

**Scripture Reading: I Cor. 16:1:9**

**Key Verse: V. 9**

**Background/Context:**

### **Paul's Final Counsel (Chap. 16)**

This chapter can be broken down into 3 main thoughts:

#### **A. Concerning the Collection (16:1-4)**

The first verse of chapter 16 concerns a **collection** which was to be taken up by the church in Corinth and sent to needy **saints** in Jerusalem.

Paul had already **given orders to the churches of Galatia** in connection with this very matter, and he now instructed the Corinthians to respond in the same manner that the Galatian saints had been exhorted to do.

#### **B. Concerning His Personal Plans (16:5-9)**

Paul discusses his personal plans in verses 5-9.

From Ephesus, where he wrote this letter, he planned to **pass through Macedonia**. Then he hoped to move south to Corinth.

Before leaving Macedonia, Paul expected to **be in Ephesus until Pentecost**.

It is from verse 8 that we learn that the Epistle was written from Ephesus.

**16:9** Paul *realized* that there was a golden opportunity for serving Christ at that time at Ephesus. At the same time, he *realized* that **there were many adversaries**.

What an unchanging picture this verse gives us of Christian service: **On the one hand**, there are the fields white already to harvest; **on the other**, there is a sleepless foe who seeks to obstruct, divide, and oppose in every conceivable way!

#### **C. Closing Exhortations and Greetings (16:10-24)**

Believer's Bible Commentary: A Thorough, Yet Easy-to-Read Bible Commentary That Turns Complicated Theology Into Practical Understanding.

It's that 2<sup>nd</sup> main thought that we find our text verse in and my thought for tonight's sermon.

Let's go back to verse 9 now and see...

**“Reality in Service”**

**I Corinthians 16:9**

**Introduction:**

This text gives us two views of service.

It is neither overly *optimistic* nor overly *pessimistic*.

It is a text of *reality*.

If we would serve God successfully, we must not ignore *realities*, neither must we disregard *potentialities*.

They are both in our text.

## I. THE OPPORTUNITIES

*"A great door and effectual is opened unto me."*

We could translate this sentence as '*many opportunities*' and '*good opportunities*.'

Paul expresses his situation to the Corinthian church.

He had many opportunities for spreading the Gospel and they were good opportunities, too.

He obviously wanted to take advantage of every opportunity possible.

[**Illus**] Paul wanted to *hit* while the *iron was hot*, he wanted to *make hay* when the *sun was shining*, and *the opportunity* was *great*.

Sometimes God gives us many ("great") open doors of *opportunity*.

We get all excited about what can be done.

Do not discard *opportunity*, for it may pass quickly, and if we do not take advantage of it when it is present, *opportunity* will pass by.

## Ephesians 5:16 (KJV)

<sup>16</sup> Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

\*\*Week after next; we have a great and wide-open door—a great *opportunity*—Vacation Bible School!

Rest assured however, there will also be "opposition!"

Let's examine that last part of our text verse:

## II. THE OPPOSITION

*"And there are many adversaries."*

Paul was a *realist*.

He knew that every *opportunity* comes with *opposition*.

Satan *opposes* God's work vehemently and will especially show up when *opportunity* is great and impressive.

Note the *character* of this adversity and some *cases* of adversity (two things):

[**Note**] We need to note both so that *opposition* does not discourage us in our *opportunities*, but *opposition* should only cause us to put forth more effort in serving the Lord.

A. ***The character of opposition.*** "*There are many adversaries.*"

*Opposition* against the work of the Lord is both “many” and “mighty.”

Let me say something about that very briefly...

**First**, it is many.

[**Illus**] It seems sometimes as a pastor that the whole church is against him.

I have had those experiences in the past myself as well as many of my comrades who have shared their “oppositions” with me.

He sees what can be done, but the church does not want to be *disturbed* or do things *differently*.

You may not be the pastor but in whatever you do, do not let the fact of “*many*” adversaries stop you from serving God.

“*Many*” just gives God more *opportunity* to show his power.

**Second**, it is mighty.

The word “*adversaries*” is not a mild word but says *opposition* is great.

The word even has in its meaning repugnant.

But the greater the *opposition*, the greater one will see the power of God in service.

B. ***The cases of opposition.***

We need to look at some cases where great *opposition* was overcome to “encourage” us to serve despite great *opposition*.

[**Illus**] **Fanny Crosby** was blind from early in life yet became one of the greatest hymn writers of all time.

**Franklin Roosevelt** was crippled by polio, yet in wheelchair and steel braces was a four-term president.

One of the great **Olympic** gymnastic performances was done by a man with a broken leg.

**Caleb** and **Joshua** saw the *adversity* of the giants, but they also saw God and survived.

You can be part of this list if you will look at God more than the adversity.

**Conclusion:** So while on VBS is just around the corner for us, remember church that it is a GREAT OPPORTUNITY for us to work and help save some children, young people and possible even adults from the flames of Hell (that B. Ellis preached about last Sunday morning).

Don't get all sidetracked or despondent when "opposition" comes prior to and during this great OPPORTUNITY!

Face it with Faith, Hope and Love and let God work in our midst!

\*\*Don't let Satan use you to be "one" of those "adversaries!"

**Closing:** God bless you. Let's bow our heads now for prayer and reflection.

Let us stand and sing this beloved old song...

**Invitation Hymn:** (Big) # 479 "Onward Christian Soldiers"

\*Bruce Beach—6/7/15—p.m. @ OBC, Dalton—VBS meeting night

\*Bruce Beach—4/24/24—Wed. @ WHBC, Dalton

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