



POWER IN WEAKNESS!

The Epistle of 2 Corinthians

Do not be Unequally Yoked!

2 Corinthians 6:1-18

Message #8 of 17 – S882

Sermon given on February 9, 2020



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Do not be Unequally Yoked!

2 Corinthians 6:1-18

Opening Comments

- Turn to **2 Corinthians 6**
- For you watching online, we're going to partake of Communion this morning, if you like you can partake with us
- Today we continue our journey through **2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness!**
- Before I got saved, I can remember people saying that getting saved would change your life
- I can remember thinking, 'Why would I want that?'
- I liked my life – it wasn't perfect, but it was good enough for me
- Then I did get saved, and my life started to change
- And then I realized just how ignorant I was – I didn't know how good my life could be
- It is like the first time you take a young child to Disneyland
- All they have known before that was the local park with its slides, swings, and climbing things
- A whole new world is opened up to them
- After more than two decades I am still discovering things that were opened to me when I got saved
- One of the big things is in my relationships
- Before I got saved, the relationships I had with others were tools I used to get what I wanted out of life
- I have come to understand that the relationships I am in are tools God is using to get what He wants out of my life and the lives of those I am in relationship with
- A true understanding of Christianity reveals that God created us to be in a relationship with Him
- That's why Paul said they pleaded on God's behalf that people be reconciled to God
- You exist to be in a living, loving relationship with God

- And then, once you are in that relationship – once you have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, your relationships with others become eternally more important
- We could save ourselves a lot of pain and suffering if we saw our relationship with others through God’s eyes
- Let’s pray and then get into our text
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Do not be Unequally Yoked!**
- Paul has been dealing with the news that he received that people had come into the church in Corinth, which he founded, and are questioning Paul’s authority as an apostle and questioning the message he taught them
- Paul ended chapter five with a summary of the gospel
- **2 Corinthians 5:21**
- Paul’s ministry was focused on people being reconciled to God
- Verse 1 is a continuation of the thoughts of chapter five
- **2 Corinthians 6:1-2**
- As a pastor, I understand what Paul is saying here
- My role, just as was Paul’s, is to dispense the grace of God through the spoken word **Romans 10:17**

So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- If you have been here for any length of time, you have heard the gospel message – the grace of God has been given to you
- But the burden of every faithful pastor’s heart – was it in vain?
- The phrase ‘in vain’ = without result
- It is not enough to hear the gospel – must take the faith God gives you and believe – and be reconciled to God
- It is hard for me not to look at you all and wonder is someone here has received the grace of God in vain **Romans 5:5**

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

- God’s love for you has been poured into my heart and I long that you would experience all God wants for you, especially to be reconciled with Him

- If that is you -
- **2 Corinthians 6:2b**
- Don't wait – today is the day to respond to God's grace and believe
- Paul's detractors were pointing to the things Paul suffered as proof that was not a true apostle of Christ
- **2 Corinthians 6:3-5**
- Saying the exact opposite is true – **R. Kent Hughes**
Paul's sufferings did not disqualify him. Rather, they proved the authenticity of his faith and commitment.
- Paul felt compelled by the love of God to be a minister of reconciliation to those who did not know Christ
- In all his troubles, Paul did not curse God or quit
- He was living proof of the power of God to sustain us through our troubles
- Paul then tells us about the graces that enabled him to live the way he did
- **2 Corinthians 6:6-7**
- Notice in the middle of that list 'by the Holy Spirit'
- Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit in his life and the gifts from the Spirit are what empowered Paul to live such a radical life even in the midst of real suffering.
- Each of the things in these two verses deserve a greater explanation
- I want to pause and look at the last one – 'the armor of righteousness'
- 'armor' would probably be better translated as tool or weapon
- Turn to **2 Corinthians 10**
- Righteousness is both a state of being – reconciled to God = the righteousness of God – and a way of life – righteous or holy living
- Paul is saying that living a holy life is a tool God uses to glorify Himself and accomplish His will and it is a weapon He uses against the enemy
- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**
- Too many Christians are using the tools of this world and fighting with the wrong weapons and usually against the wrong enemy
- A righteous or holy life is a powerful tool and weapon in the hand of Almighty God

- Go back to **2 Corinthians 6**
- Paul then lists seven paradoxes of enduring in righteousness by the Spirit
- **2 Corinthians 6:8-10**
- The Christian life is a paradox – it doesn't go the way unbelievers think it should – often doesn't make sense to them
- Notice Paul isn't making a judgment on any of these states
- As Christians we should not respond to the things life throws at us in the same way the rest of the world does
- Verses 8-10 are a declaration of victory over troubles through steadfast endurance walking in the Spirit-empowered graces and by righteous living.
- Paul is concerned for the church in Corinth
- **2 Corinthians 6:11-13**
- All of us who have ever tried to share the gospel with someone has probably experienced what Paul is referring to here
- That person is closed to hearing the gospel from you
- There is a temptation in those circumstances to close our heart to them – to write them off as unredeemable
- God would call you to keep your heart open to them and walk in Spirit-empowered righteousness through whatever life puts in your path – whether awesome or troublesome
- God's heart is open to everyone, and we need to try to keep our heart open to them as well
- At some point after I was saved, I started to realize that God wanted to use me for His glory and purpose in the lives of others
- And so, the significance of my relationships with others started to change
- But then Paul warns us in the following verses about the nature of our relationships with unbelievers
- **2 Corinthians 6:14-16a**
- What Paul is not saying here is that Christians should not be in relationships with unbelievers
- It is through living, loving Spirit-empowered relationships with unbelievers that their hearts will be opened to the gospel message and

they will be reconciled to God who loves them and sent Jesus to die for them

- In context, Paul is referring to unbelievers in the church
- His detractors were preaching a different gospel than the one Paul gave them
- ‘Do not be unequally yoked together’ – **(picture)**
- A yoke attaches two animals together to work
- They are so different that they can’t work effectively together
- As a church we cannot allow anyone to have influence in the church who teaches a different gospel or doctrine than what we believe
- This also applies to things like worship
- There are popular songs that you won’t hear us play in this church
- Because the churches (like Hillsong and Bethel) that produce those songs teach things that are wrong, even heresy, and doctrines of demons
- Anyone ever heard of ‘grave-sucking’
- It is something people associated with Bethel have been doing for years
- They lay down on the grave of a Christian to absorb their spiritual energy – that is necromancy – it is demonic
- To play their songs here would be to approve of their doctrine
- We usually apply this verse to marriage and business partnerships, and it is correct to do so
- We should not be entering into a contractual partnership agreement with unbelievers
- Paul concludes this chapter with God’s reasons not being unequally yoked
- **2 Corinthians 6:16b-18**
- Paul quotes from numerous Old Testament passages to let us know that this has always been God’s desire
- We have been called into this radical relationship with the living God
- Yoking ourselves together with an unbeliever will corrupt and pollute our relationship with God
- You are the righteousness of God in Christ – you are holy – don’t pollute your relationship with God with an unholy partnership

- In my years of ministry, I have ministered to people who have chosen not to believe and obey this verse
- They believe they can change that unbeliever
- The result is almost always years of pain and suffering and usually ends in great loss
- When God tells us not to do something, it is for our benefit and blessing – to protect us – never to keep something good from us
- It is so much better to trust God and walk in righteousness
- We're going to partake of Communion this morning
- It is a celebration of our relationship to Christ
- Let's take a little time this morning to reflect on the truth that we are the people of God, we are His sons and daughters
- **Pray!**