:22-23 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.
 In **tumults**: in riots like the one in Ephesus over the goddess Diana (Ac 19)
- III) These were all hardships that he experienced when he was opposed in ministry
 They were experiences he had at the hands of men
- IV) V5 In this list he included self-inflicted hardships
 These are costs of ministry and part of what is involved in preaching
HE BEGINS WITH OUTWARD EXPERIENCES
- V) In **labors**: Hard work and toil that produces pain
 In **sleeplessness**: Having to stay awake, watching
 In **fastings**: Going without food
 Labors, sleeplessness, and fastings are all part of **the cost of preaching**
- VI) All these things would be seen in his travels and evangelistic ministry
 He now refers to **inward qualities**, revealing his **motives** and **methods** of ministry
WHAT FUELED HIM FROM WITHIN
- VII) V6 **By** purity, **by** knowledge, **by** longsuffering, **by** kindness, **by** the Holy Spirit
 These speak of his **integrity** and what **fueled him** as he preached
 By **purity**: Blamelessness
 By **knowledge**: Of Jesus and pure doctrine; wisdom
 By **longsuffering**: Forbearance; patience
 By **kindness**: Goodness, uprightness; moral excellence
 By **the Holy Spirit**: By the Spirit's influence, sanctifying, and leading
 By **sincere love**: By unfeigned agape
- VIII) V6 Notice how he speaks of purity, knowledge, longsuffering, and kindness
 All of these give us insight into **internal elements** of teaching

- I) They are part of what **qualified him** to preach the gospel with impact
- II) He preached a holy message about a holy God and should reflect this
Spurgeon: The minister's life must be **a living sermon**, reflecting Christ's character
NOTICE HOW HE SAYS
- III) By the **Holy Spirit**: Which speaks of the Spirit's leading and inspiration
 By **sincere love**: By unfeigned agape, produced for lost people
KEY
- IV) The heart of fruitful ministry is walking in the Spirit and loving those you serve
 God's **holiness** drove him to share, and **God's love** fueled him (5:11,14)
HE NOW SPEAKS OF THE MESSAGE AND POWER
- V) 7b **By the word of truth, by the power of God**
 Paul's ministry was built on God's word and the power of the Spirit
- VI) V7 **The word of truth**, conveying God's truth to man and is, **in itself**, absolute truth
 His message communicated to them that **Jesus Himself is truth** (Jn 14:6)
- VII) He also communicated that the **message itself** was truth
 Jn 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.
- VIII) He didn't come to them preaching a deceptive message, to ensnare them
 2 Co 4:2 we have renounced secret and shameful ways. We do not use trickery or
 pervert God's word. By **clear statements of the truth**, we commend ourselves to
 everyone's conscience before God.
- IX) V7 **By the Holy Spirit**, speaking of God's power in His preaching and works
 His message was anointed by God
 1 Th 1:5 our gospel came to you not simply with words but also **with power**, with
 the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake
- X) By the power of the Spirit, he performed mighty works
 2 Co 12:12 I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle,
 including signs, wonders and miracles.
HE NOW USES TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH WARFARE
- XI) V7 He speaks of the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left
 Because he was in spiritual warfare, he relied on spiritual weapons

- I) This emphasizes that he is a spiritual warrior, establishing his credibility
The weapon on the right hand is the sword of the Spirit, God's **word** (offense)
The weapon at the left would be the **shield of faith** (defense)
FINALLY, HE OUTLINES HIS WOUNDS
- II) V8-10 By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet
He responds to the attacks he has had to endure (it costs to follow Jesus)
- III) By honor, dishonor (not essential), evil report (false apostles), good report (by
those he ministered to), as deceivers (false charge) and yet true, as unknown
(unimportant) and yet well known (to those who are believers), as dying (exposed to
death) and behold, we live (through Christ, we continue)
- IV) V9 **as chastened** (enduring trials brought by God) but not killed (preserved by God)
Ps 118:18 The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death
- V) V10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, **as poor**, yet making many rich; as having
Paul's life was filled with grief for others, something people didn't understand
Ps 69:10-11 When I wept in my soul with fasting, it became my reproach. When I
made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them
- VI) Part of what he endured was the taunts of the prosperous false teachers
In the eyes of many, his life and ministry were regarded as a failure
- VII) V10 As poor yet making many rich as having nothing and yet possessing all things
HE EXPERIENCED POVERTY
- VIII) **As poor** can also be as a beggar: he worked hard, accepted support from others
This made him appear to be someone living off of other people's generosity
In spite of this, the gospel he proclaimed made people rich in Jesus
- IX) Though he had **nothing**, in fact he possessed **all things**
Though he had no home, land, silver, or gold, in Jesus **he was content**
- X) This is because **in Him** he had every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places
In the end, he looked to God to be the sustainer, as well as the rewarder
Heb 6:10 For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you
have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.