

Bible Study Notes

2 Corinthians

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Section 23

2 Corinthians 6:3-10

“Look at My Life and Ministry”

As we mentioned in a previous study, false teachers had moved into the church at Corinth during Paul’s absence and had begun to stir up dissention against him. Periodically, in the letter to the Corinthians, Paul defends his ministry among them. Verse 3, of chapter 6 is one such occasion.

Paul states that he had not placed any stumbling block in anyone’s path, in order that his ministry among them would not be discredited. In chapter 7:2 he asserted, “We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, and we have exploited no one.” These were all charges the false teachers had probably brought against him.

In chapter 6:4, he points to evidence to back up his assertions. It’s like he is saying, “Just look at how we have lived our life and the purity of our ministry when we were with you. Who we are, and our intentions, are evident and plain to everyone.”

In essence, Paul is saying, “Look at our great endurance. Look at how we responded in trouble, in hardships, in distress, in imprisonments, in riots, in hard work, in sleepless nights and in hunger. Look at how we lived our lives with a pure heart, with understanding, with patience, and with kindness. Look at how, in the Holy Spirit, we exercised sincere love, truthful speech -- all this in the power of God.”

He goes on to say, “Look at how we stood with the weapons of righteousness in our left hand and the right. We stood firm through glory, and when we were dishonored, through bad report and good report. We stood firm when we were genuine yet treated as imposters, known yet regarded as unknown. We were faithful when dying and yet we lived on, when beaten yet not killed, when sorrowful yet always rejoicing, when poor yet making many rich, when having nothing yet we possessed everything [in Christ],” cf. 2 Corinthians 1:8.

Do you need evidence of Paul’s faith? Look no further than the evidence of the works of the Holy Spirit through him. His words and his works were his testimony that the Lord lived in him and was working through him. The Apostle James reminds us, “What good

is it, my brothers if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? ...In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by actions, is dead [worthless],” James 2:14, 17. Works do not save us; however, they will be evident if we are saved. In other words, how can we say we believe God if we will not obey him by living the life he has instructed us to?

Knowing who he once was, we see Paul had been born-again. It was evident that he was a new creation and this fact could be seen clearly by the characteristics of his life and ministry. There was evidence of the fruit of the Spirit being demonstrated through him. Evidence that he was a genuine follower of Christ and his ministry was from a pure heart. He was being transformed into the very image of Christ, for it was Christ living in and through him.

Let us also not shrink back in the midst of our difficult circumstances and the work the Lord has called us to. Instead, let us strive for a bright and vibrant testimony -- all for the glory of God.

In light of this truth, what would God have you do?