

Stewardship

Gary Presbyterian Church

Scripture

2 Cor. 6:1 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2 For he says,

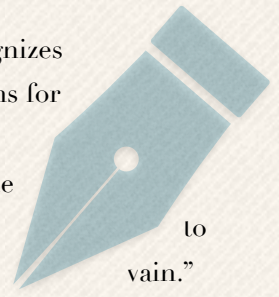
*“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”*

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! 3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way; so that no fault may be found with our ministry; 4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see — we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Devotion

In Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians he is making the case for his authenticity as an apostle of Jesus — as one sent to deliver the message of the gospel to others. In this he relies heavily on his own state of *grace*. He is what he is by the

grace of God. But he also recognizes that God’s grace has implications for his (and our) behavior. That is why he begins this section of the letter with, “...we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.” Grace, while freely offered and given, also invites our response. “See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!”



Paul goes on to recount how unsuccessful he has been in the categories of worldly success. He has been through *much* trouble and hardship, peril and poverty as an apostle. And yet, he concludes with these intriguing words, “; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.” Clearly he has come to see that his success as a disciple of Jesus and as an apostle of the gospel is measured not in power and wealth, but in weakness and in generosity.

Today is the acceptable time. Today is the day of salvation! But we never get salvation as a personal and private arrangement with God. Our salvation is connected to our participation with God in the redemption of the world, and that participation might prove costly to us. And yet, the marvel of our faith is that, like Paul we can learn to count the costs differently, “as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.”

Prayer

Lord, may we join you in the redemption of all you have made. Give us courage to hear and respond to the clarion call to discipleship for today is the day of salvation! Amen.