

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Pastor John Miller

The famous A.W. Tozer once said, "It is doubtful God can use any man greatly until He hurts him deeply." I often tell pastors when they're suffering in ministry that God hasn't made you, He's making you, that you're in process. The same thing is true of every one of us tonight. We want always the sun to be shining, we want the birds to be singing, we want the flowers to be blooming, the bees to be buzzing, and everything—the wind at our back, the hill slightly downhill, and everyone lining the road is applauding us and smiling at us. We want all of life to be friendly, but Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation . . ." I've never found that verse in a little "Promise Box" or anything. Like, "What's the promise for today?" You pull it out of the box, "In the world you shall have tribulation..." "Well, let's try to find another one. Let's see if we can get a little better one there."

In that world of tribulation, Christ is with us. Amen? And, He will not forsake us. I think it's important for us all to understand that God is more concerned with the minister than He is with the ministry. He wants us to be the people that He wants us to be so that we can actually then serve Him in power and bring Him glory. God is working in us. It's called sanctification.

But it all surrounds Paul's ministry. As I said, he's under attack, and the only reason he's defending himself is because he was a preacher of the gospel and he didn't want people to get a false gospel. If they actually rejected Paul and followed the false teachers, then the danger would be that they would go off doctrinally. He's not arguing because he wants popularity. He's not arguing because he wants support and a following. He's arguing for the truth of the gospel. We need to keep that always in mind that Paul's not being self-seeking here, Paul's actually wanting to promote the gospel, and he knows that these false teachers would lead people astray. Paul is defending his ministry, and he's doing that for the glory of God and for the faith of the gospel and the truth of Jesus Christ.

There are three ways that Paul does this in this chapter. We'll just look at the first two tonight. The first is that he pleads with them to receive his ministry, verses 1-2. He just pleads with the believers there in Corinth to receive him and his ministry. Secondly, he puts before them the hardships that he faced in the performance of his ministry, verses 3-10. Thirdly, he calls for a separation from the false teachers, verses 11-18. I'm sure you didn't get all that written down, and you can't memorize it all, but we're going to go through it one section at a time, and you can make these notes.

First, if you're taking notes, Paul's plea for them to receive his ministry, verses 1-2. Follow with me in 2 Corinthians 6. Paul says, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Don't be deceived; don't be led astray; don't follow the false teachers. Verse 2, "(For he saith, I have heard thee"—he's quoting from the Old Testament, which happens to be Isaiah 49:8. This is actually in parentheses, but it's a quote from Isaiah 49:8—"(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee"—in my King James Bible, unfortunately, the translation for us

today, but it means that I've helped thee—"behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

When the translators were putting this Bible translation together they sometimes took a little liberty in putting some words in that were not in the original autographs or in the Greek, and they are noted for us though. We know what's in the Bible. This is not to say we don't know what's in the Bible, but when you see words italicized, and in this text "as" and "with him," you should try to read it by pulling them out and you get a little closer to the meaning. "We then, workers together, beseech you . . ."

If you actually read it as, "We then, as workers together with him," you go back in the text and feel that it's actually a reference to those working together with God in pleading with people to be reconciled to God. At the end of 2 Corinthians 5, he actually says, ". . . God . . . hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation . . . we are ambassadors for Christ"—we're calling people to be reconciled to God. It is true that we work together with God in a sense—God works in us and through us, and we surrender to Him, we yield to Him, and we walk in obedience to Him—but that's not what Paul is talking about here. He's talking about working together with the believers in Corinth. He's wanting them to be a part of his ministry, a part of the gospel ministry, a part of being ambassadors for Christ, a part of seeking to call men to be reconciled to God. He's saying, "We're workers together, and so I beseech you," and that's a gentle word for an apostle to use. It's not a command. It's not an imperative. It's Paul on his knees pleading with them passionately, "We then . . . beseech"—beg—"you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

What does he mean by "receiving the grace of God in vain"? The word "grace" by the way is the Greek word *cháris*. We get our word "charismatic" or "charisma" from it. We also get the name *cháris*, which means all that is beautiful, lovely, and charming. Paul is speaking about God's grace, no doubt, in salvation and God's grace in sanctification.

How do you receive the grace of God in vain? Well, one way you could say is that God saves us by His grace, but you reject the offer of salvation. If you're not a Christian, and you don't trust Christ, you don't believe in Jesus Christ, then you're resisting God's grace, you're not receiving God's grace, and for you it goes in vain. I don't know for sure that Paul is thinking in those terms. I think he's probably thinking more in the second kind of concept; that is, once you have trusted Christ and believed in Him and been born again or regenerated, you have experienced and received God's grace, the problem then is you don't want to go on to think that you are sanctified by your works.

Paul, writing to the Galatians mentions this, ". . . having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" It's so easy to be born again by the Holy Spirit, receive salvation by grace, and then think, Okay, God, I'm going to roll up my sleeves and I'm going to work hard for You. You're going to be really impressed. Just sit back, Lord, and watch me go. Watch how wonderful I'm going to be, and then we fall flat on our face and call out to the Lord, "Lord, I need You. Forgive me." He picks us up, dusts us off, and then sends us on the way. We must walk in

dependence upon God's grace, God's mercy, and God's Spirit. Having begun in the grace of God, we should continue in the grace of God. Don't forget this: you're saved by grace and you're sanctified by grace, and you will be glorified by the grace of God. But don't let the grace of God go ineffective in your life. Receive and live by and rely upon the grace of God—God's unearned, undeserved, unmerited favor.

I love the fact that we're saved by grace. We're going to be getting that, Lord willing, at the most maybe two more Sundays. I had a lot of Sundays of condemnation, but it's going to be so wonderful when we finally get to the grace of God and find salvation. Amen? And, to know that we're saved by grace is just a marvelous truth that when we get to heaven there'll be no boasting, there'll be no bragging. Wouldn't it be a bummer to be in heaven and for all eternity have to listen to everyone brag about what they did to get there as opposed to just praising the Lord for all of His grace and mercy to us?

Paul quotes, verse 2, Isaiah 49:8, and in Isaiah in context it's actually God the Father speaking to God the Son. It's a prophecy of the Messiah coming and the day and age of Christ and the day of salvation. Paul says, verse 2, “. . . I have heard thee”—and I love that expression—“in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation”—so the time of acceptance, the day of salvation is a reference to the period we live right now, which begins when Jesus Christ came into the world. When Jesus Christ came into the world, He ushered in the “Age of Grace,” the grace and mercy of God in a special way and that He was coming to save us by grace. It was the Messiah coming into the world in “. . . the day of salvation have I”—helped—“thee”—God the Father speaking to God the Son through the resurrection. He says, “behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”

You'll hear me quote this verse a lot when I'm giving an invitation to believe in Christ or an invitation to receive Christ or an invitation to come forward and trust in Christ, “. . . now is the accepted time . . . now is the day of salvation.” It's interesting that nowhere in the Bible does God put salvation in the future tense, “Well, next week, next month, next year,” it's always now. Don't put it off, and the reason being is because you only have the moment, - right? - you don't have tomorrow, you don't have next week, you don't have next month. You're only guaranteed right now. That's why “. . . if ye will hear his voice,”—the Bible says—“harden not your hearts” If God is speaking to you, if God is convicting you, if God is drawing you, don't resist Him. Yield to Him because you do not have tomorrow.

I know you don't want to hear this, but you don't know you'll be here tomorrow. You don't know you'll make it through the night. You say, “I came to church tonight to find out that I might not survive through the night?” But, you know, it's true. I've been a pastor long enough to know that sometimes people you never thought would die, die. You don't have a guarantee of tomorrow. You have no lease on life. I heard of a minister that was talking to a young woman that was saying, “I'm not ready. I'll do it later. I'll do it another time.” He said, “Would you sign an agreement right now that you promise not to accept Christ for one year?” She said, “No, I don't want to do that.” “Would you sign an agreement that you promise you won't accept Christ for the next six months?” “Oh, no, certainly I wouldn't do that.” “Well, would you promise that in the next

three weeks that you would not accept..." "On, no, no. I don't want to do that." Then, she realized how foolish she was being, I'm not guaranteed any day in the future. I better get right with God right now—today while there's hope. The Bible says, "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" Come to Him and believe in Him and trust in Him.

Paul is talking about his ministry of preaching Christ, preaching the grace of God, preaching that now is the day of salvation and that you should respond in obedience to Christ. Paul the apostle begins to speak, then secondly, verses 3-10, of the hardships in his performing of his ministries. He's talking about the challenges and the difficulties and the hardships and the trials that he faces because he decided to serve the Lord and follow the Lord. So, first is Paul's ministry before God in verses 3-4. He says, "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry"—there it is—"be not blamed"—or blasphemed—"But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, 5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings"—you want to follow Paul's example? Do you want to be in the ministry? Do you want to serve the Lord? It can be difficult. He says, "I'm going to do this," verse 6, "By pureness, by knowledge,"—I believe that has to do with our knowledge of God in His Word—"by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit"—the Spirit's power—"by love unfeigned, 7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; 9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; 10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

What an amazing thing is it to serve the Lord as Paul breaks down his ministry. Notice, first of all, his ministry before God, as I said, verses 3 and the first part of verse 4. He doesn't want to give any offense to anyone as he serves the Lord; neither should we. "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not"—blasphemed. Again, his ministry was what was being under attack, and he didn't want any blame to be upon the ministry. Actually, in the Bible of the New Testament in the pastoral epistles when it gives the qualifications for pastors, it says they should be blameless—not perfect, but blameless. What does that mean? It means above reproach. It literally means that if someone is to accuse them of wrongdoing, it won't stick because they're living above reproach. Their lives are lived above reproach so they are considered blameless or that the accusations won't stick by the way that they live.

We should all have the same heart. We should not want to be living in any way that would cause someone else to stumble or be offended, "Giving no offence" That word "offence" in verse 3 is a word skándalon. We get our word scandal from it. It actually means to trip or to stumble. It was used of a tripstick in what was called a fowler's trap—a little trap that they would use to catch birds. It was the trigger that would trap and catch the birds. When I was a little boy, we used to put a cardboard box up with bread underneath it, a stick, and a string. We'd back up around the back of the house and wait for the bird to come get the bread. When the bird was under the box, we'd pop the stick and the box would come down and you got a bird. I never knew what to do with it once the box got the bird. I said, "I got a bird in the box!" I don't know what to do but just open it up and let it fly away and go on my next hunting experience. It was

used for that little stick in a trap. So, we don't want our lives to offend anyone. We don't want to trip them, we don't want to stumble them, so we need to be living blamelessly, all of us as believers.

It's interesting that the qualifications for spiritual leaders in the church actually in other places of the New Testament are also applied to every believer. Every believer is to be living blamelessly in Christ, all Christians.

In verse 4, "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God,"—he wanted God's approval. He wasn't seeking man's approval, he was wanting God's approval. He wanted himself to be approved and recognized by God. God knows our hearts. Paul doesn't waste any time. In verses 4-5 he gets into the hardships that he dealt with and faced in ministry. Notice he said, " . . . as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,"—actually, from verses 4-10 to the end of this section, he's going to really talk about the challenges that he faced as a minister of Jesus Christ. Let's just briefly look at each one. He mentions patience in verse 4, so we want to be patient. We want to have patience.

This word "patience" literally is endurance. The word "endurance" is a better translation. It's not a passive concept that you just kind of sit back and go with the flow. In my hippie days we used to say, "The guy's mellow. That dude's really mellow." Remember that? No one's old enough to remember that. It's like, "Yeah, it's cool, man. No problem. Yeah, I'm mellow." Whatever, you're just weird. The word "patience" doesn't mean that you just go with the flow. It means that when there's opposition coming against you, it means that you keep going. You don't give up. You have steadfast endurance. It literally was used in the Greek for someone who would be outside on a real windy day. We had that real strong wind about a week ago for just a little while. If you've ever been out on a real windy day and the wind is so strong that it wants to blow you off your feet or knock you over, and you have to bend forward and press against the wind. If you're going to get any progress in your walking, you have to lean forward against the wind, it's so strong. That's what this word "patience" means. It means endurance. Notice he makes the phrase, " . . . in much patience" It's the ability not to quit, to keep going when the going gets rough. You don't easily give up.

One of my favorite authors, V. Raymond Edman, said, "It's always too soon to quit." That statement has bugged me my whole life. Do you know many times I've wanted to quit? Most pastors what to quit every Monday after Sunday when they preach and they're thinking, It didn't go that well. I'm done. That's my last sermon. I'm not going to go back. It's the ability to get back up and to keep going, putting one foot in front of the other and just plodding along, steadfast endurance. If you're serving the Lord and you're getting hammered for serving the Lord, don't give up. Don't throw in the towel. You need steadfast endurance.

Notice the word, verse 4, "afflictions." Paul talks about patience and then talks about afflictions. Afflictions are trials that come to you, and it literally expresses the idea of under pressure. It's being pressed down by circumstances. It has the idea of actually being hemmed in or pressed in, so we're under pressure. Then, he uses the word, verse 4, "necessities," which would be

financial or physical hardships. There were times that Paul said in Philippians 4, “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things”—to trust Christ. He went through financial and physical hardships, the result from everyday life, so under great pressure. Paul in his ministry was under pressure the same as anyone else has pressure.

Then, “distresses,” verse 4. That word actually is the one that means no room to turn around, just hemmed in. Have you ever felt like you’re trapped, and there’s no way out? Frustration and depression results? So, what do you do? Psalm 118:5 says, “I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place.” When you feel like you’re being pressed and there’s no way out, you trust in the Lord and He will deliver you and put you on a large place. This is what’s called The School of Hard Knocks. God puts all His ministers through The School of Hard Knocks.

Verse 5, “In stripes,”—which are actual beatings. Later on in the book of 2 Corinthians, Paul will talk about the numbers of the lashes he endured and the beating. Acts 16:23 says, “. . . they had laid many stripes upon them . . .” Jesus actually said that you should “. . . take up his cross daily, and follow me.” If you’re following Jesus, life will be challenging and difficult. Like Christ, you must be persecuted. Paul says, “We were whipped. We were actually beaten for our ministries serving the Lord.”

Notice he mentions, verse 5, “. . . imprisonments . . .” Paul went to prison. Can you imagine Paul applying to be a pastor today? “Have you ever been arrested?” “Yeah, I’ve been arrested quite a few times.” “Have you ever been in jail?” “Yes, I’ve been in jail.” Some of the greatest servants of the Lord have spend a lot of time in jail and in prison. John Bunyan wrote Pilgrim’s Progress from a jail in Bedford, England. Paul the apostle spent a lot of time in prison. When he was in prison, he preached and prayed and continued to glorify God.

So, Paul was beaten or whipped, “In stripes,” he’s been thrown in prison, Acts 16, when they were put in stocks and in Philippi they were in prison. Then, “. . . in tumults”—are mentioned again in verse 5. What are tumults? Tumults would be riots. I don’t know if you saw the public protest and the riots going on in France last week, but whenever Paul would preach there would be big tumults, there would be big riots. They’d grab him and beat him and start a big riot and were dragging him around. Someone said, “Wherever Paul went there was either a riot or a revival,” either they turned to Christ and got saved or they attacked him and beat him up and there was a riot.

Then, verse 5, “. . . in labours . . .” The word “labours” there is a reference to fatigue created by strenuous effort. I’ve had people say, “You’re a pastor, aren’t you?” “Yeah, I’m a pastor.” They say, “What do you do all the time? You just preach once a week for an hour and get paid? Do you play golf or what do you do? What does a pastor do all the time, just play Tiddlywinks? I mean, what do you got to do?” It just makes me laugh that people think that way, that there’s nothing to do. Paul says, “I labored to the point of fatigue,” or wearisome toil. Paul was laboring.

Then, verse 5, “. . . in watchings . . .” That word “watchings” in verse 5 means times of

sleeplessness, to be late to bed and early to get up, and they could not sleep because no doubt of the pain in his body. I thought that interesting. I read one commentary that said if Paul's beaten and whipped and persecuted and sometimes stoned with rocks, then he's thrown in prison and put in stocks, you don't think he had physical problems? In the same book, when we get to chapter 12, he talks about the thorn in his flesh, ". . . there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me" So, no doubt, Paul had pain in his body and maybe kept him awake at night, sleepless nights, and he was watching. No doubt, also as Paul said, "The cares of all the churches are on my heart." Ministers wake up in the middle of the night, and they're thinking about the congregation. They're thinking about congregants—people's problems, people's difficulties, issues that need to be dealt with. They're praying for people, praying for the ministry, very many nights with very little sleep.

Then, verse 5, ". . . in fastings"—or hunger. The "fastings" here is probably a reference not to religious fastings that were voluntary but literally no food to eat. I don't know about you, the older I get the harder it is, and I traveled a lot in years past, but traveling can be difficult because many times you don't get sleep and you don't get food. You can't eat. They almost force you not to eat on airplanes.

My wife was on a trip recently and a woman on the plane asked for some water and they said it would be \$5. for you to have water on a flight. They're going to charge you five bucks to have a glass of water on a flight? But try to imagine before airplanes. Try to imagine before automobiles. Try to imagine Paul's travel before trains or cars. We've got air-conditioned cars, self-drive. I was with a pastor yesterday who had a self-driving car. He put the thing in and sat back and closed his eyes and rested for a while. I go, "Whoa! This is scary!" Paul had to walk everywhere he went—dirt, dusty, rocky roads with open sandals, sleeping under the stars, dealing with wild beasts and animals. You're talking about radical! All the years that he traveled around the Roman Empire and how difficult that must've been. What a toll it must've taken on his body. The "fastings" there are just basically he was going without food, and I think that's an interesting thought that Paul was sometimes hungry.

In Philippians 4, when Paul was thanking the believers in Philippi for their giving to support him, he said, ". . . for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased,"—that means be without—"and I know how to abound . . . both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Whatever God calls you to do, God will strengthen you. But there was a price to pay for serving the Lord.

Then, Paul's spiritual response to these trials in verses 6-7. Again, I'll try not to tarry on them, but in verse 6 he mentions, "By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, 7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report" Notice he says, "I respond, 'By pureness,'" in verse 6. That means he lived a godly, pure, holy life; so should we. Notice verse 6, ". . . by knowledge,"—that knowledge there, I believe, is a knowledge of God found in His Word. Of course, Paul got direct revelation, but it

always drove him to know God better, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings” He wanted the wisdom of knowing God and knowing God’s Word.

Paul said also by responding “ . . . by longsuffering” This word “longsuffering” which is also defined as love or charity in 1 Corinthians 13 is a fruit of the Spirit, and it actually refers to longsuffering with people. It’s not talking about circumstances, it’s actually talking about people that we need to suffer long with. That word “longsuffering” literally means to put anger far away. It actually, believe it or not, has the idea of being short-fused. Do you know people that are short-fused? They don’t have longsuffering. They’re not long-fused. You say the wrong thing, they blow up real quick. You light them, and they blow up. They’re short-fused. They’re not longsuffering. They’re not patient and longsuffering with people. They don’t put anger far away from them.

Then, I love it, verse 6, Paul responds to persecution and opposition and difficulties, “ . . . by kindness” He’ll get long-suffering and kindness, the fruit of the Holy Spirit and also mentions 1 Corinthians 13. I love what Harry Allan Ironside once said. He said, “If you’re not kind, you’re not spiritual.” “Oh, I know Greek, and I know Hebrew, and I know theology, and I speak in tongues.” Well, groovy-doovy. Big deal. If you’re not kind, you’re not spiritual. That’s another statement I heard years ago that’s bugged me because I know if I’m not being kind, I’m not really spiritual. Do you think Jesus was ever not kind to someone? Was Jesus ever rude to someone or mean to someone? He personifies love and patience and kindness.

Now, how do we do this “ . . . pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness”—the answer is in verse 6—“by the Holy Spirit”—Ghost in my King James translation which is a reference to the Holy Spirit. We must rely on the Spirit of God if we’re going to be able ministers of the gospel and not offend other people and no one will be stumbled—being kind, relying on the Holy Spirit. It’s the fruit of the Spirit.

Then, “ . . . by love unfeigned,”—love that is sincere. I love that, verse 6. Paul responded with “ . . . pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned”—sincere. That word “sincere” comes from the latin sincerus which means literally without wax. It means it’s not fake. There’s no phoniness. There’s no fill-in. There’s no alloys in the metals. It’s pure. It means you’re genuine, you’re authentic, you’re true. You’re sincere.

Notice, verse 7, “By the word of truth,”—he was using God’s Word to do ministry. He was grounded and growing. All effective and true ministry is centered on, focused on, built on the truth found in God’s Word, and then relying upon “ . . . the power of God, by the armour of righteousness”—so the armor of God. The “armour of righteousness” makes us think of Ephesians 6, that we should “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles”—or the attacks of the enemy. If you’re going to be serving the Lord and serving the Lord effectively, you better make sure you put on your armor—the breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, sandals of peace, the belt of truth. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the

wiles of the devil.”

Verses 8-10, in closing, Paul contrasts the paradoxes of ministry, and I love these. Verse 8, “By honour and dishonour,”—so there’s that paradox of ministry. It’s an honor to serve the Lord, but by the opposition of the world, the unbelieving world, there’s dishonor. Then, “. . . by evil report and good report”—this is basically Paul, no doubt, covering the opposition he got from the Judaizers there in Corinth. And, they were accused of being, “. . . as deceivers, and yet true”—we’re genuine, we’re not deceivers, we’re true.

Verse 9, “As unknown, and yet well known” From the world’s perspective they don’t care about the man of God. They don’t care about the ministry. It’s interesting, Billy Graham dies and there’s a little short blurb in the news “Evangelist Billy Graham died,” now let’s go to Dolly Parton. I mean we had nonstop, weeks and weeks of Dolly Parton, like one of the greatest people in the history of mankind, and very little recognition of a man like Billy Graham. I think years ago I heard Christopher Hitchens, that new atheist which now has died, he’s no longer an atheist I’m sure. I couldn’t believe that I heard him one time say, “Billy Graham is the most wicked human being that has ever lived.” I was shocked! He said, “Billy Graham was the most wicked person that has ever lived on planet earth.” I can’t believe it. In Hebrews it talks about those people that live by faith of whom the world was not worthy—I love it—and that they “. . . wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted . . . they wandered in . . . dens and caves of the earth.” “(Of whom the world was not worthy.)”

Paul says, “You want to serve the Lord? The world will not clap for you. The world will not recognize you,” so you’re living for God, you’re living for His Kingdom. You’re not living for this world.

Verse 9, “As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live”—this is dying to self and living unto God. We die to self. We die to our own goals, plans, and ambitions, and we live to serve the Lord. “. . . chastened, and not killed; 10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” What a paradox. We’re filled with sorrow. You have the weight of ministry on your heart and your life and you see so much sorrow, so much suffering, so many hurting people, the cares of all the churches, and Paul says, “. . . yet always rejoicing”—because Jesus is Lord and Jesus is in control.

Verse 10, “. . . as poor, yet making many rich”—I love that. I’m poor in this world, but I’m rich toward God. I love it when Peter and John went to the temple to pray and there was a lame man that said, “Can we have some alms?” What did Peter say? “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ . . . rise up and walk.” Isn’t that awesome! He didn’t have any silver or gold. He was poor in this world, but he was rich in the things of God and he said, “. . . but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ . . . rise up and walk.” The man stood up and was healed and walked. How wonderful that is, “. . . as poor, yet making many rich”

Then he says, “. . . as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” That is such a beautiful

picture of our lives of service in this world that is not our home. We're just strangers and pilgrims passing through. Amen? So, don't get too attached. Don't get too devoted to this world. I love it when the Bible says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

Paul, in Colossians, said, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." In Proverbs 13:7 it says, "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches."

Well, let's live for the Lord. Let's follow the Lord no matter what the world says, no matter what the world does, no matter what the world thinks. We want to be living blamelessly and bringing glory to God. Amen?