

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Approving Ourselves as the Ministers of God
2 Corinthians 6:1-13

Last time...we “in Christ”

- are accepted by God
- will appear before the judgment seat of Christ...rewards for serving Him
- are compelled by the love of Christ to make Him known
- are new creatures...Jesus-kind
- have a ministry of reconciliation to those still dead in their sin

This time...the grace of God and how are we to approve ourselves as the ministers of God

We are in 2 Cor 6

Before we consider the text in 2 Cor 6:1-13, let's put our ministries in historical context

- We have been called by name...personally...by the Lord God Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth
 - out of
 - our filth into His purity
 - the land of the dead into the land of the living
 - darkness into His glorious Light
(Col 1:13)
 - into
 - the fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord
(1 Cor 1:9)
 - His eternal glory by Christ Jesus
(1 Peter 5:10)
 - for a work He wants to do
(Ex 31:3, Acts 13:1-2, Eph 2:10, Phil 2:12-13, 2 Tim 1:9)
 - to preach the Gospel where He is leading us
(Acts 16:9-10, Acts 26:18)
- We have been filled with the Spirit of God,
 - equipped for His service
(Ex 31:4-11, Col 1:9-11, 1 Cor 2:16, 2 Tim 1:7)
 - empowered For His service
(Acts 1:8, 2 Cor 4:1)

- We have been appointed to serve the Lord God when time is short and the fashion of the world is passing away, during
 - The time of God's sign to the nation's of His coming judgment – Israel re-gathered into His land for the 2nd time (Is 11:11-12)
 - the beginning of sorrows (Matt 24:4-8, Luke 21:8-12)
 - pervasive deception
 - wars and rumors of wars
 - great international tensions
 - great racial tensions
 - pestilences (COVID, fentanyl)
 - earthquakes in a wide variety of places
 - persecution by the world because of Jesus' name
 - distress of nations with perplexity (no answers to the problems)
 - the Days of Noah and the Days of Lot (Luke 17:24-30)
 - lawlessness
 - widespread and senseless violence
 - militant sexual perversion
 - great confusion in the hearts of man-kind

In these perilous times, we are grieved by what we see in the world

- The horror the world calls abortion but God calls the shedding of innocent blood
 - Crazy men and women demonstrating and rioting for what they think is their right – to butcher a defenseless and voiceless baby in a mother's womb that feels every slice of the butcher's knife
 - A militant denial that life begins at conception, when the Word of God clearly says so
 - Legislation in the works that will make this horror declared legal, protected and funded by the Federal Gov't up until the moment of birth, and then beyond
- An absurd sexual perversion "taking the world by storm" – transgenderism
 - A male rapist convicted by a court of law "transitioned" into a woman...and was sent to a women's prison
 - Society claiming anyone can have a menstrual cycle and anyone can get pregnant and bear a child
 - Society's inability to define "woman" and "man"
 - A Colorado baker, who won a law suit because it violated his religious beliefs to bake a cake for a homosexual wedding, lost a law suit because he refused to bake a cake for a "trans" celebration

- Public school teachers helping students “transition” while hiding it from the parents
- Mother Earth worship – climate change being embraced by national Govt’s and imposed on its citizens world wide

We are grieved by all the mental illness of

- Man-kind playing God
- Man-kind in open rebellion against the Creator, attacking the image of God
- Man-kind worshipping the creature rather than the Creator

We are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth...but now it seems like we don’t even belong here any more in a world gone mad
Yet we have been appointed to live in these times as the ministers of God

With all that in mind, let’s hear from the Lord in 2 Cor 6:1-13

v1 As was the Apostle Paul, we are co-laborers with God (1 Cor 3:9a), a part of what He is doing in the world – seeking and saving the dead-in-sin from eternal death
We are children of the Light, witnesses of Jesus Christ and ambassadors of Christ in His ministry of reconciliation

So, as Paul then, we now beg people in our sphere of influence to not receive the grace of God in vain/to no effect

What is “the grace of God”?

1. The Gospel, the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes
1 Cor 15:3-4

Acts 14:26 sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

Acts 15:40 Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

Heb 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

Eph 2:8-9

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

2. God's nature

Ps 103:8-10 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

Jonah 4:2b Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.
(1 Tim 2:4)

3. God's gift of forgiveness to sinners

Rom 5:1-2 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

What we do not deserve (grace)
vs what we do deserve (justice)
and not getting what we deserve (mercy)

4. Our service unto the Lord...Christ-like living

1 Cor 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Eph 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

How is the grace of God received in vain?

When grace fails...when the children/ministers of God are not Christ-like
(Gal 5:16-17)

- unmerciful, unkind

“flip side” of Matt 5:7

James 1:20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

responding in kind rather than

Prov 15:1

Overcome evil with good

Blessing those who persecute us

When insulted, turn the other cheek

When waved at with 1 finger, wave back with all 5 fingers

Rom 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Reading *Ghost Soldiers*....history is ugly (Jer 17:9)

- not forgiving
 Heb 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled

Our ministries: the grace of God and the grace of God received in vain:

1. My conversation with a dear and faithful friend whose son attempted to take his life last week via drug overdose

history of drug use and the father's threat if again

feels worthless

wants to be normal – without anxiety, not unstable

embittered (over “the hand” life has dealt him)

claims to be a believer

Needs: grace

- a. not thrown out of the house; where would he go?
- b. tenderly brought to the nail-marred feet of Jesus
 - i. see clearly his worth in God's eyes
 - ii. look up into the face of Jesus Who so loves him
- c. to serve someone else with his God-given gift vs focus on Self
 (most miserable place in the world and is “contagious”)

2. help the enemies of God see His grace (Rom 2:4)

Where did Noah find grace whereby he entered the Ark and escaped

God's world-wide judgment by water?

In the eyes of the Lord (Gen 6:8)...”seeing” by faith (Heb 11:7)

- the heart of God
- things not seen yet (rain, the Flood)

How does a citizen of the world find grace in the Days of Noah whereby they “enter the Ark” and escape God's world-wide judgment by fire?

In the eyes of the Lord...”seeing” by faith (Heb 11:6)

- the heart of God in the lives of His ministers
- things not seen yet (what is on the horizon)

And that is so vitally important because...

v2 No one is guaranteed tomorrow
 No one knows the day of their death...it may very well be today
 And after one's last breath on earth lies eternity – based on one's decision regarding Jesus Christ, Who is the very fulfillment of Is 49:8a...

I...God your Creator

have heard you in an accepted time...an approved occasion, in due time
and in the day of salvation...a moment in time known by God when a knee bows
and a tongue confesses

have I helped you...by grace thru faith

Rom 5:20-21 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.

But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace
reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ
our Lord

Because Acts 17:31 he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in
righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he
hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from
the dead.

when we as faithful ministers of God called by name to share the grace of God,
we should “ask for the order”...ask the hearer to make a decision for Jesus Christ
because TODAY is the day to make that choice!

Since “later” may be too late

So, as the ministers of God during the Days of Noah and the Days of Lot, we must be
very mindful of...

- v3 2 Peter 3:18, being Christ-like (Matt 16:24, die daily to Self) so no one watching and
listening to us as the witnesses and ambassadors of Christ is stumbled in
- making a decision for Christ (unbeliever)
 - following Jesus (believer)

Every minister of God is to be a reflection of Jesus Christ...always

No part of the Body of Christ should bring shame upon the Head of the Body

Perhaps a silly example

Believers that play softball

Good witnesses off the field but, once between the lines, are bad witnesses

No excuse

We are witnesses of Jesus Christ always and everywhere

Remember...2 Cor 3:6, so we need to obey the small still voice of God leading us

v4-5 The ministers of God, in these Days of Noah and Days of Lot, are called to exhibit the grace of God **in**

1. much patience...abundant cheerful endurance of difficulties
2. afflictions...trials, tribulations, persecution (bearing in mind 2 Cor 4:17-18)
3. necessities...shortages, the lack of things needed
4. distresses...anguish
5. stripes...beatings
6. imprisonments...the Lord allows His ministers to be put in prison so the dead-in-sin there can hear the Gospel too
7. tumults...disorder and confusion
8. labors...great toil
9. watchings...keeping awake

Matt 24:42 *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*

Matt 26:41 *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.*

Luke 21:28 *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

Israel
Ezk 38-39

10. fastings...depravation of the flesh to focus on the Spirit

In all circumstances

v6-8a The ministers of God, in these Days of Noah and Days of Lot, are called to exhibit the grace of God **by** (given wholly to)

1. pureness...purity of heart, blamelessness
Matt 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*
(and reflect Jesus)
2. knowledge...of God
Jer 9:24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.
3. longsuffering...patiently enduring hardships, trouble, and heartbreaks...
the nature of God
4. kindness...the nature of God
5. the Holy Ghost...the power of Spirit of God indwelling us
6. love unfeigned...self-last, self-less love that is genuine and sincere,
not an empty façade of plastic
7. the Word of Truth...the inspired, inerrant, and infallible words of God
(not our opinion)

8. the power of God...the power from on High whereby we have boldness to be the witnesses of Christ
 Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.
9. the armor of righteousness...the armor of God (Eph 6:11-18)
10. honor and dishonor...whether we are honored or held in reproach/disdain by men
11. evil report and good report...whether we are defamed or praised by men

Given wholly to the Lord our God

v8b-10 The ministers of God, in these Days of Noah and Days of Lot, are called to exhibit the grace of God **as** (like, in the manner of)

1. deceivers and yet true...thought of as liars and imposters but nonetheless true and faithful ministers of God
2. unknown and yet well known...not really known or not understood but nonetheless recognized as ministers of God
3. dying and behold we live...not as we were before we were saved by God by grace thru faith...grace has changed everything, are truly alive!
4. chastened and not killed...punished as hate-mongers in the world but not executed (Matt 10:28)
5. sorrowful yet always rejoicing...come what may, PTL!
 1 Thes 5:16-18 Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
 Rom 8:28
6. poor yet making many rich...beggary paupers in the things of the world but rich in the things of God freely received and freely shared so others are rich in God too
 Matt 5:3-4 **Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.**
 Matt 8:20 **The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.**
 Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:
7. having nothing and yet possessing all things...1 Cor 4:2 but Rom 8:17

With our hearts and minds trained on the next world

v11-13 Paul, in his ministry has a minister of God to the church at Corinth did so

- in
- by
- as

without much appreciation from them

He opened his heart wide to them, holding back no love and affection for them,
even though they withheld their love and affection for him

The “loss” is not his but theirs

But Paul speaks as a father to them, his children

1 Cor 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye*
not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through
the gospel.

“Open your heart to me as my heart is open to you!”

As the ministers of God in the Days of Noah and the Days of Lot, our love for the lost
may be unrequited

We do not our ministries for the applause and praises of men but for the praise of God

We will appear before the judgment seat of Christ...alone

Our rewards will be based on our faithfulness, NOT on the response of others

In the Days of Noah and the Days of Lot when it seems like we don’t even belong here anymore:

1 Chron 12:32 *men* that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought
to do

1 Cor 14:3 he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and
exhortation, and comfort.

Esther 4:14 who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a
time as this?

So in these Days of Noah and Days of Lot in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation
“flooded” with

- confusion and mental illness
- violence
- militant sexual perversion
- the screams of the butchered unborn

we are the ministers of the grace of God

- to everyone
- in every circumstance
- given wholly to the Lord our God Who gave Himself for us

The Light we shine is NOT a flamethrower!
We are NOT Sons of Thunder
We are ministers of the grace of God...
 grace that is NEVER frustrated even if we get frustrated

Gal 2:20-21 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (when I was dead in my sin). I do not frustrate the grace of God

- the Gospel
- the forgiveness of God
- the nature of God
- my service to God...Christ-like living

for if righteousness (accepted of God) *come* by the law (a person's merit or performance), then Christ is dead in vain.