OUR SINS HAVE ALREADY BEEN FORGIVEN

II CORINTHIANS 5:9 - 5:21

Now this is Bible study, and it's the only reason we're here. Our teaching is simply to help people study on their own, to be able to read and understand what the Bible is all about. We are currently in Paul's Epistles, in II Corinthians Chapter 5. In our last lesson we left off in verse 9 where Paul has just been dealing with the fact that as soon as a believer dies, their soul and spirit leave the body, and goes immediately into the presence of the Lord. Now when they get to Heaven, what their activity is and what their state is I'm in no position to say because the Bible is fairly silent on the subject. All we know from Scripture is that they are in the Lord's presence, and they are waiting for the great resurrection day for their new body.

Now the only thing I can do to temper our thinking on this is that in eternity there is no time, and so even though Adam has been dead 6000 years, when the resurrection day comes he won't suddenly realize that he's been off the scene that long, but rather it will seem to him it's only been a matter of hours because time is irrelevant. So keep in mind that when our departed loved ones will be reunited with us they won't realize it's been a long time since we saw each other. I read once that it's just like you took one of your loved ones to the train depot (back when trains were a main form of transportation) and they got on the train in one of the front cars, and got them all situated, but before the train pulled out of the station you suddenly decided that you would also go buy a ticket and you had to get on the last car of the train. Well you're both going to arrive at the same destination at the same time. I think that's what it's going to be like.

Although our loved ones may have left for Heaven years ago, when the Rapture of the Church takes place (and we meet our loved ones) it won't be like we haven't seen them in 30 or 40 years, but rather just 5 minutes ago. So all these things enter into these events that will happen and often we make it more difficult than it really is. But Paul has now been dealing with the departure of the soul and spirit from the body which puts us in the presence of the Lord.

II Corinthians 5:9
"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent (that's beside the point) we may be accepted of him."

Approved of Him is a better word than accepted of Him because we're not dealing with salvation at all here. And this is what I want to emphasize: in these verses from 1-13, he is not dealing with salvation whatsoever, but rather it is totally in the area of reward for our living here in this life as believers. And that's the admonition to a believer. We're not just saved to escape hell fire, but rather we are saved to serve, and that's why He leaves us here. In fact, even the Twelve disciples in Christ's earthly ministry in Matthew Chapter 19 wanted to know what, serving Him, would be their reward. The eleven had been with Jesus in this Scripture for almost the whole three years. They have their salvation so they're not about that, and remember we're not counting Judas. But in verse 27 we find:

Matthew 19:27,28

"Then answered Peter and said unto him, `Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? (what's Peter referring to? What kind of a reward are we going to get for having left all of material blessing, his fishing, and business, their home and family? And look at how Jesus answers them.) 28. And Jesus said unto them, `Verily I say unto you. That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration (that is when the 1000-year kingdom would be set up) when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Now what was that? That's their reward for having served Him so diligently during those three years of His earthly ministry. It didn't have anything to do with their salvation but it had everything to do with their rewards. Now back to II Corinthians 5, and we have the same concept for you and I as members of the Body of Christ. Paul's not dealing with our salvation here, but rather with rewards.

II Corinthians 5:10a

"For we must all (no one is going to escape it, they won't be able to fast talk the Lord out of this situation. because all believers must) appear before the judgment seat of Christ;..."

Now I wish the King James translators wouldn't have used the word judgment, because I think that scares people. The Greek word for this judgment is "Bema," and we must all appear before the Bema Seat. In the Greek it's Bema, and most of you know that it was a raised platform that was used to judge people by. The parties would come and stand in front of the judges who were on the Bema Seat. It was also used in
the Olympic games for the seat of the judges who determined who would win. So this is the analogy that I think Paul is more apt to have the Olympics in mind rather than the political situation at the Bema Seat of government.

So looking at it from an Olympic sports event scenario we must all appear before the Bema Seat, not to be judged for our sins, but rather for our rewards. Oh, I can't stress that enough because you have no idea how many people over the years have said, "Les, am I going through all these trials and tribulations because of sin in my past?"

Well the first thing I ask those people is this. "Are you a believer? Are you a child of God?" And they always say, "Yeah, I know I'm saved." "Well then, where do you get the idea that you still have sin on your back, because it's not in this Book? You do not carry past sins because they have been judged at the Cross." Let's look at a few verses to confirm this because there are some who will say, "Les, where do you get these things?" Turn to Ephesians 4:32:

_Ephesians 4:32a_

"And be ye kind one to another, (remember Paul is addressing only believers, But he is doing so on a higher level than he did the Corinthians. Also remember that the Epistles of Paul are progressive. We move from the simplistic to the more in-depth, and those things that are more doctrinal.) tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath (past tense, already) forgiven you."

You don't forgive one another so you can be forgiven. See what the disciples prayer says back in Matthew. In those Scriptures you have to forgive everybody before you can be forgiven.

_Matthew 6:15_

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (This was written to the Nation of Israel under the Law. Do you see that difference?)

There is a vast difference between Law and Grace. But you see Paul doesn't write that way to the Grace Age believers. Paul says to be ready to forgive your neighbor because you have already been forgiven. Do you see the concept? Now reading verse 32 again:

_II Corinthians 4:32_

"And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath (already) forgiven you."
Now that doesn't just take you up to a certain point in time, but that means now and forever you are forgiven. Let's carry it a little further by going to Colossians Chapter 2. The Scriptures don't lie, and we have to believe it, because this is what God is going to hold us accountable for. Do you believe His Word? God calls that faith. And without faith it is impossible to please Him.

*Colossians 2:13*

"And you, being dead in your sins (in our pre-salvation existence) and the uncircumcision of your flesh, (regarding pagan Gentiles) hath he (God of verse 12) quickened together with him, (when Christ died, we died, when He arose from the dead, we arose to newness of life) having forgiven you all trespasses;"

He has forgiven every last sin that we have committed, are committing, and will commit. These sins are already forgiven. I've stressed in our last series of lessons how that when Christ died, how much of the world's sins did He die for? All of them! He tasted death, the Book of Hebrews says, for every man. I'm going to keep repeating it. I want people to know if they go out into a lost eternity it wasn't because their sins weren't taken care of, it won't be because the atoning Blood wasn't for them, but rather it's because they rejected it in *unbelief*. And, oh, pass this on. Make people realize that their sin debt is paid in full, but God can't activate that payment until they believe the Gospel. That's the kicker! We have to believe before we can appropriate this forgiveness. But for those of us who believe - yes, we are totally forgiven. Now let's look at Colossians Chapter 3:13 and again it's that same concept that we are forgiven.

*Colossians 3:13*

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

Now coming back to the text in Chapter 5 of II Corinthians. When we come before the Bema Seat or the Judgment Seat of Christ, it isn't that we are going to have to face our sins because they are taken care of, they're forgiven, they're cancelled. So we come before Him now to be judged on what we have done as believers in our earthly sojourn. It's not going to be so much on how much we have done as the motivation behind what we have done. Why do we do the things that we do? In other words, if the only reason I taught was to show people how much I know; hey, it would count for nothing. It has to be the right motive. So everything we do has to be done in that light. *Am I doing it because I love the Lord, and He'll receive the glory? If so then it will count for rewards.* But on the other hand if we're doing it to show people how much we can accomplish then it will count for nothing. It will be nothing more than hay, wood and stubble. Now reading on in verse 10:
II Corinthians 5:10,11

"For we must all (believers) appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, (while we're here in the body) according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 11. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

So let's look at this whole concept of working for rewards. Turn to I Corinthians Chapter 3, and we find the same idea. Verse 12:

I Corinthians 3:12,13a

"Now if any man (remember Paul only writes to believers) build upon this foundation (Christ up in verse 11) gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13. Every man's work shall be made manifest:..."

It will be under the spotlight, and the very fiery eyes of Jesus are going to examine everything that we've done as believers. We can either have those things that the fire can't touch such as the gold, silver, and precious stones or we'll have some of the stuff that goes up in a puff of smoke - wood, hay, and stubble. So that again is pretty much self-explanatory. And again that will be primarily based on our motives. Why do we do the things that we categorize as good works? Is it just for pleasing the flesh or someone else or strictly done for God's honor and glory.

I Corinthians 3:13

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day (what day? That day when we stand before the Bema Seat. For that day) shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

And here we have to go back to that portion of Scripture in Revelation, where the eyes of the Lord Jesus are as what? Fire!

Revelation 19:12

"His (Christ) eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself."

Now it doesn't say that His eyes are fire, but rather they are as fire, and that makes a big difference. So as Christ’s eyes penetrate the works record of every believer, the
stuff that was hay, wood, and stubble will just disappear. And that which was gold, silver, and precious stones will remain, and from that we will receive a reward.

**II Corinthians 3:14a**

"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward...."

Now you can't argue with that. Many people don't like that concept, but I'll never forget quite a few years ago I had a gentlemen who had been pastor of a large Church in Chicago. He came up one night after I'd been teaching this very thing, and he told me, "Les teach it, and teach it, and teach it, because so few people understand this concept of rewards for the believer." Absolutely we're going to receive a reward. Above and beyond our salvation, above and beyond the promises like the street being paved with gold, and the mansions in glory, but that's not the rewards. The rewards are going to be something else, however I can't totally put my finger on it, but I'd like to think that it will be places of responsibility in the heavenlies.

I noticed in the Daily Oklahoman this morning that the Hubbell space telescope has just found the largest star ever. That's just mind boggling, and if I remember correctly the analogy was that that star put out more energy and heat in a few moments than our sun does in a year. So I think that whole area of outer space is going to be the domain of the Church Age believer, because we're told that we're going to rule the heavenlies. Israel is promised the earth, and we're going to give them that, but the believer of the Church Age, the Body of Christ, we are going to rule in the heavenlies.

Now I think there's also going to be a certain amount of interfacing between those of us in our resurrected bodies, and the Millennial citizen who will be in flesh and blood for that thousand years, I would think. But whatever, there's going to be areas of rewards that I want every believer to work for. Remember you don't work for salvation, that is a gift. Let's look at that for a moment in Romans Chapter 6. This is a concept that is so hard for a lot of people to overcome because they've had it drummed into them since they were little that they have to work, they have to do something for their salvation. But Romans 6:23 just blows that out of the saddle.

**Romans 6:23**

"For the wages (something that you earn) of sin is death; (spiritual death) but (the flip side) the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now how much work can you do and still call it a gift? None. You can't work for something and then call it a gift, because as soon as you work for it, it is no longer a
gift. And so it is with salvation. It has to be something that we take totally as a gift of God without having to do any work of any kind. But once we've become a recipient of that gift, what does God logically expect? Now we go to work and work for rewards. That's the whole idea that we're not saved to sit, but rather we're saved to serve. Now another thing I don't want you to confuse rewards with and that is the crowns. Now I don't think the crowns have anything to do with the rewards that we receive from the Bema Seat. Now, there are various crowns listed. The crown of righteousness, the crown of life, and so on and so forth. But I don't think they are one and the same whatsoever.

Now we know when we studied the Book of Romans when Paul listed the gifts to men that He gave to the Church; not everybody has that same gift. They're not all going to work in that same area for the rewards, but every believer has something. Don't ever lose that. I don't care who you are, or how old or young you are. You have something that God has given you that can be used as a gift, and it in turn can precipitate your rewards. Now let's come back to I Corinthians again and look at Chapter 9 where Paul alludes to this over and over and this is by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this isn't just man's idea. This is what God wants us to understand.

I Corinthians 9:24,25a

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. (Not salvation, but rather the prize, the reward.) 25. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things...."

I know here Paul is alluding to the Olympic athletics. So what did the athletes do? They trained, and trained, but they did it with temperance. They did not destroy their body with over-training, not one. On the other hand did they arrive flabby, and in no condition to run the race? No. And so with common sense, and being temperate in all things, they prepared for these Olympic races. So here Paul is telling us the same thing. Now reading on:

I Corinthians 9:25b

"... Now they (these Olympic runners) do it to obtain a corruptible crown; (a wreath of leaves) but we (who are also running a race. and running for rewards we're looking for) an incorruptible."

A crown that will never end. In other words once the Lord establishes our place of responsibility in the heavenlies for eternity that will never end. It's going to be ours forever and ever and ever. And if only more people could get a concept of eternity.
Eternity is without end and whatever reward we have earned we are going to enjoy for all eternity.
LESSON ONE * PART II

OUR SINS HAVE ALREADY BEEN FORGIVEN

II CORINTHIANS 5:9 - 5:21

Now let's pick up where we left off in the last lesson and that will be in verse 14.

II Corinthians 5:14

"For the love Christ constraineth us;..."(or drives us on)

Remember during the past several lessons I've been stressing how the apostle Paul suffered so much for the sake of the Gospel? And how long, with all of his physical sufferings, he had to constantly defend his apostleship. He had to constantly stand up against the Jewish people from Jerusalem who thought that he was a false teacher, and impostor. So in spite of all the opposition there was only one thing that kept driving the man on and I think he says it all right here, and that was "the love of Christ."

Now you want to remember the man's background kind of sets him up for this because he was such a religious zealot under Judaism. I mean his whole life was wrapped up in Judaism as his work as a Pharisee. Now knowing that even though God totally transformed the man and saved him by grace, yet that personality kept going and now the man is turning all that energy not to defeat the name of Christ, but now out of love for Him.

II Corinthians 5:14

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; (or drives us on) because we thus judge, (or conclude) that if one died for all, (Christ died for the whole human race. He didn't just die for the believers, but rather He died for all.) then were all dead."

Now that's another concept that a lot of people don't like to stare in the face, and that is what? We have all fallen short of the glory of God, we are all sinners by virtue of our having been born from Adam, and we are separated from God. There is that vast gulf between man and God, and all because of Adam. Remember, we're not sinners because we sin, but rather we sin because we're sinners. And we're sinners because we're born of the lineage of Adam. So all of this is right here in this verse. The love of Christ constrains this man because Christ died for the whole human race. And so because the whole human race needed His sacrificial death, it follows that the whole human race was dead in sin.
When people try to make eternal life by their works then they are flatly denying that. They are not admitting that they have been totally separated from God. They are not admitting that they are dead spiritually. They are still thinking that somehow whatever they do will merit favor with God and they're going to get into Heaven. But they're not going to be able to. I've stressed so often; when you go all the way back to our study in Genesis we find that man was created in a physical body. We can see, and touch, and we function. But in this body are two other areas of our make-up that are invisible, and that's the soul and the spirit, the mind, will, and emotion, and the spirit part of it. No human being can touch, or get into that.

And so how in the world can someone in a "works religion" hope to make it when they can't even see and touch their own invisible personality? It has to be a miraculous work of God who alone can work in the area of the invisible. Oh don't lose this. In fact let's see how often Paul brings that out. Come over to Ephesians Chapter 2. Because this isn't just a quirk of Corinthians, but rather this is Paul's theme throughout all of his letters. In fact, while you're finding Ephesians I'll just put up the timeline that we like to use so often, especially beginning with Genesis Chapter 12, and the call of Abraham. That was when God pulled the Nation of Israel out of the river of humanity, and made all those Covenant promises to them. It was a time that God was dealing almost exclusively with that nation, but we also know that there were exceptions when He dealt with Gentiles.

But He pulls off this little Nation of Israel, and gives them the promises and the Law, and the priesthood, also the civil law. In other words, the nation had the very mind of God expressed in their national behavior, and their understanding of the spirit. And then one day God sent the Messiah with the idea that now Israel could take the knowledge of her Jehovah God to these pagan Gentiles. But before they got that far they rejected everything and they crucified their Messiah. Now beginning with the three years of Christ's earthly ministry we find that Jesus again ministered only to the Jew and under the Law.

Matthew 15:24

"But he (Jesus) answered and said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

Just the other night in our Tulsa class a lady came up and said, "Les, last week when you made the statement that Jesus ministers to the Jews under the Law it was the first time I had ever caught that." Well that's so true. A lot of people still, as often as I've said it, do not understand that Jesus' whole ministry for three years was under the Law. He never told anybody to stop Temple worship, He never told a Jew, "Now you no longer have to give sacrifices." They were still under the Law, and even when you
go past His death, burial, and resurrection, and you come into the early chapters of Acts you will find that all the language in those first few chapters is still the Jews only under the Law. No one has told them that they are no longer under the Law. Everything is still legal. Even in Chapter 3 we find Peter and John going to the Temple for prayer.

Acts 3:1

"Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."

Well what does that imply? There was certainly nothing in Christianity that demanded you go to the Temple three or four times a day to pray. Remember a Gentile couldn't even go to the Temple, because that was Judaism. So they were still under the Law although they had recognized Christ as their Messiah, and were believers of that. But they weren't released from the Law. Even in Chapter 10 when the Holy Spirit made Peter go to Cornelius' house, what was the first thing Peter said to Cornelius?

Acts 10:28

"And he (Peter) said unto them, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation;..."

So this is what I try to point out that in those early chapters of Acts we find God still dealing with the Nation of Israel, and the language is so plain. Some verses that recognize this include:

Acts 2:14a

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, "Ye men of Judaea,..."

Acts 2:22a

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words;..."

Acts 2:37

"Now when they heard this, they (the men of Israel in verse 22) were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we (the men of Israel) do?"

Acts 3:12a
"And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, `Ye men of Israel, ...'"

And then finally when it was evident that Israel was not going to accept their Messiah we find in Acts Chapter 9 something totally different takes place again in God's operation, and what is it? He saves the very man Saul of Tarsus (that was trying to destroy Him) from Judaism. And as old Saul of Tarsus was laboring under his blindness and the results of that experience on the road to Damascus, God speaks to Ananias in Damascus and tells him:

Acts 9:15b,16

"...Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles..." 16. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

So in our timeline then we can see that after Israel had rejected the Messiah, and after Israel had rejected Peter and the eleven's preaching in those first few years after the crucifixion, we find God sending Israel back into a dispersion especially after 70 AD. It was at the time God also destroyed the Temple, and in the mean time He is now going to do just the opposite. Now, rather than dealing with Israel primarily, He is dealing primarily with the Gentiles. Howbeit there can be Jews that can come into this Body of Christ individually, but not as a nation, as God was dealing with them back there.

So here is where the apostle Paul now comes into play as the apostle. In fact as I'm writing this, be looking up Romans Chapter 11:13. Now this apostle is not like the Twelve apostles of Israel, but rather we find in Romans 11:13, where Paul is speaking, and there is no way we can argue with it. This is where we are today:

Romans 11:13

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles,..."

Now you can't get around that. That's just plain English. Another verse that says almost the same thing is in Ephesians Chapter 3. The reason I'm spending so much time on Paul's Epistles is because this is where we, as Gentiles, have to spend our greatest amount of time. Now that doesn't cancel the rest of Scripture. I know some have accused me of telling people to just throw away the Four Gospels, but you people know better than that. But nevertheless, never do we take away any portion of Scripture, but we have to set priorities, it's like in everything else. And the priority for the Grace Age Gentile Believer, and the Jew as he has come into Christianity as a born again person, is that these Pauline Epistles are where we find the very meat of
our faith and practice. Because the Four Gospels were Christ's under the Law given to the Jews only.

Matthew 10:5a

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles,..." Remember we're not under Law, but rather Grace. Now look what Paul says in Ephesians Chapter 3.

Ephesians 3:1,2

"For this cause (because of everything he has written in Ephesians 2 such as 'For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' So he says, for this cause) I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, (see how plain that is?) 2. If ye have heard of the dispensation (or administration) of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward."

So bear with me as I spend this much time on Paul's Epistles because of the concept that God has now called this man as the apostle of the Gentiles. He has inspired this man to write the biggest part of our New Testament. And as I said when we began our study of Paul's Epistles way back when we started in Romans, that out of all the existing manuscripts of the New Testament we find some have the Four Gospels in various orders. Some have the little Epistle such as James, Peter, John and Jude in different order, but always you find Paul's Epistles are in the same identical order. Now that just tells me the Holy Spirit has just hovered over that part of our New Testament so that no one has been able to fool with it. It's exactly where it belongs from Romans through Hebrews. So keep all that in mind as I keep spending week after week on these letters to the various Churches from this apostle. Now if you will come back to II Corinthians Chapter 5. So as the apostle of the Gentiles has now written to this period of time and we think we're coming close to the end. But nevertheless what he has written is still just as appropriate as the day he wrote it. So he says again in verse 14:

II Corinthians 5:14

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, (conclude) that if one died for all, then were all dead:"

Let's look at that in the Book of Ephesians Chapter 2:1 And again remember that Ephesus was a Gentile congregation. Now I'm sure there was a scattering of Jewish believers in all these Churches but they were predominantly Gentiles.
**Ephesians 2:1**

"And you hath he quickened, (or made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins;"

Now that's the lot of every human being. Not because they were pagan, not because of their religion, not because of their immorality, but rather they were dead in trespasses and sins because they were sons and daughters of Adam. And oh I hope people don't get tired of my drumming it in, but we have to understand that everyone of us was dead in sin because we are the offspring of Adam. Now verse 2.

**Ephesians 2:2**

"Wherein (while we were dead in trespasses and sins) in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

So for the lost world they are still dead in their trespasses and sins. Now let's come back to II Corinthians Chapter 5.

**II Corinthians 5:15**

"And that he died for all, (do you see how the scriptures constantly brings this in? He died for all) that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

What is that? The Gospel! Do you see how the Gospel keeps popping up throughout all of Paul's writing? And remember how he delineates it as the Gospel that we must believe for salvation in I Corinthians 15:11-4? How that Christ died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again. Listen if you believe anything other than that, then you are believing in a false gospel. You must believe this Gospel for salvation! This is why the Holy Spirit has prompted the man to bring it up over and over and over. A verse just comes to mind in the Book of Hebrews. You know in our last seminar I told the group that they may wear out their Bible as we study from 8:30 to 5:00 PM. by comparing Scriptures with Scriptures. I think God expects us to use this Book till it becomes totally worn out, and then go get another one. I think this is my 7th Bible since I started teaching, so wear them out, and please God. Here in the Book of Hebrews Paul makes it so plain in verse 9.

**Hebrews 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.

Christ died the death that every human being should have had, but He did substitute on their behalf. As I've said so often, "What a waste that God has done everything that every human being ever needed for salvation and yet the vast majority is walking it under foot." I hope the latest poll I read is true about Christians. I have a hard time believing that it is, however this particular pollster declared that 50% of Americans are born again Christians. My if that is true I would think that we would have a different nation. But let's hope that statement is true because I hate to think of anybody going out to a lost eternity seeing that Christ has already paid the price. Now back to II Corinthians Chapter 5, and let's look at verse 15 again.

II Corinthians 5:15

"And that he died for all, that they which live (for those who have believed the Gospel and have become spiritually alive they) should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Now I'm confident that God doesn't expect every believer to suffer like the apostle Paul did. But on the other hand I don't think that we have to take the idea that since we're Christians then everything is going to have a rose petal pathway to it. No way is that true. We're going to have trials and tribulations, we're going to have pain and suffering, and sickness just like anybody else. But we have this blessed assurance that whatever we go through the Lord is with us, we're not alone. But on the other hand, He does expect us to live for Him as much as is within us and as He gives us guidance and direction to do so. But you see too many people are just totally unconcerned. They say, "Oh yeah, I'm a Christian, I'm not going to go to Hell when I die, I'm going to Heaven." And that's where they leave it. But you see that's not what God wants.

I've used this on the program before, but I'll share it with you again. I remember back when communist Russia was seemingly going to overrun the world. I think many of us thought that there wasn't anything that anyone could do that could stop the juggernaut of communism. That was probably back in the early 80's and there was nothing of any signs of it's finally crumbling away. I remember reading (I think in Time Magazine) a little box on the bottom of the page where the reporter had interviewed an ordinary Communist worker. He was a factory worker of some sort. As I read that article I became alarmed to find that when he got off work in the evening, he would go down to communist headquarters in whatever city he was living in and he would work for the party until 10 or 11 o'clock at night. His family and
everything else was 2nd to his love and pushing of communism. And as I read that article years and years ago I often thought, "My if Christians would even come close to that what a different world we would be living in." Now coming back to our text. So the very core of all of our activity is the fact that we know He has died for us, and He has risen from the dead. Now verse 16. We must take this next verse slowly.

II Corinthians 5:16a

"Wherefore henceforth..."

Now what does the word henceforth mean? You know I'm a stickler for words. Henceforth means, "From that point on." Paul is not going back to John the Baptist, he's not going back to Christ's earthly ministry, but rather he's going back to His death, burial, and resurrection. That's where things really kick into gear for us Gentiles. Let's use some Scripture for this. Let's go to John's Gospel Chapter 12, and I know this is a big pill for some people to swallow. But listen we have to understand that all the way up through the Old Testament that God was dealing with His Covenant people under the Law. Remember all the prophets wrote under the Law, and they practiced the Law to the hilt. But once the death, burial, and resurrection has been revealed to us Gentiles as God's plan of salvation, then that's where we have to start.

John 12:20a

"And there were certain Greeks (Gentiles) among them that came up to worship at the feast:..."

Now it doesn't say that they came to worship, so don't try to put the handle proselyte on these Greeks. I think they were just curious bystanders, and these Gentiles saw these masses of Jews coming in from all over the world for these various feast days. This feast day of course is for the day of Passover.

John 12:20-24

"And there were certain Greeks (Gentiles) among them that came up to worship at the feast: 21. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, `Sir, we would see Jesus.' 22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. (there are some Gentiles here and they want to see you. Does Jesus except them? No way.) 23. And Jesus answered them, saying, `The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn(kernel) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it..."
Well what's Jesus saying? Unless that kernel germinates and brings forth the stem of grain and brings out the number of heads that are on that stem then that kernel stays alone. But if it dies, if it germinates, and brings forth new life, then what's the result? That whole head then becomes maybe a hundred or a hundred and twenty kernels of grain. What was Jesus alluding to? His own death, and burial when He would die. And then when He would be resurrected from the dead then these Gentiles could come into the picture, He could then be the object to their faith as a result now of His death, burial, and resurrection and really not until. So this is what Paul is referring to in II Corinthians Chapter 5.

II Corinthians 5:16

"Wherefore henceforth (from His death, burial, and resurrection) know we no man after the flesh:..."
LESSON ONE * PART III

OUR SINS HAVE ALREADY BEEN FORGIVEN

II CORINTHIANS 5:9 - 5:21

Let's begin in verse 16. So take your Bible and follow along with us because after all I've stressed over and over that I don't want anybody to go by what I say, but hopefully be able to search the Scriptures with us to see if these things are so. I remember years and years ago when Iris and I were first married, we had a young couple come into our fellowship who were from diverse denominational backgrounds and as a result they were naturally having some problems in the home. I guess it was the Lord's way of getting me ready for all of this.

Anyway, the pastor asked me if I would go out to that farm house one night a week and just teach those two people. Well I'd never done anything like that before and I was green as grass but you know sometimes you plunge in where angels fear to tread. I'll never forget the rude awakening I got when I began to point out some things from this Book and the young lady said, "Now hold it Les, I have always been told that my Church is my only authority, and not that Book." Well how are you going to overcome something like that. But we did, and both of those people came to know the Lord and they've walked with the Lord ever since.

You see the whole idea of my teaching is not that you go by what I say, but to learn, what does the Bible say. And as I've stressed so often it's just as important to see what the Bible does not say. A lot of times we have misconceptions of what the Bible says, and a lot of time it's not even in there. So anyway we're going to just teach and hopefully point out what the Scriptures really say. So many times people just gloss over their reading of the Word and don't really see what it says. Now let's begin with II Corinthians 5:16 where we left off in our last lesson. And remember when Paul starts a verse with Wherefore or Therefore he's wanting you to reflect back to what he has just said, and he has just stressed the fact that Christ died for all, and since He died for all every last human being was dead in trespasses and sin until they're brought out of that deadness by an act of God when we believe the Gospel.

II Corinthians 5:16

Wherefore (because that's all been accomplished) henceforth (now remember Paul is only talking about Christ's death, burial, and resurrection so he says, henceforth since that time)know we no man after the flesh: (now who in the world is he talking about? Well let's read on and see.) yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet
Now (this side of His death, burial, and resurrection) *henceforth know we him no more.*"

Now what's Paul driving at? Well come back with me to I Corinthians Chapter 1. Paul was constantly up against opposition of one kind or another, and some of it probably sounded real good. It's just like today. I know people can throw arguments at me that sound real good. And sometimes they put me on the defense for a little bit, but when I stop and think, "Well what does the Word say?" And then that makes all the difference in the world. Now here was what Paul was up against in verse 12.

*I Corinthians 1:12*

''*Now this I say, that every one* (the whole congregation of how many there were) *of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; (Peter) and I of Christ.'''

Well what did they mean by that? "Well I'm going by what Jesus said." Does that sound familiar? I hear it all the time. Some asked me, "Why do you emphasize Paul? I'm not going to go by what some man says, but rather what Jesus said." Well now wait a minute, remember everything that Jesus said was under the Law. Now there are things that Jesus said that we can make application, of course we can, because it's the Word of God. But for the most part everything He said were to people living under the Law of Moses. For example when the lepers were healed and cleansed by His own miracle, what did He tell the lepers to do? "Go show yourselves to the priest." All right now are you going to tell me that if someone is suddenly healed of a disease or they are suddenly well again that to confirm this they are to go to the priest? Well what priest are they going to go to?

There is no Temple worship today, we're not under the Law of Moses. And in order to make it so profoundly certain that we are no longer under the Law God prompted the Roman army to destroy the Temple. Have you ever stopped to think, "What would have happened to Christianity if the Temple would have kept right on operating?" Christianity would have never gotten off the ground. There would have been so much profound Jewish opposition that after all the Temple was viable, the priesthood was still viable, this is the only place (Jerusalem) to worship, and God knew that. So God had to have the Temple totally destroyed (in 70 AD) the priesthood was uprooted, Israel was sent out into the nations of the world so that there was no temptation what so ever to hang on to Temple worship. So this is what Paul is coming backing to here. He said since the death, burial, and resurrection, and since the revelations of the Gospel of the Grace of God then:

*II Corinthians 5:16*
"Wherefore henceforth know we no man (Christ) after the flesh:..."

We are no longer going by the things that He taught to Israel under the Law of Moses. But rather we have this whole new revelation revealed by Him from glory. Now what am I talking about? Turn to Galatians Chapter 1. These Scriptures lay it out so plain. And this is what I have to constantly in my own ministry come up against when someone tells me that they are not going to go by what some man like Paul says, that they are going to go by what Jesus says. Always remember everything He taught back in the Four Gospels was before His death, burial, and resurrection. The Twelve didn't even know that He was going to die. And after He was crucified they had no idea that He was going to be raised from the dead (Luke 18:34) Why? Because that was something that God was going to reveal back here especially to this apostle.

Galatians 1:11-19

"But I certify (or guarantee) you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (And remember Jesus Christ was now in glory) 13. For ye have heard of my conversation (manner of living) in time past in the Jew's religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church (assembly of Jewish believers at Jerusalem) of God and wasted it: 14. And profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. (Paul was a religious zealot remember) 15. But (the flip side) when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16. To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen: (Gentiles) immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, (where he received all these revelations from the ascended Lord that he could now take to the Gentile world) and returned again unto Damascus. 18. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." (and remember James wasn't one of the Twelve)

Now why is all of this in here for? To show us (Church Age believers) that as soon as God saved this Jewish religious zealot He did not permit Him to have contact with the Twelve. He purposely kept Him from them, sent him instead down to Mount Sinai in Arabia to give him these revelations, because you see had Paul gone back to Jerusalem, what do you suppose the Twelve would have drummed into him? Well, what they had been preaching. That Jesus was the Messiah of Israel, The Son of God, yes He was crucified, but God raised Him from the dead, and He's still willing to be the King of Israel if Israel will only repent.
But God says, "No, no, Paul. That's not what I want you to learn, I'm going to show you these things from my own position in Heaven. So He reveals this whole sphere of doctrine that we call Grace. And it was completely separated from Judaism, and yet an extension of it. Now, I'm always talking progressive revelation in Scripture, because everything is progressive. The same way here. As soon as Paul receives these revelations - that doesn't cancel everything that's gone before but rather it builds on it. So as the Abrahamic Covenant was given and brought Israel to the place of having the Messiah come, does that cancel the Old Testament? No it was all fulfilled. And then Israel, according to prophecy, rejected the Messiah and then God saved this man and said,

Acts 22:21b

"I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles." Well now Jesus didn't teach anything like that. Jesus certainly never taught the Twelve to go out to the Gentiles:

Matthew 10:5b

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles..."

And especially with the Gospel based on His death, burial and resurrection. He couldn't have because that hadn't taken place yet. I wish people could see that. Jesus never told those Twelve to go out and preach His death, burial and resurrection for salvation but this man, the apostle Paul, that's all he knows. Now I was thinking of another one last night in my waking hours. You know I do more studying lying on my pillow than any place else. And again the thought came last night, and I've never taught this before, but I'm going to give it to you today. You know there is no earthly headquarters for the Body of Christ, our headquarters is Heaven. But the one place on earth where Christianity did begin was not the church (or assembly in Jerusalem) but rather at Antioch.

Acts 11:26

"And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people, And the disciples were called Christian first in Antioch."

Do you see that? Antioch which was 150 to 200 miles north of Jerusalem was the place from which Paul and Barnabas were first commissioned by the Holy Spirit to go to the Gentiles up there in western Turkey and not Jerusalem. I want people to think about that. Why didn't he just go back to Jerusalem, learn everything from the Twelve, and then have Jerusalem be the place that they would jump off into the Gentile world?
Well because God wouldn't have it that way. And so even when there was a jump off place, and I don't like to call Antioch the headquarters of the Church, but it was the place from which Paul and Barnabas left. It was the place to which they went back to. It was the place from which later Paul and Silas left again to go to the Gentile world, and again they came back to Antioch. Not Jerusalem. Do you see that? Why? Well all of this is to show us that God is just keeping Judaism and Christianity so far apart even though they are connected by virtue of their beginning. And that's what we have to understand. Now coming back to II Corinthians Chapter 5, and maybe I've made my point. And this is why the apostle can write by inspiration:

**II Corinthians 5:16**

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: (and you know he's talking about Jesus as we see in the next part of the verse.) yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

And yet I ask people to analyze most of your preaching today and see where it's coming from and you will find it's from Christ's earthly ministry. Now there's nothing wrong with a certain amount of that. Absolutely I'm in agreement with that because we have to understand the story of Bethlehem, and the virgin birth. It's good for us to know all the miracles that Christ did in the midst of the Jews to prove that He was Who He said He was. It's good to understand what led to His crucifixion. It's good to know how they responded to His resurrection there in John Chapter 20 and 21. But that's not the Gospel. The Gospel of salvation comes out where Paul comes on the scene and tells us "that Christ commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, and He gave Himself for us." And that's all the man knows, the preaching of the Cross. Now this is why he's stressing it in verse 16b.

**II Corinthians 5:16b**

"...yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

Now that's loaded. Why does the Holy Spirit prompt him to say that "we have known Christ after the flesh?" I think Paul and Christ were about the same age. We know that Jesus was 30 when He began His earthly ministry, He was 33 when He was crucified. We know that the apostle Paul or Saul of Tarsus was one of the key men of the Sanhedrin, and no doubt was in his thirties as well. I think they were almost the same identical age. So Saul of Tarsus, that Pharisee of the Pharisees, was hearing all about the miracles that this Jesus of Nazareth was performing. And every time Saul would hear about more Jews following after the Messiah from Nazareth, it infuriated him because he was defending his religion. (Judaism) Then he had to defend his
religion, and later as Paul, he had to defend his apostleship. The poor guy had a lifetime of fighting didn't he? But at the first, as Saul, he had to defend his religion, and he started to stamp out every Jew that had embraced Jesus as the Messiah. But now he knows Jesus for Who He really is, and I like to show that from Acts Chapter 9. A lot of people have never seen the impact of this. In his conversion account written by Luke, most of you know the account on the road to Damascus.

Acts 9:3-5a

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (now the voice is also coming from Heaven, so the pronoun me strikes the man, `Well it must be God speaking.' Now read on.) 5. And he said, Who art thou, Lord?"

Now you want to remember the word Lord in the Jewish vocabulary was that which replaced Jehovah. They didn't even want to voice that word. So in his mind he's saying Jehovah, but with his lips he says Lord. So put it in that light.

Acts 9:5b

"...Who art thou Jehovah? (and how does Jehovah answer?) And the Lord said, I am Jesus..."

Now how would you like to have been in his shoes? Because it was Jehovah that he was serving, and it was Jesus that he was trying to stamp out and then to suddenly realize that they are One and the same. It just blew his mind, in fact it blew him blind. That's what it amounted to as he ended up blind. So they had to lead him by the hand into Damascus. But once Saul of Tarsus saw Who Jesus really was he became the unstoppable dynamo that carried Christianity to the Gentiles. Oh he had his times of discouragement as we saw in a recent lesson, as he was even nigh unto death itself. He was burdened with all the care of those Gentile believers, but they couldn't stop him until finally Nero had to take his head off, and that's the only thing that stopped him.

So don't lose sight of the fact that when Paul speaks of knowing Christ in the flesh back here in II Corinthians 5:16, Paul knew all about Him, although I don't think he had a visible confrontation with Him. At least there's nothing in Scripture that would indicate that. But Saul knew what was going on in Israel. He knew what was going on up in Galilee and I have to think at times he was on the outer perimeters of some of the crowds that were following Jesus, and it was just burning him up. Remember Saul thought that Jesus was an impostor, He was blasphemer, He was a false teacher, and it was just destroying the religion of the God of Abraham. But once he was confronted
on the road to Damascus the man did a total 180 degree turn, and now he can say, "Henceforth we know him no more." Oh if we could just get people to realize this. There's nothing wrong with studying Christ's earthly ministry, don't misunderstand me. But listen, that is not where it's at for us. Where it's at for us is that which follows His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. Now let's go on to verse 17.

**II Corinthians 5:17a**

"*Therefore* (since we're no longer hanging onto Christ's earthly ministry, but rather we're hanging everything on His death, burial, and resurrection) *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:*"

Creation is a better term for the English language, it means the same in the Greek. So we become a whole new creation of God. Now going back up to "*if any man be in Christ,*" We need to look at that in I Corinthians 12:13:

**I Corinthians 12:13**

"*For by one Spirit* (the Holy Spirit) *are we all* (every believer) *baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*" (also see Ephesians 4:5)

So how do we get into Christ? By believing in our heart the Gospel and by letting the Holy Spirit do His work. The Holy Spirit places us into the Body of Christ. Now coming back to verse 17 of our text. So now we're a new creation, we're a work of God. Also remember that that part of us which has to deal with eternity is invisible. You and I or any other human can't touch the invisible. Only God can deal in that area, so then in the area of the invisible God has done a work of creation. Also remember that the old Adamic nature had to be crucified, he had to be put to death. Now again that's in the spiritual realm, that's an invisible part of us, so only God can do that. Only God could put our old Adam to death in the crucifixion with Christ. Now the same way only God can give us that new creative personality, the new nature, because again it's in the area of the invisible. So we are a new work of creation which God alone can do, then look at this change.

**II Corinthians 5:17b**

"*...he is a new creature:* (creation) *old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.*"

Every believer is suddenly going to have a change of appetites, a change of lifestyle, a change in behavior, a change in attitude. Why? Because we're a new person, we're
different than what we were. Now that doesn't give us a halo around our head, or make us sinless, or anything like that, but we are now the result of the creative work of the Creator God. We now have a whole new concept in life. I remember years ago there was a man that was my same age who spent every Saturday night in the bar. He came to my class one night, and as we were sitting having a cup of coffee together he said, "Les, why don't I ever see you in the bar on Saturday night?" And I said, "For the same reason I don't see you in church on Sunday morning". Well that's exactly the way it is. They have their own lifestyle, they have their appetites, and it is so totally different from ours. It's as different as daylight from dark. So this is why I question professing Christians who see nothing wrong with doing everything that the world does. Hey, there's got to be a change in attitude, and actions, and if nothing has changed then I have to doubt that anything has happened. Remember this says it all. If we are the work of a creative act of God then old things are passed away, and everything becomes new.
LESSON ONE * PART IV

OUR SINS HAVE ALREADY BEEN FORGIVEN

II CORINTHIANS 5:9 - 5:21

Now let's begin with II Corinthians 5:17,18. So get your Bible, and compare Scripture with Scripture. Remember I think God is going to hold us accountable for this question, "What have you done with the Scriptures?" Paul says that so often in his writings, "Thus saith the Scripture," Never go by what I say, but I invite you to see what the Scriptures say because this is what we have to rely on. So let's continue on with this whole concept of the difference it made when Christ died for the sins of the whole world, for every human being that has ever lived. Christ has already forgiven them, and now in this series of verses we're going to run into yet another word that deals with our relationship with God as believers, and that is "reconciliation." Reconciliation has been totally accomplished because of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

II Corinthians 5:17a

"Therefore if any man..." (anyone, and that includes children)

A lady wrote recently that the moment her 7-year-old hears our theme music he comes running and flops down on the floor in front of the television. We have a lot of kids that are learning from us, and this has always been the scope of my teaching. Hopefully I try to make things interesting enough for even the highly educated adults and yet make it simple and plain enough that kids can understand. Now that's quite a span I know, but nevertheless I just hope and pray that even our young people will begin to catch the idea that this is an interesting Book. Now back to the text.

II Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: (creation) old things are passed away; (the old life style, the old habits) behold, all things are become new.

18. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, (His finished work of the Cross, His death on the Cross, His shed blood, and His power in resurrection) and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;"

Now I don't think I have to explain reconciliation to an adult, but to our children it bears taking a moment to explain. Whenever reconciliation becomes necessary there first has to have been a separation. In other words, someone who has never separated or distanced themselves from someone, certainly there is no room for reconciliation,
that's understandable isn't it? In other words, bringing it into to our every day life, you take a husband and wife who have never had any difficulties, they've never had any idea of separation then there's no point in reconciliation for them. But you take a couple that has had marital problems and have drifted apart, and here they are just almost enemies. They almost detest each other. Well then they are candidates for a reconciliation, and the whole idea of marriage counseling is to bring these two people back to a common ground.

The same thing has happened in the realm of the spirit with man and God. God created man in His own image, had fellowship with him in the garden, and everything was super wasn't it? God could walk with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day, and it was sweet fellowship, and everything was fine. But then all of a sudden sin entered and man and God were suddenly totally separated because of sin, so they were alienated. What once was together has now been totally separated, and this great gulf that stands between God and man has to be bridged, and only God can do it. Man can't make reconciliation, God has to. So the work of the Cross has brought in reconciliation to man and God. Come back to Romans 3, and here the word reconciliation isn't used as such, but nevertheless we get the whole picture. I've always said that the first step of faith for the lost person to take is to believe what God says about his condition. And that is that they are breakers of God's Law, and they are in a situation where they can do nothing pleasing in His sight. Here in Romans 3:23 it says that in such compact language.

**Romans 3:23**

"For all (that includes every human being that's ever lived) have sinned and come short of the glory of God;"' That's a blanket statement. You can't overcome it any other way but by believing the Gospel. Now verse 24.

**Romans 3:24-25a**

"Being justified freely by his grace (not by anything that we do) through the redemption (or that process of paying the price and buying something back) that is in Christ Jesus: 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,..."

Now I know a lot of people don't like to hear the word, "**BLOOD**" any more, but we can't go around it, because there has to be that abiding faith in the fact that when Christ died He shed His Divine, precious, sinless blood. And that was the requirement from the Creator Himself, that there had to be a blood payment for mans sin debts, and you can't escape that. Now continuing on.
Romans 3:25,26

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he (Christ) might be just, (and absolutely fair) and (be) the justifier (or the One who precipitates, and declares us as justified.) of him which believeth..."

Now you can't add anything to that. I can't judge hearts, I don't know how much God is going to allow, but if I understand my Bible correctly, God is not going to stand for any human being to add to what He has done. It's going to be against God's nature, and it's going to make Him a liar. If He said that He has done everything that needs to be done for our salvation, and then man comes along and says, "Yeah, but I've got to do this and that." Now I hope it isn't that serious I really do. I don't think God will bend at all with what mankind tries to add for our salvation. I don't think God can bend. He has given us in His Word that He has done it all, and then to have someone come along and say, "Yeah but I've done this and I've done that to add to it." That reasoning is just not in the Bible in this Age of Grace. Verse 26 again. So the justification comes to:

Romans 3:26b.

"...him which believeth in Jesus."

And of course when Paul speaks of believing in Jesus he's speaking of His death, burial and resurrection. Now if you'll come back to II Corinthians Chapter 5 you'll find this all tied up in this same concept of reconciliation. It all means the same thing that God is going to do whatever this sinner over here needs to have done on his behalf to bring him back to Himself for full reconciliation. But it doesn't stop there, because Paul says in the last half of verse 18:

II Corinthians 5:18b

"and hath given to us (every reconciled believer) the ministry of reconciliation;"

Now what does that mean? We have to tell a lost world, we have to tell our neighbors, our friends, and our loved ones that the work of the Cross has made it possible for them to be reconciled to God. They can close that gap, they no longer have to go through life and face eternity separated from a Holy God. Everything has been done to bring them to that place of reconciliation. You know that old hymn, Jesus Paid It All, indeed He did. He's paid it all and then we come along and say, "Yeah, but we've got
to do this or that, rather than just simply believe the Gospel for our salvation." Now verse 19:

**II Corinthians 5:19**

"To wit (that is to say) *that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*; (so far as the reconciliation of lost man and forgiveness is concerned, it is already accomplished. Now we'll comment on that a little further in a moment.) *and hath committed unto us* (you and I as believers) *the word of reconciliation.*"

In other words, we are to let a lost world know everything has already been done on their behalf, and all they have to do is believe. **Now when I say that all the sins of the world have been forgiven, and that God has totally paid for them with the atoning blood of Christ, don't get the mistaken idea then that lost persons who are never reconciled will not have to give an account of sins just because I claim that they are already forgiven. Let's go to the Book of Revelation for a moment and I'll show you that they do.** Granted, for the lost person to understand that his sins are forgiven, and they are atoned for, and that Christ died for him, and if he spurns it and in unbelief he turns his back on it then, yes, he's going to have to give an account for every thing that he does in the human body as a lost person. We pick that up here in Revelation Chapter 20 as the lost come before the great White Throne. Remember that every unbeliever from Cain until the last one at the end of the ages is going to come up before this great judgment throne of God. **Now this is not the Bema Seat that Christians will stand before God to receive their rewards, but rather this judgment is only for the lost. This judgment is only for unbelievers, you and I are not going to be there. We're not going to see loved ones who may be coming up here as unbelievers. That would be awful. We will not be at the great White Throne. But for these lost of the ages:**

**Revelation 20:12**

"*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;* (now the God here of course will be the Lord Jesus Christ, the Righteous Judge) *and the books* (plural) *were opened: and another book* (singular) *was opened, which is the book of life:* (now when it's evidenced that the lost person's name is not in the book of life then Christ turns to the record. He turns to the books that are a record of their life here on earth) *and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*"

Now the lost who find themselves in this situation can no longer claim that they were paid for by the blood of the Cross, because it's too late. So now they come up before
God and they're going to have to face those sins as God now passes on the judgment of those things written in the books, according to their works. So never misunderstand me when I teach that all the sins of the world are forgiven, and that lost people don't have to face them, because that only applies if they become believers. If they don't believe the Gospel, and appropriate what God has already done for them with the finished work of the Cross, then they will have to face their sins. A couple of lessons ago we talked about how congress appropriates money for different projects, and how that money just sits there waiting for someone to draw on it. Well it's the same way for salvation. **Remember that account for salvation sits there already paid for and is available for anyone to draw on the eternal life account just by believing.** And if they won't believe the Gospel for their salvation then they are going to have to face their sins as an unbeliever at the Great White Throne Judgment.

*II Corinthians 5:19a*

"To wit, (that is to say) **that God was in Christ,...**"

It was the Creator of the universe who hung on that Cross. There are people who have never contemplated that. That Jesus of the Cross at Calvary was the same God of Genesis 1:1. who called everything into being. He had to be or He could have never tasted death for every man. I had a person come to the ranch years ago, and the first question he asked me was, **Who in the world is Jesus Christ anyway?** I've said over and over, if only more people would ask that question. And my first answer to that question is, **He's the Creator of the universe. That's who He is. He is the God of Creation, He's the same God only He took on flesh, and He went the way of the Cross.**" So Paul is telling us again that God was in Christ:

*II Corinthians 5:19b*

"...reconciling the world unto himself, (bringing it back to Himself, after He lost it in Adam) **not imputing their trespasses unto them;**"

Now that means what it says. Until that lost person dies, and has lost his opportunity for believing the Gospel, I don't think his sins are being held against him. God is ready to cancel those sins in a moment, but when they leave this life never having believed then here they stand at the Great White Throne. Everything that they have ever said or done as a lost person is going to be brought up against them. Yes it's scary, I know it is, but there's no reason for it because it's such a simple thing to believe and trust the Gospel. Now in the next verse we have one of the greatest concepts I think that Paul puts out in all of his writings. And that is where are you and I in the whole scheme of things as believers? Now you know we hear so much about the great commission. I think every Church bulletin board has the great commission
posted. Well what is the great commission? I maintain it's not so much the one in Matthew.

Matthew 28:19

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" That was given to the Twelve disciples provided the Nation of Israel could have maintained her relationship with God, and become the vehicle between God and the Gentiles as outlined in the Old Testament, but we know they didn't so God turned to the Gentiles with Paul as their apostle. So today this verse in II Corinthians just fits beautifully for the believers in the Body of Christ, and here it is:

II Corinthians 5:20a

"Now then we (every believer) are ambassadors..."

Now I trust that you have taken at least one semester of high school government, because that's when I first learned the term ambassador. What's an ambassador? He's a representative of some government, but he's living in a foreign country. I usually use the analogy of Washington D. C. as the capitol of our nation, and our ambassador for example to Japan is living in Tokyo. Now he's an American living in that foreign country, but he's a representative of our government in Washington D. C. In the late 70's, I think it was, there was a book that hit the bestseller list called The Ugly American. It was more or less an expose of a lot of our diplomatic people who were not good representatives of our government. Their lifestyle was anything but exemplary. But the whole idea was that our ambassadors and foreign service people are to be visible representatives of our government here in Washington. The Japanese people for example should be able to watch our ambassador or foreign service people and say, "Now that is a typical American."

That's the whole idea, they are a representative. Now then Paul says you and I as believers living here, in the here and now, are in the same kind of a role. We are left here as ambassadors of our homeland which is in Heaven. Now let's pick up this concept in Colossians Chapter 1. Here in this chapter Paul has been praying for the these Gentile believers up there in Colosse in Asia Minor.

Colossians 1:12,13

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet (or has prepared us) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear
"Son." Where is that Kingdom? Well it's in Heaven. So we are now citizens of Heaven because we are members of that Kingdom of Christ. Now granted that Kingdom is one day coming back on the earth and we're going to come with him at the end of the Tribulation. And I believe we're going to reign and rule with Him as members of that Kingdom in Heaven. Now back to Philippians, and I think this just puts the cap on it. Now verse 20.

**Philippians 3:20**

"For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:"

Do you have the picture? The moment we become believers, and we're placed into the Body of Christ, we are also made members of the Kingdom of Christ in Heaven, but we're left here as ambassadors. So now what's our job? To represent our homeland. We are representatives of Heaven itself, we become the ministers of reconciliation. Now if you want a great commission, what a dandy this one is. This one anybody can do. I don't think that I would go around baptizing people. I know we had a famous individual doing that years back in swimming pools and bath tubs etc., but I'm not comfortable with that. But I have no trouble telling the world that Christ has already reconciled you unto Himself so believe it. What a commission, and what an opportunity. Now back to our text:

**II Corinthians 5:20,21**

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21. For he hath made him (Christ) to be sin (He took on the sin of the world) for us, who knew no sin; (that precious sinless Lamb of God, The eternal, Sovereign, Creator God took on the sins of the world for us) that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Now a lot of people are afraid of that word "Righteousness." They think that denotes a holiness that makes you so Heavenly minded that you are no earthly good. Well that's not the case at all. You see when the righteousness of God is imparted to the believer, it's simply means, "That now God sees you, God sees me clothed in the righteousness of God Himself. He doesn't look on the old sinner Les Feldick, nor the sinner whoever you are, but rather He looks on you and He sees the righteousness of Christ."
LESSON TWO * PART I

TRUTH PERSONIFIED

II CORINTHIANS 6:1 - 8:6

Now in our last lesson we finished Chapter 5, so we'll review a little and then pick up with Chapter 6. I've told you before that I'm not a pastor or theologian, but rather just a layman, and if I can teach the Scriptures where anybody can understand them whether they're young or old then you take what you have learned and do with it what the Lord would have you do. So now if you will take your Bible and turn to II Corinthians Chapter 5 and let's take a brief review where we closed in our last program how that Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, is just constantly emphasizing the fact that Christ is no longer just dealing with the Nation of Israel, but now the Gospel of salvation that He gave to Paul is now going to the whole world. And as we saw up in verse 14

**II Corinthians 5:14**

"*For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, (the whole human race) then were all dead:*"

And we've taught that from day one that when Adam fell, then you and I inherited that Adamic nature. So every human being that has ever come into the human family has been a child of Adam and we are a fallen race, we are spiritually dead. Then as we came down through these verses, we saw that it was the crucified and resurrected Christ that becomes the object of our faith. Not the Jesus of Nazareth in His earthly ministry, although He's One and the same in Person, but yet we have to constantly emphasize that our Gospel of salvation is based on that which was revealed to this apostle after Christ's resurrection and ascension. I feel that this being so totally neglected in so much of our preaching and teaching today. It's these revelations from the ascended Lord that now become our primary role of believing. And that's what he's saying here in verse 16:

**II Corinthians 5:16**

"*Wherefore henceforth know we know man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.*"

I think Paul is making reference to the fact that as Saul of Tarsus, as Saul the persecutor, Saul the religious Pharisee, he knew all about Jesus of Nazareth. He knew about His ministry, but now you see after his revelation on that road to Damascus, and
down at Arabia then he no longer refers to Christ in His earthly ministry. Sometime
we hear people say, "We don't like Paul's teaching, because he doesn't even mention
the virgin birth, or Bethlehem, or Christ's earthly teachings. " Well, of course not.
Why should he? That's all been established in the early revelations, we don't have to
have it again. We understand that Christ was born at Bethlehem, born of a virgin, and
went the way of the Cross, but when it comes to the post resurrection doctrines and
revelations, Paul is the only one that reveals these precious truths to us. Now also look
at verse 17.

*II Corinthians 5:17*

"*Therefore* (when we understand and believe that the Christ of the Cross, the Christ
who has been raised from the dead is now the object of our faith, then we become a
new creation because at that time God worked a work of regeneration, a work of
justification, and all the things that go with it. It's all part and parcel of that great plan
of salvation how that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead.) *if any man be
in Christ, he is a new creature: (creation) old things are passed away; behold, all
things are become new,"

Now this is just a good introduction for what we are going to be seeing in Chapter 6,
maybe not in this lesson but at least in the next one, and that is this whole business of
separation from the world. And that's the reason we must be separated because now
we are a new creation in Christ Jesus. And that leads toward the end of Chapter 5 with
that tremendous responsibility of every Grace Age believer that we are now
ambassadors for Christ.

*II Corinthians 5:20*

"*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us:
we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."*

We are to let the world know that they have already been reconciled to God. It's done,
it's finished, and it's our job to let them know it. Then we come on into Chapter 6, and
beginning with verse 1.

*II Corinthians 6:1a*

"*We then as workers together..."*

In other words, when our government sends an ambassador to a foreign country he
doesn't totally isolate himself, he stays in communication with the home government.
They are constantly feeding information back and forth, because after all he is an
employee of the government and so that's why after teaching us that we are to be ambassadors in Chapter 5, he comes into Chapter 6 and says:

**II Corinthians 6:1**

"We then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

God didn't save us to sit, He didn't save us just to escape hell fire, but we are saved to serve. We are to be useful in God's vineyard in whatever particular capacity that He may give to each one of us. Now in verse 2 Paul is going to quote from the Old Testament from the Book of Isaiah.

**II Corinthians 6:2**

"(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured (or helped) thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

Do you remember back in the Book of Acts the King Agrippa and Felix account after Paul had witnessed to them?

**Acts 24:25**

"And as he (Paul) reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.'"

**Acts 26:28**

"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'"

Well you see that is never the teaching of Scripture. The Scripture says, "today if you hear my voice harden not your heart. Today is the day of salvation" for that person who has not yet entered in. So Paul appropriately quotes from the Book of Isaiah and Psalms. Now verse 3.

**II Corinthians 6:3**

"Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry (that is his ministry, our ministry of reconciliation) be not blamed;"
Now I think there is nothing that the devil likes better than to besmirch or to put a smudge on a ministry. I don't care whether it's mine or anybody else's, or whether it's your local church or a denomination. You see, as soon as the devil can convince the world of our faults and failures then he gloats, the world gloats, and of course Paul was constantly aware of that same danger. He didn't want anything to cause people to say, "Well look what he's doing?" Paul wanted to keep it blameless as much as he could possibly do so. This is what Paul is saying, "he's not going to give offense in any thing," lest someone could turn around and truthfully accuse him.

You know truthfully, Paul was up against it constantly wasn't he? You know I'm always saying and you're going to hear me say it again today. "**Paul has to constantly defend his apostleship.**" He was constantly being falsely accused, he was constantly being submarined by the Judaisers from Israel, by the pagan world, and even by believing Jews from the element of Peter and the Twelve that he was an impostor because he didn't require Law-keeping for these pagan believers. They thought he was a false teacher, and he didn't have the credentials, if he could have just had letters of commendation from Peter, then he wouldn't have had so many of these problems. But you see he didn't have that. All he had for the proof of his ministry were these pagans that had been saved and set on the Rock Christ Jesus, and their lives were proving it. We're going to see this now as we come on through these following verses yet in II Corinthians.

Now I should have stressed this in the beginning that the 1st letter to the Corinthians was a letter that had to correct some horrible problems among the Corinthians, the chief being this gross immorality. It was so gross that even the pagan Gentiles didn't do it, and yet a member of the Corinthian Church was guilty. So the main thrust of that 1st letter was to correct some terrible things that were going on in that local assembly. Now this 2d letter comes within the next year of the 1st one. I want to emphasize that because as you see the language coming through these next few chapters I think you'll understand why he is saying what he does. Now verse 4, and remember Paul's not going to do anything to blame the ministry:

**II Corinthians 6:4**

"**But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of** (not of Jerusalem or Judaism, not of Peter and the eleven, but Paul is the minister of) **God, in much patience, in affections, in necessities, in distresses.**"

Now remember we went through all of his suffering in one of our studies not long ago? Paul was suffering constantly with all the attacks of Satan, privation, sickness, threats on his life, and here he mentions some more of them. It was just a constant battle in the apostle's life against the forces that were opposing him. Verse 5.
II Corinthians 6:5,6a

"In stripes, in imprisonment, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; (Now in verse 6 I'm going to take a little time to explain again.) 6. By pureness, by knowledge,..."

Now we're going to have to look at a few more verse aren't we? Come back with me to the Book of Galatians Chapter 1 first. Now we'll be teaching the Book of Galatians verse by verse as soon as we finish II Corinthians. Remember, we came here to look at the word `knowledge.'

Galatians 1:11,12

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ."

Galatians 1:16-18

"To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; (Gentiles) immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. 18. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."

Now this is all background for that knowledge of revelation that the man is always talking about. Paul had a knowledge of the mysteries. Now come on over a few pages to the Book of Ephesians Chapter 3:3.

Ephesians 3:3,4

"How that by revelation (from the ascended Lord) he made known unto me (now remember this is Holy Spirit inspired, the man isn't bragging or giving himself credit for anything.) the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge (as a result of the revelations) in the mystery of Christ)"

Now come back if you will to II Corinthians Chapter 6.

II Corinthians 6:6

"By pureness, by knowledge, (as a result of these supernatural revelations from the ascended Lord) by longsufferings, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,"
In other words did Paul ever put on a false front? Did the apostle Paul ever come into a pagan city with a veneer? No. He came in with that heart full of revelation and knowledge in the power and working of the Holy Spirit. Now verse 7.

II Corinthians 6:7

"By the word of truth,..."

Now we're living in an age where the What is truth in the intellectual community, the politically correct are always making emphasis of, "What is truth?" There are a lot of universities that will have it over the doors of one of their great halls, What is truth? Well I've said it for over 20 years, and I have not changed my mind. "The perfect definition of truth is Jesus Christ! He is the Truth." Now let's back that up with some Scriptures. Come all the way back to John's gospel Chapter 1:17:

John 1:17

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Christ is the epitome of truth. Now who is the direct opposite of truth? Well since you are in John come on over to Chapter 8:44 We need to arm ourselves with the Scriptures. If Christ is True then what is the opposite. The lie! Here in this verse Jesus is speaking to the Jews of His day and says:

John 8:44

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts (or desires) of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it."

Now remember that verse. I think most of you know it, that the devil is the originator of every lie. Now let's head back to the Old Testament for a moment. We'll stop first at Exodus Chapter 20. A lot of times we know these things so well, and we get so acquainted and comfortable with some of these Scriptures that we really lose the full impact of them. And the one I want you to see right now in the idea of truth and lie is this commandment in Exodus Chapter 20:16:

Exodus 20:16

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."
Now what's a false witness? It's a lie! In other words God could have just as well said, "never lie." It would have meant the same thing because when you bear false witness, you're lying. When you're lying you are being false. Now let's see how the father of lying began. Come back with me to the Book of Genesis Chapter 3. You all know the setting. I firmly believe that Adam was not in proximity with Eve. I think the old devil caught her at a moment when she was by herself, and probably close enough to get a good eye full of the tree that was forbidden. But anyway as Satan and Eve are looking at that tree, look what Satan says in verse 4.

**Genesis 3:4**

"And the serpent said unto the woman, 'Ye shall not surely die:'"

Well now what did Truth tell them? Now remember the Lord that walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden was Christ in His Old Testament personality. So what did Truth tell Adam and Eve?

**Genesis 2:17**

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

And remember the liar said, "Ye shall not surely die." Now verse 5. Now he's stacking lie on top of lie.

**Genesis 3:5**

"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

It was the opposite of what the devil told them. They fell from their place of dominion. It's the lie! Remember this lie carries all the way through human history, when we come to the end of that 1000 year reign of Christ in the Kingdom age. Those generations of kids that have been born during that period have not had to deal with Satan since he has been locked up in the pit. But these kids who have grown into adults will be presented with the advisory who will be released for a short period of time. How is Satan going to get them to fall so en-masse? By the same lie. "You've had it so good, you've had it perfect, you've had a glorious 1000 years, but listen folks, wouldn't you just like to go one step higher and be like God?" The Lie! It will be the same way in the Tribulation let's look at that for a moment in II Thessalonians Chapter 2:9 Here we have the description from the pen of the apostle Paul of the Anti-christ.
**II Thessalonians 2:9,10**

"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, (Christ) that they might be saved."

You can almost always use the Word Christ and Truth synonymously. Very seldom it won't work, most of the time it will. Now verse 11.

**II Thessalonians 2:11**

"And for this cause (because they rejected salvation) God shall send them strong delusion, (He's going to take away their ability to comprehend Truth during the Tribulation) that they should believe a lie:"

During that time the world is going to believe the lie of the father of all lies. Now in the short time we have left let's come back to II Corinthians. And so Paul says, that he not coming with deceitfulness, not coming with the power of a lie, but rather by:

**II Corinthians 6:7**

"By the word of truth, (which is the Gospel of Christ) by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left."

Now you know Paul has a way of using contemporary things to make a point. A lot of time he uses the Roman soldier. Now in battle what did the Roman soldier carry in his hand? His weapon in his right hand, and the shield in the left. Those were the two items that carried the soldier into battle. Paul's making that same analogy but instead of a sword and a shield, what do we have in both hands? Righteousness. Romans Chapter 3 and drop down to verse 22. Oh how this all fits together. This isn't something that only a few believers can have. This is for every believer.

**Romans 3:22**

"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (between Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, black and white. It makes no difference. The righteousness of God has been imputed and covers every believer."
LESSON TWO * PART II

TRUTH PERSONIFIED

II CORINTHIANS 6:1 - 8:6

As most of you know we're just an informal Bible class, and as I stand before you and teach I see people from many different denominations, but remember there are no denominations in glory. There is only one Bible, and as we'll see when we get into Ephesians there is:

Ephesians 4:4,5

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (I Corinthians 12:13)

So there is not much room for all these differences of opinion when we come down to the truth of Scripture. So now let's get right back into our study in II Corinthians and let's begin with verse 8. We finished with verse 7 and the word "Truth" in our last lesson, and how Paul came only in the name of truth which is also the name of Christ. Now you come into verse 8 - he came -

II Corinthians 6:8

"By honour and dishonour, (there were those who were constantly besmirching his name) by evil report and good report: as deceivers, (by some) and yet true;"

I've discovered that I've missed so much in these Corinthians letters over the years. But as I prepare to teach these letters I've discovered that these little letters are so loaded, especially if you just get into them and dig. Now let's look at verse 8 for a moment.

II Corinthians 6:8b

"...as deceivers, and yet true;"

Who else came up against this very same attitude of His peers? Well Christ did. Isn't that exactly what the Lord had to put up with? Come back with me to John's Gospel Chapter 7 again. In this chapter the Lord went up against the same thing that the apostle Paul and you and I do yet today. Human nature has not changed one bit. Just because it's 2000 years ago doesn't mean it's changed.

John 7:10-12
"But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? 12. And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, `Nay; but he deceiveth the people.'"

Now that was what Jesus was being accused of, and here He was as Truth personified and they even accused Him of being deceptive. Come on over to Chapter 8 where we were in our last lesson concerning the word truth in verse 44. But let's go to verse 52.

**John 8:52,53**

"Then said the Jews unto him, `Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets: and thou sayest, If a man keep my sayings, he shall never taste of death. 53. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?'" The Jews are doubting everything that Jesus says. Now verse 57.

**John 8:57**

"Then said the Jews unto him, (and can't you just sense the scorn, as they were thinking, `who do you think you are?) `Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?'"

Do you see that? You have scorn and ridicule, and they accused Him of being a master deceiver. Now the apostle Paul was up against that same thing. Everywhere he went there were his detractors who would ridicule and scorn him, and yet he had to continue on. Now back to II Corinthians Chapter 6, and verse 9.

**II Corinthians 6:9a**

"As unknown, and yet well known;..."

Now there again you just stop and think about it. Here he was one of the top Pharisees in Judaism. Oh, Paul was well known among the Jewish religious leaders, but outside of Palestine who had ever heard of Saul of Tarsus? No one! And so he was well known and yet unknown. So Paul comes into these areas of Asia Minor and Greece, Athens and Corinth as a relative unknown. Now continuing on.

**II Corinthians 6:9b,10a**
"...as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; (he was always threatened with his life.) 10. As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich:..."

Now again stop and think? What had happened? He had been rich. He says in Galatians that he profited more than his equals in the Jewish religion. I think Saul of Tarsus was wealthy. He probably had one of the better homes in Jerusalem, and yet the Book of Philippians tells us that he cast all that aside and counted it as dung for the sake of the Gospel.

**II Corinthians 6:10b**

"...as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Well now let's just look at the total opposite of Christendom today by going back to Revelation Chapter 3 and look at the last of the seven Churches - the letter to the Laodiceans. My goodness how this just tells it like it is. What a condemnation the Lord Jesus puts on this congregation.

**Revelation 3:17**

"Because thou sayest, `I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;' and knowest not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:"(spiritually)

That's most of Christendom today, isn't it? They are so wealthy. They have these huge sanctuaries, huge fellowship halls, gymnasiums, swimming pools, tennis courts, you name and they have it. But where are they spiritually for the most part? Now I never make a blanket judgment, but for the most part these same congregations are spiritually dead. Now you come back to the apostle Paul - he had the opposite. Paul came from that wealth, he came from that high religious experience, and for the sake of the Gospel he became as poor as a church mouse. Now back to II Corinthians. Now we're to come to an area where I wish we had more time to chase it all the way up from the Book of Genesis. We'll try, we'll come as far as we can. Now don't lose sight of the spiritual level of the Corinthian Church. Where were they? **Babes in Christ.** They were still carnal, they were not Paul's pride and joy like the Ephesians or the Philippians were. But in spite of that I want you to see the man's love for these carnal believers.

**II Corinthians 6:11,12**
"O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, (I've been able to speak to you) our heart is enlarged. (His love for these people was just enveloping them in spite of their failures.) 12. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels." (the innermost being, the heart.)

In other words, the Gospel had taken hold of these Corinthians enough to bring them out of their paganism. They had separated themselves from their pagan background to a degree, but they were still carnal and had a long way to go. Now verse 13.

II Corinthians 6:13

"Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged."

In other words, be ready to just open yourselves to the truths that this man was bringing them. Now here we come to kind of a touchy situation. People don't like to talk about this anymore. We're living in a time when this is almost blasé. But you know what Paul is talking about in verse 14? Separation.

II Corinthians 6:14a

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:" Now that doesn't mean that unbelievers are awful. I always have to define the word, "ungodly." A lot of people think that ungodly means people down on skid row, or maybe in prostitution. No. To be ungodly is to take the first two letters of the word and set them aside, and what does un always mean? Without. So someone who is ungodly is someone who is simply without God in their life. They may be the prime example of citizenship, but they are still without God. So the same way here. Just because Paul calls them unbelievers doesn't mean that they're the pits. They may be perfectly good people, more moral than a lot of Christians could ever hope to be. But they are still unbelievers, they are without faith. Always remember without faith it's impossible to please God.

Now get the picture here. I'm not saying that we're talking about two diverse people. Here's someone who is a Christian, and here she marries someone down in the gutter. No, no. We're talking about people who may be on equal level in society, but one is a believer and the other is an unbeliever. Paul says by inspiration that it won't work to be unequally yoked. Now the Scripture always makes things so plain. Come back with me to the Book of Deuteronomy, and as you read the Old Testament you have to remember that Israel was a farming society. They still lived back when animals were used for beasts of burden and so forth. So there's a lot of correlation between the
agriculture of the day and even the spiritual understanding. So now when Paul says, "Be ye not unequally yoked," what does the word yoked immediately bring to mind? Well the beast of burden out in the field plowing. That's what a yoke did, it put two oxen together so they could pull in unison. Now look at Deuteronomy Chapter 22 verse 9 and 10. And this was part of Israel's Law. Remember the admonition is still the same today. "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers."

Deuteronomy 22:9,10

"Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers (different) seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled. (the Law said you couldn't have a vineyard of grapes and sow something else that was still able to cross-pollinate, because they would have a rogue crop) 10. Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together."

Now can you picture an ox and a little donkey pulling a plow together? That poor little donkey would just be working his tail off to keep up with that big ox. It wasn't that the Jewish people were actually doing this, at least I can't envision that they were, but the lesson that it was teaching was that as soon as you have an unequal yoke then you have something that is ridiculous. And an ox and a little donkey is as ridiculous as you can get, and it's simply an unequal yoke.

Now the next one in verse 11 and 12 you will smile at. Because with our technology you now throw wool in the washer and it doesn't draw up and shrink like it used to. I can remember when I was a kid that if something that was woolen got washed accidentally then it was done for. But now here is the admonition. Don't make a garment that was part wool and part linen. Why? When they washed it the thing would be all out of shape, and it would look ridiculous, and that was the Law. Now I don't think many Jews were trying to do this, but it was that God, by telling them this, was teaching them a lesson. Don't mix things that won't work together.

Now coming back to II Corinthians. I know that when most people look at this verse the only thing that they think about is an unequal marriage. Listen, it doesn't have to stop with marriage. It can enter into anything where people have to work together for a common cause. As soon as you put any unbeliever and a believer together you're just as unequally yoked as that ox with a donkey or making a garment with linen and wool - it's the same thing.

Now remember, I'm not a marriage counselor or pastor and don't pretend to be, but you have no idea how many people call me with their marital problems. And invariably do you know what the problem was? Unequally yoked one way or another, and their problems began before they ever got married. In fact I'll never forget, one
young lady was crying her heart out that her husband had become a wife beater and all
that, and I asked her, "Didn't you know that he had that potential when you were
going together?" She said, "Well maybe a little bit." I said, "Then why did you go
ahead and marry him?" She said, "Well he was a star football player." Now I have
nothing against football players, but listen that's a mighty poor criteria for husband
material. Now a football player can be a good husband, but to chose one to be your
husband just because he's a star is just as ridiculous as you can get. That again is being
unequally yoked.

But listen, the problems that people walk into with their eyes wide open thinking they
can change the person somewhere down the road. Listen, people don't change. Iris and
I have talked about that in all the years that we've known people. Except for what
salvation does for people, people do not change. We just don't change. So when you
began with an unequal yoke, then you're beat from day one. There was a day when
Iris and I thought that we'd like to make one more move and have a ranch in
Colorado. So we were looking around and stopped at this one realtor and he gave us
some rule of thumb, and I love rules of thumb. He said, "Mister, let me tell you
something. If you can buy a ranch at the rate of $1,000 for every cow/calf pair that
you intend to run on the property, then you have a good chance of making it in
ranching. But if you go out and spend $2,000 for every cow/calf pair then you're beat
before you start." Well that's just the way it is with marriage. A lot of people enter into
a marriage relationship and they're beat before they start. And why are the beat?
They're unequally yoked. But like I said, it doesn't stop with marriage, it can be in
business, or where two or more people have to work for a common cause.

**II Corinthians 6:14**

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath
righteousness with unrighteousness? (what have you got there? Two distinct
opposites.) and what communion hath light with darkness?" (the two will not
cohabit.)

You are either going to have light or you're going to have darkness. Now verse 15.

**II Corinthians 6:15a**

"And what concord (or accord) hath Christ with Belial?"

Now this is the only place in the whole New Testament that the word Belial is used.
But it is used several times in the Old Testament. I used to think that it was a
reference to some pagan god, but it isn't. The word Belial means something that is
worthless. Now just analyze that a moment. If we have Christ Who is the epitome of
everything great. He is the epitome of goodness and Grace, and righteousness, and majesty, and we're going to put that alongside of something that is worthless? It's ridiculous isn't it? It's just as ridiculous as putting a little donkey beside an ox.

II Corinthians 6:15b

"...or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

I can't imagine two such people living under the same roof. Now that would take a lot of Grace to have to live with an infidel. And I suppose an infidel would say the same thing about having to live with a believer. They are two totally opposites, and they cannot pull together. Now verse 16.

II Corinthians 6:16

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; (our physical human bodies) as God hath said, `I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.'"

That's the promise we have as believers. The unbeliever can't claim that, because it's not true for him. So here's the conclusion in verse 17:

II Corinthians 6:17a

"Wherefore..."

Because of all these arguments that I have been giving you for this entire lesson. And what was the purpose? So that you can come out of a world that is diabolically opposed to everything that we believe. Now that's the world around us, and that doesn't mean that we're going to retreat into monasteries like they did from 500 to 1500 AD. Remember the historians put the right name on that time and what was it? The dark ages. Why? Because the Word of God was confined to the monasteries. The average man didn't have access to the Word of God during that time. That's exactly what happens to the human race when the Word of God is withdrawn. Israel at times in her history lost contact with the Word of God and what happened? They went down the tube nationally! So we see from the scriptures that we are to:

II Corinthians 6:17b

"... come out from among them, and be ye separate,' saith the Lord, `and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters,' saith the Lord Almighty."
In Genesis Chapter 12 that's the Abrahamic Covenant and you all know that one.

*Genesis 12:1a*

"Now the LORD had said, unto Abram, `Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house,...""

What is that? Separation. God couldn't deal with Abraham in the midst of Ur. God couldn't deal with Abraham when he was in the midst of all his pagan relatives. Remember *Joshua 24:2* said they worshipped other gods. So there had to be a separation before God could work with him. Now let's look at Chapter 13

*Genesis 13:8,9a*

"And Abram said unto Lot, `Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. 9. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me:..."" (Then come on down to verse 14.)

*Genesis 13:14*

"And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated..."

It started from day one that God's people had to be separated from the world around them. Now turn to Exodus 8. And here we have the plagues coming upon Pharaoh's Egypt for the first three we find Israel had to come under those plagues as well as the Egyptians, but now look what it says in verse 22.

*Exodus 8:22*

"And I will sever (or separate) in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. 23. And I will put a division between my people and thy people; (speaking of Egypt) to morrow shall this sign be."

What did God do? He separated them!
LESSON TWO * PART III

TRUTH PERSONIFIED

II CORINTHIANS 6:1 - 8:6

We finished Chapter 6 so we'll begin with verse 1 of Chapter 7. Now the background for all these letters of Paul. This is the second letter to the Corinthians Church (the first one dealt with several problems the Church was having and Paul really dressed them down on a few of them). The second letter is kind of like an ointment to soothe their feelings and yet at the same time gives us the response from the apostle himself to the things he was hearing coming out of this congregation at Corinth.

II Corinthians 7:1,2

"Having therefore these promises, (now remember what he had just said in the last part of Chapter 6 that if we have the wherewithal, as the results of His saving Grace, to separate ourselves from the ungodly world around us, then God will be a father unto us, He will call us sons and daughters, and that's our relationship with God as members of the Body of Christ. So having these promises) dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting (or growing in maturity) holiness in the fear of God. 2. Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man."

Why does Paul say something like this? Because this is what he's been accused of. He's been accused of everything. He's accused if he picks up an offering, that he's embezzling it. He's accused of bringing a false Gospel. (without the Law) Paul is accused of coming up with something that he alone dreamed up. And on and on the list could go. All of these things that he has given a response to he has been accused of, and he is simply stating that it's not true.

II Corinthians 7:3

"I speak not this to condemn you; for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you." In other words, the man was so full of love for these Corinthians that in spite of all the bad things that they said about him, he still loved them. Now verse 4.

II Corinthians 7:4

"Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation."
Isn't that amazing? In spite of all the bad things they were saying about the man, he still loved them and even bragged about them to his other congregations. He would actually tell the people at Ephesus, "I've got a great bunch of people down there at Corinth. Oh, they've got some problems, but I love everyone of them."

*II Corinthians 7:5*

"For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh (that is the physical body) had no rest, but we were troubled on every side, without were fightings, within were fears." Earlier, Paul was talking about death.

*II Corinthians 5:8*

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Well even though this was by inspiration there was also the physical element. Because evidently Paul had been close to death up at Philippi. Paul had been sick in bed, but he had survived, and on top of all of his trials and tribulation of attacks from the pagan world, from the Judaisers, he was supposed to have met Titus over at Troas, and after he got there, was supposed to leave and still no Titus. Now there wasn't much communication in those days, and he had no way of knowing what had happened to Titus. So all of that also was just weighing down on the man And so this is what he means in verse 5, and let's read it again:

*II Corinthians 7:5,6a*

"For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh (his body) had no rest, but we were troubled on every side, without were fightings, within were fears. 6. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down,..."

I have to wonder a lot of times, and I'm not saying this to be critical, but our society has gotten to the place that whenever there is a tragedy, especially for school kids, they have to bring in psychologists, and counselors to help these kids handle their grief. I'm sure there's something good about that, but why have we come to the place in society that we have to have that kind of help for a tragedy. Listen, my Bible says that God is the Source of our comfort. I don't need a psychologist to come in and straighten out my thinking because it's right here in the Book. And this is exactly what Paul is showing us. In spite of all of his pressures, in spite of all of his grief and disappointments, yet Who carried him through? God did, and Paul never doubted it for a moment. Verse 6 again:
"Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, (He knows when we need help, and He's there) comforted us by the coming of Titus;"

So Titus finally finds Paul. Now Paul missed him at Troas, and we don't know how much longer this was afterwards, but it must have been a fair amount of time because Paul had been up to Philippi, he had been sick in bed, and now he finally comes in contact with Titus. Now remember Titus is coming from Corinth, as he has been down there working with these Corinthian believers while Paul was at Ephesus. Now verse 7.

"And not by his coming only, (oh it was great to see Titus) but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, (Corinthians) when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind (in other words their attitude of heart) toward me; so that I rejoiced the more."

Do you get the picture? Titus has been down there at Corinth. Paul has been over here at Ephesus, and he's written that letter to the Corinthians where he had to dress them down severely. Paul has heard all these things coming out of the Corinthian congregation that were against him, that were condemning him, but now here comes Titus with nothing but good things that the Corinthians were saying about the apostle Paul. What does that show you? How human Paul was. There isn't a person anywhere that doesn't like to be complimented. Isn't that right? Everyone likes a word of compliment. A word of compliment can do more for you than anything you can imagine, and Paul was no different. He was tickled to death to see Titus, but he was thrilled to death to hear that the Corinthians still loved him, and held him in high esteem. Verse 8.

"For though I made you sorry with a letter, (the letter of I Corinthians when he had to address their problems) I do not repent, (or regret, because it had to be done) though I did repent: (or regret) for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. 9. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance:..."
they had divisions. When some said they followed Christ and His earthly ministry teachings. Some were following Apollos, others said, "Peter was their man," and still others said, "No, Paul brought us the Gospel by which we are saved so we'll keep following Paul." So they had those divisions. Also, they were taking one another to the pagan courts in lawsuits. They had other problems as well, but the most major problem that the Corinthian church had was this one right here in Chapter 5, and it was gross immorality.

**I Corinthians 5:1,2**

"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, (those pagans that the Jews thought were as low as dogs. But you as believers are permitting an act of immorality that even the Gentiles wouldn't think of doing.) that one should have his father's wife. (a step-mother) 2. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."

What were the Corinthians doing about this gross immorality? Absolutely nothing. If anything they were smiling about it. They were making snide remarks. Now verse 3.

**I Corinthians 5:3-6**

"For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5. To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, (not the soul. In other words physical death if this guy won't straighten up) that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6. (In verse 6 we find them just as guilty as he was because of their glorying or gloating over it.) Your glorying is not good, Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"

Paul goes on to say that they had to deal with that problem, and now when you come back to the second letter, did they? Yes they dealt with it, and evidently brought the man back into fellowship, and his sin was naturally forgiven, and cleansed and the letter had done it's work. Now back to II Corinthians Chapter 7.

**II Corinthians 7:10**

"For godly sorrow (or a godly regret of something done that's wrong) worketh repentance (or a change of mind) to salvation not to be repented of: (have you ever talked to a true believer who said he was sorry he had become a Christian? I never
have. So here again in this instance to take care of this individual sin situation was the salvation not for the soul, but the salvation of the time, because this situation had to be corrected, and it was) **but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**" (if there is no saving Grace involved)

**II Corinthians 7:11**

"**For behold this selfsame thing,** (referring back to this one individual in I Corinthians Chapter 5, verse 1) **that ye sorrowed** (or looked at this thing) **after a godly sort,** (in other words, they looked at that situation and it had to be dealt with as God would look at it, and they realized the sinfulness of the whole situation.) **what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.**"

In other words, the Corinthian Church took this gentlemen aside and laid out God's view of his actions, and the witness that it was having in the pagan city of Corinth. News like that travels in any city. What did it do for the whole congregation? It enhanced everyone of them. When they could see that God could move into a situation even as vile as this one, clear the deck and make everyone once again in fellowship with a Holy God. Now verse 12.

**II Corinthians 7:12**

"**Wherefore, though I wrote unto you,** (I Corinthians) **I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong,** (although certainly that man was involved) **nor for his cause that suffered wrong,** but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you."

Now think about these things. What's Paul saying? If Paul would have treated this as the congregation was and just glossed over it, what would that have said to the congregation about him? Well he's no better than the rest of us. He looks at like we do so it must not be all that bad. But when Paul dealt with it, and he dealt with it severely, when he told them. "You deal with this man, and turn him over to the power of Satan that Satan can touch the flesh unless he turns around in repentance and gets right with God." I mean it's just a perfect picture of how you and I, even today, deal with sin because God hates it. God will never wink at sin even though He has paid for it and forgiven it through His death on the Cross, yet God is never going to wink at sin. He can't. So Paul tells us that all of us profited from this situation. Paul did, the congregation did, and certainly the guilty party did. Now verse 13.

**II Corinthians 7:13**
"Therefore (because of what had happened) we were comforted in your comfort: (Paul says, `as you feel, I feel.') yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all." So even Titus had his whole spiritual life enhanced because of the reaction of the congregation in Corinth toward this adulteress individual. Now verse 14 and 15.

II Corinthians 7:14,15

"For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. 15. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all how with fear and trembling ye received him."

Now do you see what's going on here? This young man Titus, a new believer, a student of the apostle Paul, and yet when he came into the situation at Corinth, he realized their carnality, he realized how unspiritual many of the members were, and yet because of the letter of I Corinthians how it had changed that whole congregation. It was because Paul had taken the bull by the horns and he addressed the issue, and told the people to deal with it. And because of this it not only enhanced Paul's ministry, but also the congregation and this young man Titus. Now verse 16.

II Corinthians 7:16

"I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things."

Now that's quite a statement to make especially with a congregation of carnal people which was just recently brought out of paganism. Again this is what I have to stress over and over and over that these Corinthians believers had been pagan, idolaters, immoral, and everything that went along with it, and yet here they're brought out by believing the Gospel. They have become new creations in Christ Jesus and they were a thrill, to the apostle Paul and his helper Titus.

Well again I think now you can see so much of this was in the same area that Christ dealt with in His earthly ministry. You all know the account of the woman caught in adultery in John's Gospel Chapter 8. Let's go back and look at it. This is not new, it's in a little different setting of course. Now this is Jesus Himself dealing with a woman who was a known adulterer.

John 8:1-11
"Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. 2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. 3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4. They say unto him, 'Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?' 6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. (can you picture that?) 7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. (I often wondered what He wrote. I'm sure He was putting something in the sand, and those religious leaders of Israel saw what He was writing) 9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, 'Woman where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11. She said, No man, Lord.' And Jesus said unto her, 'Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.'"

Now this does not give license to adultery by any stretch of the imagination. No more than the man back here in I Corinthians Chapter 5. But what does it show us? That God is willing and ready to forgive, but with forgiveness what does He expect? A growth in spirituality. Now I think you can pick that up so graphically after King David sinned in an adulteress situation with Bathsheba. I think one of the most heart rendering portions of Scripture is David's confession of his sin in Psalms Chapter 32. There David just pours out his heart to God. It wasn't that he had just sinned against himself and Bathsheba, but he had sinned against his God. But his confession is such that he was in a cold sweat because of his guilt. But once he confessed it, and got rid of it, and got right with God then David went on and continued his walk with his Holy God.
LESSON TWO * PART IV

TRUTH PERSONIFIED

II CORINTHIANS 6:1 - 8:6

We will begin this lesson with II Corinthians 8:1. I always tell people that I don't preach at them, because this is a Bible study program. All we ever hope to do is just teach the Word, and help people to understand what the Word says, why it says it, and to whom it's being spoken to, and that makes all the difference in the world. For you see if you go back into the Old Testament, and read some of those things and try to apply it today, then you're in trouble. So what do you have to do? It's still the Word of God - absolutely it is. But it wasn't written to us. It was written to the Jews under the Law.

We feel we are reaching so many people who are confused. In fact I had a lady call one Monday morning and she said, "Now Les, I'm confused. The sermon Sunday morning was about when the rich young ruler came to Jesus and said, 'What must I do for eternal life?' His answer was 'Keep the Commandments.'" I said, "That's right. That's what Jesus told him." Then she said, "This morning you turn around and say we're not under the Law but rather under Grace. Now isn't that a contradiction?" I said, "No, because God just changed programs. Remember Jesus came to the Nation of Israel under the Law. But we're not under Law. Jesus today would not write to us to keep the commandments. Today the message of salvation is 'Believe the Gospel' as Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:1-4, and Romans 10:9-10. That is not a contradiction but rather a change in God's modus operandi."

Now as we have been stressing over the last several programs, in I and II Corinthians Paul had to deal with a church full of problems. He almost felt bad having to do it. But now within a year we find Paul writes this second letter and we find a whole different attitude. Paul is no longer condemning them for things, but rather he is encouraging them, and exhorting them. He is also boasting about them to the other churches. But now Paul comes to a subject that is still pretty touchy even today. He's going to touch their billfold. So Chapters 8 and 9 are instructions on Christian Grace Age Giving! You have no idea how many phone calls we get from people who want to know, "What am I supposed to do?" Hopefully from these two chapters we will answer that from the Word.

Now before we go into Chapter 8, and Paul's admonition to the Corinthians to get their offerings in order, let's go back for a moment to Galatians Chapter 2, and see what prompted the apostle to encourage these Gentiles to bring their offerings. Now you want to remember that these early churches met in homes. They didn't have full
paid pastors as we do now. They did not have building complexes that had to be built or maintained. So the economy of these local churches was very limited, but still Paul is admonishing them to give. What was the purpose for this?

Galatians Chapter 2, and from our last teachings this is the Jerusalem counsel at about 51 or 52 AD. This was when the Jewish believers Peter, James and John and the other members of the local Jewish congregation in Jerusalem had called Paul up to Jerusalem to really settle the issue once and for all that he could no longer tell Gentiles up there in Antioch, or in other areas where he had started churches that they could be saved without keeping the Law of Moses, without practicing circumcision, and so forth.

Well as we know, and as we'll see when we study Galatians, Paul did go to Jerusalem and withstood them to their face. Paul told them, that there was no way that he would ever teach his pagan converts that they would have to keep the Jewish Law, and practice circumcision, because they are now saved by Grace through Faith + nothing. So we find Paul and these believing Jews have this great conference. I imagine it went on a good part of the day. Finally, (Peter, by the work of the Holy Spirit, woke up, and realized that a long time ago (about 12 years ago) God sent him to the house of Cornelius and showed him that He could save a Gentile. So Peter said, "I guess Paul's right," and so the believing Jews gave in. That's in Galatians Chapter 2 which is a sister chapter to Acts 15.

Galatians 2:9

"And when James, Cephas, (Peter) and John, (I always call them the inner core of the disciples) who seemed to be pillars, (now what does that imply? Hey, they thought they were the ones in charge. They weren't but they still thought they were. What's happening? God's changing the program, but the Twelve didn't realize that. He's coming out of Judaism, and legalism, and coming into the age of Grace. When they) perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; (just like we do today. When you come to an agreement you shake hands on it.) that we should go unto the heathen, (Gentiles) and they unto the circumcision. (or Israel, Acts 11:19)

I know that's as plain as day, and how people miss it I'll never know. But I missed it for years, and I guess people still do. But that was the agreement after this tremendous counsel at Jerusalem. "Ok Paul, you continue your ministry among the Gentiles, and we'll no longer try to force you to practice legalism, and circumcision. You preach your Gospel and we'll continue dealing with the Jews. But now the next verse is what I wanted you to see.
"Only they would (that is Peter, James, and John) that we should remember the poor;..."

What poor? Well the poor Jews who were now stranded financially in Jerusalem. Now people don't stop to think about that. Here we are, 52 AD, and that's 20-some years after the crucifixion, and Pentecost, and the main concern of Peter, James, and John is that Paul not forget these poor Jews in Jerusalem. How come they were so poor? Let's chase that down in the Book of Acts Chapter 2.

While you're turning to that text let me finish the story of the lady who wanted to know if that wasn't a contradiction when Jesus said keep the commandments for salvation. I teach believe the Gospel for salvation because you can't mix Law and Grace. I knew I couldn't convince her by just making a statement so I asked if she could have a one-on-one Bible study? She said, "Oh, I'd love that."

So I took her back all the way through the Old Testament, the Abrahamic Covenant. And how that Christ came to the Nation of Israel and presented Himself as their Messiah, and how they rejected Him. I also showed her how Israel continued to reject Him in the early chapters of Acts and when that happened then God raised up this other apostle and sent him (Paul) to the Gentiles with the Gospel of the Grace of God. When I was all through she said, "It's so logical isn't it?" And it is so logical because there's no way you could bring the whole Gentile world under Judaism, and legalism, and the Law. Now with the work of the Cross completed God could pour out His Grace on the whole human family, not just Israel. But where we've turned to here in Acts it is God still dealing with the Nation of Israel, there are no Gentiles involved. You know the account, the day of Pentecost, and here Peter says -

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

See He's dealing only with Israel. Now come down to verse 42, and remember we are looking for, "Who are the poor in Jerusalem?"

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine (the teaching of Jesus and His earthly ministry) and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the
apostles. 44. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45. And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

Now what was that? That was a total communal system of living. Whatever they had they put it into a common kitty, and then the Twelve, Peter James and John and the others parceled it out to these believing Jews according to their needs. Now let's move on to Chapter 4:32, and remember these are all Jews in Jerusalem.

Acts 4:32-37

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: [wouldn't that be great if we could say that about churches today? I get so many phone calls from people who are in churches that are dividing. They are in controversy of one sort or another. Well this group didn't have that problem yet. They were all of one heart and one mind] neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all. 34. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold. 35. And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, [the same one who helped the apostle Paul on his first missionary journey] (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation, ) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37. Having land, (in Cyprus) sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet." Now let's jump back up to Chapter 2:5

Acts 2:5

"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, (remember this was a feast day, Pentecost) out of every nation under heaven."

So they had come a great distance for this feast day. Here on the day of Pentecost you've got Jews who have come to Jerusalem from maybe as far east as India, Babylon, and Syria, Greece, Spain and maybe even Great Britain, and perhaps North Africa. So on the day of Pentecost and following, when Peter and the eleven were preaching, a lot of these Jews believed that Jesus was the Messiah and the earthly Kingdom was coming. Remember as soon as all Israel believed, the King and kingdom would come!

Acts 3:19
"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing (the earthy Kingdom) shall come from the presence of the Lord;"

Acts 3:26

"Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

Now these believing Jews, once they became believers and the King and the Kingdom are just over the horizon, who in the world is going to go clear back to Babylon for example? I mean after all, the King is coming so why go clear back to Rome? Why go back to Spain or North Africa and eke out a living amongst the pagan Gentiles when the King is just around the corner. So what did they do? Hey, it was real handy, for all they had to do was stay in Jerusalem and live out of a common kitty because after all it was a stop-gap measure until indeed the King would come and the earthly Kingdom would be set up.

But remember all of Israel did not respond so the King didn't come, and what happened to the kitty? Well, it ran dry. Remember they didn't have a runaway stock market to invest their money in, and they didn't have 25% interest, and so the kitty went dry. What happened to these believers? They ended up poor. Remember they had sold all their goods, and now they probably couldn't even buy a ticket back home. So here they are, they're caught in Jerusalem. But remember, God is just! These people were caught in a legitimate cause because they had believed the Gospel of the Kingdom that Peter had proclaimed for their salvation, "That Christ was the Son of God, their Messiah, and that the King was coming, they had repented and were baptized (Matthew 4:17 and Acts 2:38)"

So God is going to take care of them until they would die a natural death. But, how? With this agreement that Paul made with Peter, James and John that wherever he would go in his ministry he would remember the poor saints in Jerusalem. Now before you go back to II Corinthians Chapter 8 let's stop at I Corinthians Chapter 16, and we touched on this while we were in our study. Paul just barely touches on it here compared to II Corinthians where he spends 2 chapters on the subject.

I Corinthians 16:1-3

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, (this will be for the poor Jerusalem saints) as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3. And when I come, whosoever ye
shall approve by your letters, (of commendations) them will I send to bring your liberality (your offerings) unto Jerusalem."

See how plain that is? So what God is now laying on the hearts of these Gentile believers is the necessity of those Jewish believers who got caught in the fact that the King and the Kingdom didn't come so they were poor, they were destitute. Let me show you another one in Romans 15:25. I'm sure that anybody who knows anything of history realizes that at this point in time there were no mission boards to help people. There were no foreign missionaries to help support them. So what was the need? Well for the local Church there wasn't that much. They were meeting in homes, and they didn't have to pay salaries or anything like that, but their responsibilities were these poor believers in Jerusalem.

Romans 15:25,26

"But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. (Paul didn't have a ministry among the Jews so he wasn't talking about preaching to them.) 26. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia (this is the same area that his Corinthian letters are dealing with) to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." Now verse 27 and here is the reason.

Romans 15:27

"It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. (in other words the Greeks in Macedonia and Achaia were not out in left field by giving offering to the Jews in Jerusalem. That was appropriate, that was as God intended it. Why?) For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their (Israel's) spiritual things, their duty (as Gentiles) is also to minister unto them (the Jew) in carnal (or material) things."

Can you see that? That was their responsibility. Because when all this was taking place, Israel had not been totally set aside, the Temple was still going, and Israel was still in the land and these Jewish believers were destitute and remember there was no welfare system. The priesthood of the Temple certainly wasn't going to take care of them because they had embraced Jesus of Nazareth Whom these religious leaders detested. So these believers were in an island of need, and the only hope they had was the collection from the Gentile believers as it would be sent to Jerusalem. Now in light of all that let's turn to II Corinthians Chapter 8.

II Corinthians 8:1

"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;"
Remember Macedonia is Northern Greece and Achaia was in Southern Greece, all of Greece is mountainous, and when you have a rough mountainous countryside back when most people eked out a living agriculturally, how much material wealth did most of these people have? None. They were poor themselves. Now to these little congregations out into that mountainous area of Greece, this is who Paul is referring to.

**II Corinthians 8:2a**

"How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy..."

This is something that America doesn't understand any more, **and that is that there can be joy without material wealth.** Now you talk to most of us who remember the 1930's depression, how much money did we have? None. There wasn't money for anything. Were people as downtrodden and depressed as they are today? No. People were happy. I can remember asking my dad how in the world did you stand farming with a bunch of horses especially after machinery and tractors came in? Do you know what his answer was? "Well we didn't know any better." And that's so true, and it was the same way in the depression, "people were poor, but they didn't know it." So what were they? They were happy. And the same way with these poor people up in Greece. They didn't have anything materially, nothing! But they had all kinds of joy and happiness because they had been removed from paganism with all of its superstition, and with all of it's fear, and they had been set free by the Gospel of Grace. Now reading the verse again.

**II Corinthians 8:2**

"How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." In other words no matter how poor they were they would still give, and they gave liberally. Now verse 3:

**II Corinthians 8:3**

"For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;"

Paul or Titus didn't go in there and do a bunch of promoting and arm twisting. All they did was express the need that the Lord was laying on them to give to help the poor saints in Jerusalem.

**II Corinthians 8:4a**
"Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift,..."

Do you get that? As poor as these believers were in Greece they actually begged Paul for the opportunity to give to those saints at Jerusalem. That's quite opposite from today isn't it? Today there is a lot of promotion and telethons of one sort or another in order to get people to give. But they didn't have to here. Now reading on in verse 4.

II Corinthians 8:4b,5

"...and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. (in Jerusalem) 5. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, (in other words they stepped into God's saving Grace) and unto us by the will of God." (They opened themselves to Paul and his ministry.)

Now this is where it has to begin isn't it? It doesn't do a nickels worth of good for an unbeliever to give for the things of God. God doesn't need it, God doesn't want it, and God can get along just fine without it. But oh listen, He expects the saints to give as He leads them to give. Not with any legal binding ramification that you will give a certain amount under Law. But remember under Grace, as we seen in I Corinthians 16:2, you give as God has prospered you. You give as the Lord has laid it on your heart, and not according to a set of rules and regulations. Now verse 6:

II Corinthians 8:6

"Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also."

In other words Titus is picking up the mantle from the apostle Paul to gather these offerings for the poor saints in Jerusalem.
Now to begin this lesson we will pick up where we left off in the last lesson and that would be in verse 7. We hope as you study with us you will truly search the Scriptures and see what the Word really says. We don't claim to have all the answers, but we do trust that the Lord has revealed a lot of these things to us that are normally skimmed over.

Now to get back into our study. You will remember that in our last lesson we introduced the idea of giving from Paul's writings, and the purpose of it. Now as I stressed then you want to remember the little churches that were founded back in the apostolic days were probably meeting in homes, and most probably didn't have full-time pastors and such, and yet Paul gives instructions for the gathering of their offerings and then we pointed out at that time it was primarily for the poor saints dwelling at Jerusalem. They had been pooling all of their resources since Pentecost and the common kitty had run out and they were now destitute. But since they were destitute because they were obedient to the Word of God, God in turn takes care of them through the offerings of these Gentile believers, and Paul has been stressing that the Jews are worthy of our material gifts because of all of the things we owe them for their spiritual things given to us.

I think it's amazing that Paul deals with giving for almost three chapters - 7, 8, and 9. I'm not going to over-do the whole thing, but we will spend this lesson on giving and hopefully that will be sufficient on this whole concept of Grace Age giving. We get so many phone calls from people asking, "Well how am I supposed to give my tithes and offerings?" The first thing I always say, and it shocks people and I know a lot of pastors don't like when I teach this, we are not duty bound to give a tithe. We are not under Law but rather under Grace. Just read what Paul says always from Romans through Hebrews, and you will never see the word tithe one time. Paul never uses the word because it is no longer appropriate. Now that doesn't mean that we don't give. Of course we give, but we are not under any kind of a rule or a mandate to give a certain amount. So it's that theme that we'll bring out in the next few moments.

II Corinthians 8:7a

"Therefore as ye abound in every thing,..."
That's the joy of the Christian life isn't it? We may not be wealthy, and we don't have to be, we may not all enjoy perfect health, because our blessings are above and beyond the material, although the material certainly enters in because we're human. These believers in Greece were no different as Paul told them:

**II Corinthians 8:7a**

"Therefore as ye abound in everything, in faith,..."

Now faith is the beginning of it. I had a call from a gentlemen yesterday, and he said, "Les, we're hearing so much about experience, isn't that taking the place of faith?" And I had to tell him, "Absolutely." We have to begin with doctrine, and doctrine comes by faith. When you put faith + doctrine then you're going to have experience. But you see, too many folks are forgetting the doctrine, and they're always talking about nothing but experience. Well it's not going to fly, God's not pleased with that, because we've got to start with one of the major gifts of faith. That ability and that power that is God given, that we can believe what God says.

Now remember believing what God says is the whole basis of studying and understanding the Word of God. Now granted we have to be careful. We're not going to bring into operation things that God told Israel to do back in the Old Testament. In fact we had a call from a person who said, "Doesn't the Book of Malachi say to bring your tithe and offerings into the store house?" And I said "Yes, but doesn't the same Old Testament say bring me your sacrifices?" The caller said "Yeah." Well then what are you going to do? Just because the Bible says to bring an animal sacrifice, are you going to go out and buy a lamb? Well of course not, we're not under that today, we know better than that. And yet it carries all the way through on everything. Just because the Old Testament told Israel to do something, that doesn't mean that's still valid for us today, and so we have to shake these things out. You can't just pick and choose what you want, like a lot of people are doing. Remember what was for Israel is completely different from what Paul tells us in the Church Age. Now continuing on with verse 7.

**II Corinthians 8:7**

"Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, (so Paul says, `You have all that, now let's put the next thing into practice,' and what's that? Their giving.) see that ye abound in this grace also."

What Grace was he talking about? The Grace of giving. Verse 8:
II Corinthians 8:8

"I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness (or zealousness) of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love."

Always take into account how many times Paul will say, "Now I'm not speaking this by commandment." In other words the Lord hadn't told me "Paul, you tell the people this." But since this is in the written Word, what does it become? Inspired! It's the Word of God. So, even when Paul says, "I'm not writing this as commandment," in essence who caused him to write that? The Holy Spirit did. So always take that explanation into account. Now verse 9:

II Corinthians 8:9

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, (oh how rich? The whole universe was His. All the cattle on a thousand hills, All the gold and diamonds that were ever created are all His.) yet for your sakes (for the sake of all believers) he became poor,..."

How poor? So poor that He could say, `that foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Son of man has not a place to lay his head. Now that was a graphic illustration in the material realm. He did not have a wealthy home or live in a sumptuous environment, but in the realm of the spiritual He went far, far deeper into absolute poverty, as we will see in the Book of Philippians Now look at this because this is beyond human comprehension, and yet it's what the Word declares:

Philippians 2:6,7a

"Who, (speaking of Christ Jesus in verse 5) being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (because He was God, the God of creation, the God who owns everything in the universe) 7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant..."

Now too often we read that word servant and we kind of glide over it without realizing what is the better term for servant? Slave. How much material goods did a slave have? None. He may be here today and gone tomorrow. The rowers in the ships of those days were down there in the stench-ridden hot areas of the ship. They rowed until they died and then they were just pitched overboard. How much of this world's goods did those fellows have? None. Well this is where the Lord Jesus took Himself. He took Himself to the depths of being a slave with absolutely nothing of this world's goods to call His own. Unbelievable? It is from the human side. I can't comprehend it,
but it's what the Word declares. The Almighty God Himself in the Person of Christ became a slave in so many words. Now reading on:

Philippians 2:7b

"...was made in the likeness of men:"

Now imagine from the exalted area of the Godhead to come down to this earth, and become nothing more than a human being like the rest of us, how far can you go? And yet that's what He did.

Philippians 2:8

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, (He didn't have to) and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Now why is Paul using that in relation to Christian giving? Well we have to take that same kind of attitude. If God, in the Person of Christ, was willing to leave that area of absolute control of the universe and took on the role of a slave for our salvation, then who are we to say, "Yeah, but I can't give anything." Now back to II Corinthians Chapter 8:

II Corinthians 8:10,11

"And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward, (zealous) a year ago. 11. Now therefore perform (or complete) the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have."

What's Paul driving at? Well for the last year he has been encouraging these churches in Greece to get their offerings ready for the day when someone would come along and pick them up and transport them to Jerusalem. Now as I was studying this, I couldn't help but remember something that Gary, the station manager, had told me a long time ago. For those who are in this business of television that statistically - and I know that there are lies, and then there are statistics, but nevertheless statistics do have a certain amount of relevance here. But statistically, out of 300 people who may be listening to me over the next several weeks, most will say, "Now I'm going to send that man an offering." How many will actually get around to doing it? One. Isn't that amazing? But you see that's human nature, and Paul was dealing with the same thing. For a whole year they had been talking about getting these collections ready for the poor saints in Jerusalem. But they still hadn't done it. So Paul says, "Let's get busy and complete it." Paul wanted it all done before he got there so they wouldn't give
because of his presence. And I understand exactly how he felt because you never like to make someone feel obligated to give just because you happen to be there personally on the scene. So this is exactly what he's talking about. Now verse 12. Remember this is all in regard to Christian giving, and notice there's not a word in here of him naming ten percent. He never says a tithe. All he's talking about is the general concept of giving.

*II Corinthians 8:12*

"*For if there be first a willing mind,* (remember everything we say or do has to begin with the thought process.) *it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*"

Now does God expect someone who is on a very meager income, maybe nothing more than just a little social security check, to give all that to ministry or some church? No way. More than once I've had to write to someone and tell them, "Now listen, if you're on a meager income I don't expect a dime." Now that's between them and God, and if they feel that God is still instructing them to give some then that's fine. But I never want someone on a meager income to feel obligated to support this ministry. Other ministries may not care, but I don't want it on this one. **But here God is making it so clear that giving is based on that ability to give.** And now in verse 13.

*II Corinthians 8:13*

"*For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:*"

In other words, Paul says, "He is not going to make anybody, whether they are wealthy or poor, to feel obligated to give because of his presence. Do you see that? Now he comes all the way down through verse 16 - 24 speaking of the men who would be coming along to pick up these offerings. And again he's showing the need for integrity in handling the affairs of God. Paul is telling the Corinthians that the men who are probably headed up by Titus, are men of integrity, they don't have to worry about turning over their offerings to them because they will get every penny of it to Jerusalem where it's supposed to go. Now I want to come quickly over to Chapter 9 and begin with verse 1.

*II Corinthians 9:1,2a*

"*For as touching the ministering to the saints,* (the poor saints in Jerusalem who had been left destitute because of their offerings into the common kitty back there beginning with Acts Chapter 2) *it is superfluous* (or it goes beyond saying) **for me to**
In other words what was Paul actually doing on behalf of the Corinthian believers? He was boasting to other congregations on what a good job they were doing in making these collections. Now verse 3.

**II Corinthians 9:3**

"Yet have I sent the brethren, (these that will be picking up the offering) lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf, that, as I said, ye may be ready:"

Now I think Paul is using a little psychology isn't he? He is building them up as he says, "Now look Corinthians, Titus, and the gentlemen that are already making collections up here in the poorest part of mountainous Greece, when they come into a culture and commercial center like Corinth, then it stands to reason there's going to be more wealth available than there would be up there in the mountains." So I think Paul is sort of setting them up and preparing them that these men are going to be expecting something of you, because you have so much more to offer than these poor churches up in northern Greece. Now reading on:

**II Corinthians 9:5**

"Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, (their offerings) where of ye had noticed before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness."

Do you see this constant drumming of the fact, "Now have this done when these fellows get there, don't put it off, don't procrastinate, have these offerings collected and ready so that they can pick it up and take it on to where it has to go there in Jerusalem. Now verse 6. Here we come to the whole concept of Christian giving.

**II Corinthians 9:6**

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

Now you want to remember that the vast majority of people in this day and time were agriculturally connected. So Paul is talking about sowing a crop of grain. And any farmer knows that if you sow half a crop of the required seed, you're not even going to get half a crop. Now you don't sow more grain than is necessary, but you put on the
stipulated amount to get a full crop of grain. However, it's brought into the Christian experience on the same level. If you're going to be tight with your giving, if you're going to hold back when you have the ability to give, then God will kind of hold back on His blessing.

And that's exactly what Paul is teaching here. **Now I'm not a name it and claim it type.** I do not claim that if you give a $1000. dollars a year, then God's going to pour you out $3000. No way does this Bible teach that. But I think that we all realize that our God is so great that if we do it with the right attitude, we do it by faith, we can't out-give God. One of my favorite clichés is **"There is a line between faith and fantasy."** By faith I can do certain things and realize that God is going to respond, but I can't be foolish. Fantasy would say, "Well I'm just going to give that ministry $500. because I just feel that God's going to turn back and give me $50,000." Now that's what a lot of people think, but it's not going to work that way. That's fantasy.

But we know that God is able, and here I must qualify. A lot of time we think that our giving should immediately have something returned in kind. But it's doesn't necessarily have to work that way. **Have you ever stopped to think of all of the potential expenses that God can spare you because you were liberal in your giving?** In other words, that old car may go another 50,000 miles where otherwise it may break down. You may end up as fortunate as Iris and I have over the years with practically no money spent for medical expenses. Do you know what I call that? That's the pay back. So you have to look at this whole thing on the big picture, not just in, "If I give a $100, will I get $500 back?" That's not the way to look at it, but rather look at the whole concept of how God is going to respond. Now verse 7. Here is the very foundation for our giving.

**II Corinthians 9:7**

"**Every man** (person) **according as he purposeth in his heart,** (and the Holy Spirit will motivate the heart) **so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity:**..." (legalism)

I can remember years ago a gentlemen up in Iowa was so upset that his particular pastor had came out to his farm, and looked at the size of his home, and furnishings, his car and pickup, and he turned around and said, "Well it looks to me like you should be able to give $600 a month." Well, how do you think the guy felt? He was totally turned off. He said, "Nobody is going to tell me how much I'm supposed to give." And I agreed with him. No one has a right to do that. That's strictly between the individual Christian and his Lord. Now reading the verse again.

**II Corinthians 9:7**
"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: (legalism, or because somebody has laid it on you) for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Now if you have a marginal Bible the word cheerful in the Greek meant "Hilarious." How many people go to church on Sunday morning, and lay that offering on the plate with a hilarious attitude? Not many. They do it out of a sense of duty, they do it because they think somebody is laying a burden on their shoulder that they have to give. No you don't. If you don't want to give, and if you can't give hilariously, God in so many words says, "I DON'T NEED IT, AND I DON'T WANT IT."

But for a believer to give as God has prospered and do it joyfully, and give it to a place where the Word is honored, where the Gospel is proclaimed for salvation. (I Corinthians 15:1-4 or Romans 10:9-10) then God will give you the direction, and God will show you how much to give and where to give it. I wanted to take you back to the Book of Malachi, Exodus, and Leviticus, and the giving stipulations were all given to the Nation of Israel. All I ask people to do is go back and read Malachi 1:1

Malachi 1:1

"The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel (not the Church in the Age of Grace) by Malachi."
LESSON THREE * PART II

THE CONCEPT OF GIVING IN THE AGE OF GRACE

II CORINTHIANS 8:7 - 11:22

Now we will just pick up where we left off in the last lesson, and I realize that we've taught 2 lessons now on giving, and we're not going to run a good thing into the ground and move on into some new territory. So in this next lesson we will begin with Chapter 10. Now I know that some of these things are repetitious, but it's not just me that's repetitious, the Scripture is also. How many times the Bible will repeat and repeat, and repeat. **And of course the Holy Spirit is the Master Teacher, and He knows better than any secular teacher that repetition is the very basis of good teaching.** In one of our lessons in the near future I'm going to go back and put my timeline on the board again, because you have no idea how many people have written or called to say it was the timeline that gotten them interested in this program and in Bible study.

So I just trust that people will begin to enjoy their Bible to study, and to read it, not just to be able to say, "I read my Bible today." But to really feed on it and to understand what it's talking about. Now speaking of repetition, how many times have I said that the apostle Paul is always having to defend his apostleship. And here we have it again in Chapter 10. **You see the poor man was under constant attack, especially from the Judaising Jews that he was an impostor, that he had dreamed up this new Gospel, and these revelations himself.** And after all, he had no badge of authority, he had no letters of commendation, he couldn't claim that he had walked with Jesus three years like Peter, James and John, and so this was the thing that he had to constantly overcome. They would ask, "Who do you think you are?"

That reminds me of a lady who called from Minnesota several years ago and that's exactly what she said. I answered the phone "Feldick's" And she said, "Is this Les Feldick?" I replied, "Yes," and she said, "Who in the world are you?" I said, "Well, I'm a nobody." And that's all that I've ever claimed to be. Paul didn't have to say that. Paul said, "I'm somebody, I have been commissioned as the apostle to the Gentiles."

**Romans 11:13**

"For I speak to you Gentiles, (non-Jews) inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:"

So here again in verse 1 of Chapter 10 we find:
II Corinthians 10:1,2

"Now I Paul myself beseech (beg) you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, (speaking of himself) but being absent am bold toward you:" (that is in his writings) 2. But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh."

Now do you see what Paul is saying? There were people out there probably among his congregation who did not recognize his divine appointment as an apostle of Christ, because you see Paul couldn't have claimed to walked with Jesus in His earthly ministry. In Acts Chapter 9 we have the first of three accounts of his conversion on the road to Damascus. Which I'm sure most people have heard from the pulpit and Sunday school materials, but I'm afraid too many teachers overlook one of the crucial statements of the Lord Jesus Himself here in this chapter. This is after Saul has had this tremendous experience outside the city, and we find the Lord speaking to a Jew named Ananias.

Acts 9:11-14

"And the Lord said unto him, `Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.' (in other words the Lord is preparing everything) 13. Then Ananias answered, `Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: (that is in his persecution) 14. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.'"

Remember Saul of Tarsus' whole purpose was to totally remove from the Nation of Israel anybody who had recognized Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, as the Messiah. And Ananias knew that and was sort of arguing with the Lord about going. Now verse 15.

Acts 9:15

"But the Lord said unto him, `Go they way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles, (and you want to remember up until this time that was almost a dirty word in the language of a Jew.) and kings, and the children of Israel:'"

Of course he always went to the Jew first. Paul never lost his desire to see Jews saved. Now look at the next verse. Jesus says long before Paul's ministry ever begins:
Acts 9:16

"For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

What goes around comes around. Now you want to remember he had caused most sufferings for the Jewish believers. In fact let's look at that in Acts Chapter 26 where Paul readily admitted the havoc that he had wreaked among the Jewish followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Here Paul is speaking in the first person as he is addressing this court room before Agrippa.

Acts 26:9,10

"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. (in His earthly ministry) 10. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints (the believing Jews who had embraced Jesus of Nazareth) did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them."

Do you see that? It wasn't just a normal persecution, he persecuted them to the death. Paul voted against them when they were put to death. In other words when these people came up before the Sanhedrin, and made their confession of accepting Christ as the Messiah, the Sanhedrin would take a vote, and Paul said "I voted to put them to death." He had no mercy, and his persecution I think was cruel. Now verse 11.

Acts 26:11

"And I punished them oft (the Jews like to punish with the lash. Thirty-nine stripes each time, and Paul was always in favor of it. Whip them, make them deny their confession) in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; (now listen, he didn't do that with words, he did that with the action of the authority, and the whip masters and what have you, until the poor Jewish believers were either beaten to death, or would finally succumb.) and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."

He didn't confine it to Jerusalem. Wherever Saul of Tarsus heard there was a believing element of Jews that Jesus was the Christ, he went after them. And of course this was his whole purpose of going to Damascus. He thought he had pretty well cleansed the little Nation of Israel, and now he had to leave the country and get those Jews up there. Now all of that is the ground work. First God commissions him to go to the Gentiles. God tells Ananias that this man is going to suffer great things for my name sake. And on the other hand Paul tells us how much great suffering he had caused. And I have to feel that every time Paul came under one sort of oppression or
another that was his first memory. "But look what I did in opposition of this myself." God had the perfect candidate to take all the abuse, because he had handed out so much himself, and it just carried him, I think, until the day that he was beheaded. We all believe that Paul was beheaded by the Roman government, and I read some place the other night that the last few yards to the chopping block, he literally ran. He was ready to give it all up. He was ready to offer himself, and I think it's probably true. Now back to Chapter 10 of II Corinthians. So here we find Paul again defending his apostleship. Now verse 3.

*II Corinthians 10:3*

"For though we walk in the flesh, (Paul was only a man like you and I. He had to fight the same temptations that you and I do.) *we do not war after the flesh:*

You know I've made the point over and over that *Paul is our example*. Let's go to Philippians Chapter 3 and just look at verse 17. Now this isn't the only time that Paul says this by inspiration. I have people jump on me once in a while and fortunately not too severely, but they will say, "But Les, I go by what Jesus said. I'm following Jesus." I always come back and say well that's not what my Bible tells me. Look what my Bible tells me and I trust yours tells you. Here he's writing to Gentile believers up there in Philippi.

*Philippians 3:17*

"Brethren, be followers together of me, (Paul) and mark them which walk so as ye have us (Paul) for an ensample."

*I Corinthians 4:16*

"Wherefore I beseech (beg) you, be ye followers of me."

*II Thessalonians 3:7a*

"For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us;..."

*I Timothy 1:16*

"Howbeit for this cause (because Paul was first in the long line of sinners in verse 15) I obtained mercy, that in me first (Paul was the first one to be placed into the Body of Christ) Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsufferings, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."
Now that's not taking anything away from the Lord Jesus, not at all. **But you want to remember that when Jesus walked the footsteps of the Galilliean Sea, He was God.** I can't walk in the steps of God. Remember He was totally man, but also totally God. When He started walking across the sea of Galilee I couldn't follow. I'd be like Peter, I'd go down. So we have to be careful how we take some of these things. But this man, Paul, was just as human as I am. He got just as hungry, and angry at times, and he had just as many failures and temptations as you and I have. Now that's the kind of person I can follow, because I know that is humanly possible. So Paul tells us that he is our example, and if only believers could only walk in the footsteps of this man, who, as he put it, followed Christ.

*I Corinthians 11:1*

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Of course he followed Christ, that was his whole life. Remember he said, "to die is gain." but he lived in order to follow and please his Savior. Now back to II Corinthians and looking at verse 3 again.

*II Corinthians 10:3*

"For though we walk in the flesh we do not war after the flesh."

In other words, the things that he is writing to the Corinthians, and to us about, were not the material and the physical, but rather the spiritual. So he says, "Yes I'm walking in the flesh, I'm an ordinary human being, but the warfare is in the spiritual realm." And we're going to see that more and more. Satan is pulling all the plugs today isn't he? And when the Lord Jesus warned the disciples that one of the first signs of the end-time would be mass deception. He said, "be not deceived." Beloved, we're seeing it on every hand, and we have only one alternative. Don't run to me or some denomination, but rather you run to the Book to see what it really says about it. Over and over people will call and tell me what they are up against with their denomination's teaching. I say, "What does the Bible say about that problem?" They come back with, "Well I can't find it in the Bible." If that's the case then you run from it, because if it's not Scriptural then God has no intention for you to follow that kind of teaching. But Paul says **that his war was not after the flesh, but in the realm of the spiritual.**

*II Corinthians 10:4*

"(For the weapons of our warfare, are not carnal, (not of the flesh) but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"
And did he pull down strongholds? Oh you bet he did. As he moved into those pagan cities (remember the city of Ephesus was so completely taken over by the worship of the goddess Diana), he made such an impact on that city, that his impact was literally destroying the work of the idol maker, and those silversmiths until they caused a riot. Now one man did that to a complete city. So that's an example of pulling down strong holds. Now verse 5.

**II Corinthians 10:5a**

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,..."

Now just stop and think a minute, are we seeing it? On every hand. Oh we're seeing all this stuff that looks so great, but does it line up with the Book? Is it the power of God? That's what we have to ask ourselves. Now reading on in verse 5.

**II Corinthians 10:5b**

"...and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Now that's quite a statement isn't it? I'm just like everybody else. Where do we have our largest problem. Well in the thought processes. That's where we have to fight most of our battles. "The temptations in the thought." As I mentioned in the last lesson, before we do or say anything, what do we have to do? We have to think it out. So we have to consider that this is where we have to fight our major battle. Now verse 6.

**II Corinthians 10:6**

"And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

That's plain language. The more obedient we are to the Word of God the more disobedient we will be to the things of the world. When you get disobedient to the things of the world, you're going to start hearing about it, you're going to start feeling it. Verse 7.

**II Corinthians 10:7**

"Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's even so are we Christ's."
And then he's going to go on and say, that we have to be able to examine our own faith. To be sure that you are certain of your eternal destiny, never take it carelessly. Now reading on.

**II Corinthians 10:8a**

"For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us..."

Paul didn't get it by working for it. He didn't get it by coming up through the ranks like we normally think of things in our present world. When a corporate president reaches that pinnacle of success, usually he's paid his dues. He comes from the lower echelons and he's worked his way up, but you see the apostle Paul didn't do that. He came from being an abject persecutor to the apostle of the risen Christ to the Gentiles. Now verse 8 again.

**II Corinthians 10:8,9**

"For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: 9. That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by let ters."

Well they were making references to his first letter where he really read them the riot act, and we pointed that out as we taught I Corinthians. How he was correcting their abuses, and he called a spade a spade, and he made no bones about it. Now Paul is quoting some of the rumors that had come back to him, and don't think for a minute that the apostle didn't hear just about everything that was ever said. It would always get back to him.

**II Corinthians 10:10**

"For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

Now you have to stop and think about some of these things. There was something about the apostle that did not just automatically draw people to him like some charismatic men can do. He had something about him that was almost the opposite. And I think I know what it was but we will probably have to wait and cover that in the Book of Galatians when we get there. But he had a physical appearance that did not turn people on, as we say today. It just kind of held them at bay. And his speech was contemptible. Now that's hard for me to believe except as I look at it in one light. Paul
said back in I Corinthians Chapter 14, that he spoke in languages more than all of them. I think his basic language was Hebrew and Greek. There was no doubt other people throughout the Roman Empire with different backgrounds to whom he ministered.

Now I’ve told you before about our guide in Israel that we use. He speaks almost perfect English although you can tell it's not his mother tongue. But he told us before the tour was over that he could speak seven languages, but I'm willing to bet that some of those seven languages were not always grammatically pure. They did not always ring 100% pure even as he did with us. I could catch him in English once in a while where he did not have perfect grammar. So when people get picky you see that's all they need. So I think what they're saying is, when it came to some of these other languages other than his native tongue, he may not have the perfect grammar, and they would grasp at anything to criticize, and remember the man is just human. Now verse 11:

**II Corinthians 10:11**

"Let such an one (who says things like this) think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will be also in deed when we are present."

Now of course as he dictated these letters most agree that he used a secretary of sort with the exception of the Book of Galatians. So maybe this secretary was able to help him with some of the grammar, but they couldn't find fault with his letters They were perfect, Holy Spirit inspired. Now verse 12:

**II Corinthians 10:12**

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise."

Now in so many words do you know what he saying? Folks, I know that you have people coming into the congregation who are finding fault with me. And they're trying to elevate their own position, but in their lack of knowledge they really don't know what they are doing. Now when we get to Galatians I'll be pointing this out especially in Chapter 2. Because when Paul makes reference in that chapter to the Twelve down in Jerusalem he speaks of them as men who seemed to be pillars, and that's exactly what this verse is saying. There were men who were ridiculing, and criticizing his ministry who no longer had the power and the clout that they thought they had, and they hadn't realize that their power was slipping away. But Paul says, "I am the apostle to the Gentiles."
Now let's pick right up where we left off in the last lesson, and we'll go into verse 13. Remember the whole theme here is that the apostle Paul is still defending his authority as an apostle. And I would remind you that's it's just as appropriate today as it was in that time. There are many many people who refuse to give this man any room in their thinking. I try to show people that if you take Romans through Hebrews out of their New Testament, then you've gutted it completely. The scary part is the Gospel of our salvation for this age of Grace was only revealed to this apostle, and is only found in his Epistles, and yet they refuse to look at this area of the Scriptures as much as they should. Oh, they'll make reference to Paul's writings, but yet to teach what the apostle Paul writes, I'm afraid that too many of them fall far too short.

I hope I'm never found guilty of not teaching his writings enough, and that's why we're taking our time as we move through these epistles. Remember Paul only writes to the Church Age believer directly. You won't find the Gospel of salvation, that the ascended Lord gave to Paul, for us anywhere else in Scripture All the rest of Scripture is written primarily to the Jews, the Nation of Israel. Now we take prophecy from those writings, and we can make application from those writings, but just always remember that was written to Jews under the Law, and does not directly apply to us. Paul tells us to rightly divide the Word and he's not talking about dividing the Old Testament from the New Testament.

II Timothy 2:15

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." So we have to learn how to discern these things. Now beginning with verse 13.

II Corinthians 10:13-14

"But we will not boast of things without (or beyond) our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, (do you see how slyly it insinuates here that everything he has, and everything that he does, and writes is not originating with him, it originates with God, and Christ Himself in glory) a measure to reach even unto you. (Now verse 14.) 14. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: (but he did reach unto them, and he
had response. Why?) *for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ:*

Now I know that most of Christendom today, without even realizing, is preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom rather than the Gospel of Christ. It's that vast difference that is leading so many glibly down a wrong road I'm afraid. **We're seeing, and hearing over and over that people are not hearing the Gospel of Grace, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of God, what Paul calls my Gospel as we find in I Corinthians 15:1-4, Romans 10:9,10 and many others in Paul's teaching, all of which tell us for salvation we must believe in our hearts that Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and rose again!** But instead most people are hearing the Gospel of the Kingdom which Jesus and the Twelve proclaimed to the Nation of Israel under the Law. Now verse 15:

**II Corinthians 10:15a**

"*Not boasting of things without* (or beyond) *our measure, that is, of other men's labours;*..."

Paul is referring to the Twelve. He's not an extension of what the Twelve have accomplished, or building on what they have done. But we find, rather, Paul out there in virgin territory. Remember the Twelve's ministry was confined to the Nation of Israel, within the borders of Israel. Very seldom did they ever go beyond the Jordan River. But here this man is out in pagan Gentile territory all by himself, and the Twelve have had nothing to do with what he has been accomplishing. So Paul says again in verse 15:

**II Corinthians 10:15,16**

"*Not boasting of things without* (or beyond) *our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged (blessed) by you according to our rule abundantly, (and for what purpose?) 16. To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, (Rome, and Spain, and Great Britain) and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand."

Now do you see how clear that is? Now had the Twelve, under the Lord's ministry, covered the whole area of the Mediterranean and they had been to Corinth or Athens or Ephesus or even Asia Minor, if they could have ministered in those territories, then the apostle Paul could have come along and built on what they had begun, then Paul couldn't have said this. But the Twelve didn't. They had no ministry outside of the Nation of Israel. So every place that Paul goes is virgin territory as these people had
never heard that Christ had died for their sins, and had been raised from the dead. Do you see that? Now verse 17.

**II Corinthians 10:17**

"But he that glorieth, (Paul's not taking credit for all he's accomplished) let him glory in the Lord."

It's God who is using the man. God has an instrument that was willing of course, but without the power of the Holy Spirit and God, even the apostle Paul would have accomplished nothing. You know one of my favorite verses, and we've looked at many times on this program, and now let's look at it again in the Book of Acts. This verse just shows it all, and for every one of you that are Sunday School teachers or teaching classes in your home this is basic to everyone of us and it was to the apostle Paul.

**Acts 16:14**

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, (see she was a religious Jewess, but lost) heard us: (Luke is writing) whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that were spoken of (by) Paul."

Now do you see how clear that is? Who opened Lydia's heart? God did. But what instrument did God use to attend to her salvation needs? Paul. And it's the same today. No minister, no teacher can accomplish anything unless the Lord opens the heart. See, that's why we so appreciate prayer, not only on our behalf, but on everyone who will pass these things on. Oh, it just thrills my heart when I realize how many people, even if they don't use our tapes and books, just take what they've learned and share. And for sure you don't have to give me credit for your learning. Just share with people just like the Lord has revealed it to you, that's what's important. Remember we are instruments that God can use when He opens a heart that somebody can give them the Word. Very, very seldom, and I won't say it can't happen, but very seldom can a person find salvation by themselves without anyone giving them any outside input. I've run across two now, and I'll share one of them with you now.

This one was a young man who got caught up in the Canadian wilderness for a whole winter, and all he had to spend his time on was an old Bible he found in that trapper's cabin. So all he could do for that whole winter was read that Bible. But by spring he had come to a knowledge of salvation. Now I say that's rare because you see in the Book of Romans it says:
Romans 10:14

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

So how can they believe unless someone proclaims it? And God has seen fit to use human instruments, and that's why you teach Sunday School classes, that's why you teach a home Bible class, people have to have a human instrument to show them what the Word says. Another one comes to mind right now in Acts Chapter 8, and who was it? The Ethiopian eunuch. And what did he tell Philip?

Acts 8:31a

"And he said, `How can I, except some man should guide me?...'" So this is the whole concept of Scripture. Now coming back to II Corinthians and verse 17 again.

II Corinthians 10:17,18

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. (because the Lord has to open hearts) 18. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."

Now what is the man refuting? The charges against him that all he was doing was what he had drummed up in his own mind. They thought Paul didn't have any authority, but he said, "Oh, look I've got all the authority of the universe because God is the One Who sent me to you." When we get to the Book of Galatians Paul is going to make it so abundantly clear that every thing that he understood of the Spirit, the ascended Lord Jesus in Heaven had revealed it to him, but by the working of the Holy Spirit.

Now coming on into Chapter 11 of II Corinthians and I know that there are differences of opinion about the Church, the Body of Christ, being the Body of Christ or whether it's Israel, but they haven't changed my mind. I've been deluged with information from both camps but I still I hold that the Church is the Bride of Christ. And as I said when we started the study in the Book of Romans, I agree with old William R. Newell the teacher of the 20's and 30's in the Chicago area when he made the statement: "That when the Bride of Christ is ready to be presented to the Groom, the apostle Paul will be the introducer." And I like to think of it that way. I think Paul is just going to stand head and shoulders above everyone else. And William R. Newell took that from the Scriptures when the disciples asked Jesus:
"...which of them should be greatest. (in the Kingdom?)

And do you remember Jesus' answer?

"...for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."

Well when the apostle Paul comes along, what does he speak of himself as?

"Unto me, who am less then the least of all saints..."

William R. Newell put that together and I tend to agree with him. On that basis I think the apostle Paul will indeed be the one who will introduce the Bride to her Groom.

Now verse 1 of Chapter 11:

"Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. 2. For I am jealous over you..."

Now don't forget who he's writing to. He's writing to Gentile believers which include Jews in the age of Grace. But he's writing to members of the Body of Christ, and says:

"For I am jealous over you with godly (small g so it's appropriate) jealously: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste (or pure) virgin to Christ."

Now isn't that a beautiful picture? Now then that is why the Bride is depicted in the Book of Revelation as:

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."
You see that's the whole concept of a virgin bride, and that's why she's always been depicted as wearing white, because of, hopefully, her purity. Now looking at verse 2 again. Paul says to the Church-

**II Corinthians 11:2**

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Now this goes back to cultures in days gone by which were contrary to the way we do things today. Back then the parents would literally pair the children. You know that. So when the father would find the appropriate girl for his son's bride, then the father would make all the arrangements and he more or less consummated the espousal. In other words, what we today would call the engagement. **Now Paul is taking that same concept, that he has made the engagement between the Body of Christ, and Christ, the Head of the Body, in lieu of the wedding that will one day transpire, I think, in glory.** Now I know that there are some who feel that the Body of Christ is not the Bride, but rather Israel. But I don't go along with that line of thinking and the reason is as Paul writes to the Corinthians who are members of the Body of Christ, he says in verse 3:

**II Corinthians 11:3**

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Now what's Paul driving at? Well as Adam and Eve were the first couple that God ordained as the first human family, and as God ordained the set-up, He made the man the head of the woman. Now let's turn to the Book of Ephesians Chapter 5, to chase that down. And here Paul draws the analogy between the husband's relationship with his wife and Christ's relationship with the Church. Again, if there was not that groom and bride concept I don't think the apostle would do this. Let's begin with verse 23:

**Ephesians 5:23,24**

"For the husband is the head of the wife, (that doesn't mean that she is his slave, but he is positionally the head of the wife) even as Christ is the head of the church: (do you see the analogy?) and he is the saviour of the body. (that is, the Body of Christ or the individual, however you want to look at it.) 24. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be (subject) to their own husbands in every thing."
Now all I'm doing is drawing the analogy between the wife and the husband in the physical, and Christ as the Head of the Body of Christ as, I feel is, the Bride. Now verse 27:

Ephesians 5:27

"That he might present it (that is the Body of Christ) to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Now the concept is going back to that beautifully white clad bride. You've know I've always made the statement that I have never seen a bride that wasn't attractive. Have you? Regardless whether she may have been more or less a plain girl otherwise, but when she puts on that wedding gown she is so attractive. So this is exactly the picture that God is drawing. That the Body of Christ as the Bride is white and clean, and without wrinkle, and without blemish. And then Paul comes back to physical analogy in verse 28. Now I have another one that I like to use in this instance, and the connection may not be as clear cut, but on the other hand I have to feel that the Holy Spirit gave Paul this particular picture again for our own doctrinal understanding. And we find that in Romans Chapter 7:4:

Romans 7:4

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; (that is His crucified physical body) that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Now I think when we taught Romans we brought this out. What is the primary purpose of God bringing man and woman together in a marital relationship? Fruit. And what's the fruit? Children. That not the sole purpose, but the primary purpose. Well it's the same way here. What is the primary purpose of God uniting Himself to us as members of the Body of Christ, and claiming us as His own. We are to be fruitful and bring forth spiritual children. Now we're all getting anxious I trust for the Lord's soon return. We are seeing the world just plunging into the end-time phenomena, and the things that are getting bad are going to only get worse. While you're in Romans stop with me at Romans 11:25 because here's the whole concept that as in a physical marriage God expects the fruit of that marriage to be children so also the fruit of the believer should be other believers, and we call that soul winning. And soul winning has to be done scripturally.

Romans 11:25
"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (secret) lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness (a spiritual blindness) in part (one day this blindness will end) is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

Now what's the fulness of the Gentiles? When the Body of Christ is complete. When God has finished drawing that last person into the Body of Christ then we're out of here. After that happens God will pick up where He left off with the Nation of Israel. Now coming back to II Corinthians Chapter 11 and reading verse 3 again.

II Corinthians 11:3

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve (in that first marital union) through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

If Eve is a symbol of the Church, the Body of Christ, then it stands to reason that it's the Church that Satan is constantly attacking. Satan knows that it's in the realm of the Church that he has his greatest opposition. Now we hear over and over, "When good men do nothing, then bad things happen." And Satan knows that, so if he can neutralize the Body of Christ to where it says nothing then he can have full sway. Now then verse 4.

II Corinthians 11:4

"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, (not the One of the Cross, not the One in resurrection power, but preaches the Jesus of His earthly ministry, with all His signs and miracles) whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

Now I would go to Galatians Chapter 1, and what does Paul say?

Galatians 1:6-8

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; (something other than faith in His death, burial and resurrection for salvation + nothing) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8. But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."
LESSON THREE * PART IV

THE CONCEPT OF GIVING IN THE AGE OF GRACE

II CORINTHIANS 8:7 - 11:22

When we were first asked to teach on television, Iris and I dragged our feet for about three months but finally the Lord just laid it on us so heavily that we decided we would explore the possibilities. We never dreamed the program would go for more than six months. Now we're several years down the road in this ministry. So Iris and I are in this together, and that in itself is a miracle of God, how He brought us together. Who would have ever dreamed that we'd be used the way we are by Him. Now let's pick up where we left off in the last lesson and that would be with verse 4.

II Corinthians 11:4a

"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus,..."

Now what do you suppose Paul is talking about? Well, something other than the Jesus Who died for the sins of the world, and rose in power and glory from the dead. You don't hear that too much anymore do you? We hear a lot of preaching about Jesus. Once, I was teaching in Northern Iowa and we had a house full of young people every Saturday night, and that was just after the Jesus Movement of the 60's. Remember that? And that's what they were. They just loved to sing, "Here comes Jesus walking on the water." Well they only knew One Jesus, and that was the Jesus of His earthly ministry.

They knew nothing of the Christ of Calvary, they knew nothing of the shed Blood, they knew nothing of the power of His resurrection. And they aren't alone. This is most of Christendom tonight. They know about Jesus, they know about Christmas and Easter, but the power of the work of the Cross, that's something that has been long forgotten I'm afraid. But Paul says, `If they come preaching another Jesus than the One which he preached which was:

I Corinthians 1:23a

"But we preach Christ crucified,..." And here Paul says:

II Corinthians 11:4

"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received , or another gospel, which ye
have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." Now in verse 5 we have the crowning statement of his defense of his apostleship, and how many times hasn't he used it.

II Corinthians 11:5

"For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" Now who was that? Peter. Paul says he's not a whit behind him. Now move across the page to Chapter 12 and look at verse 11.

II Corinthians 12:11a

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: (you forced me. Why? Because of them constantly accusing him of not being a rightful apostle. Paul didn't have letters of commendations, he couldn't say, "Well, I ministered with Christ for 3 years like Peter could.") for I ought to have been commended of you: (was he? No, but he should have been. He was the one who brought them out of paganism, he was the one who brought them into the light of the Gospel of the Grace of God as found in I Corinthians 15:1-4. Now they are turning against him and not even giving him credit for it.) for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."

I've told you that the Holy Spirit, by inspiration, over and over repeats things that need to be repeated, and here are two of them in two Chapters. In Chapter 11 Paul says, "For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." and here in Chapter 12 it's repeated again as he says, "for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."

Galatians 1:11,12

"But I certify (or guarantee) you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man, (Paul didn't pick up someone else's mantle.) 12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, (by other men) but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Now go to Chapter 2. The disciples have now called Paul and Barnabas up to Jerusalem. This is the great Jerusalem counsel of about AD 51 and this chapter is a
parallel chapter of Acts Chapter 15. Now at this counsel the disciples have been coming down hard on Paul. They want him to back away from all of the claims of his apostleship, they want him to quit teaching that Gentiles can become believers without keeping the Law. (Acts 15:1 and Acts 15:5-6) They want him to embrace Judaism and circumcision, along with a belief in Christ. Now verse 5, and look what Paul says by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

*Galatians 2:5,6a*

"*To whom* (these men in Jerusalem, Peter, James and John and the rest) *we gave place by subjection*, (see what that says? He was under pressure to do what they said. But Paul says, `We didn't give into to them') **no not for an hour**; (and what was the end result of not giving in?) **that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.** (Gentiles. Now verse 6) 6. **But of these** (the Twelve) *who seemed to be somewhat,...*" They thought they were still head and shoulders above him, but they're not. They thought they were, but their authority had slipped through the cracks and Paul's had ascended. And so these who seemed to be somewhat:

*Galatians 2:6a*

"*But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were,..."*

That's past tense. They had been, they were the Twelve, that Jesus had chosen. But Israel has rejected it all, and Israel is slipping away. In just a few years after this is written the Temple will be destroyed, Jerusalem is destroyed, and Israel goes into a dispersion among the nations of the world. Oh sure these disciples had had their time. But because of Israel's unbelief they had lost it. Verse 6 again:

*Galatians 2:6*

"*But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference*(when they really started comparing notes of doctrine, not experience.) **added nothing to me:**"

Now when it came to experience then who could have had the most? Well the Twelve. Look what they had experienced with all the miracles. Peter could even say, "Well Paul, I walked on the water." And Peter did until he sank, but he made a few steps on the water. The Twelve could rehearse all of that because they had the experience. But you see Paul had the doctrine. Paul had the revelations from the ascended Lord. Now verse 7:
Galatians 2:7,8

"But contrariwise, when they (the Twelve) saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision (the Gentiles) was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision (the Jew) was unto Peter. 8. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, (Jew) the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)"

What did Paul mean in verse 8 when he said, "the same?" The same Christ, the same God, the same Lord Jesus Who commissioned the Twelve to go to Israel, and they followed Him for 3 years, they ministered unto Him. But now that has all fallen through the cracks and the apostle Paul comes to the front, and now with this same Jesus he becomes the apostle of choice.

Galatians 2:9a

"And when James, Cephas, (Peter) and John,..."

I always feel that in Scripture there is a reason for the order of names. And here Peter is not first. It's not Peter, James and John, in fact the James of the Peter, James and John we read about in the Four Gospels is already dead, he's been beheaded. This James is the one that wasn't even one of the Twelve. But he is now at the head of the list. Peter has already lost his place of primary authority. Peter is not even moderating this meeting, but rather James is.

Galatians 2:9

"And when James, Cephas, (Peter) and John, who seemed (they weren't really, but they thought they were. So they seemed ) to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, (to be the primary apostle now) they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; (they shook on the whole deal, and all agreed) that we (Paul and Barnabas) should go unto the heathen, (Gentiles) and they (would continue to go) unto the circumcision. (Jews)

Now the Twelve can only go to the Jews a few more years, because the Romans over-run Jerusalem, and Israel ceases to be a viable entity (until 1948) as they are scattered into every nation on earth. But until that happened, Peter, James, and John are going to hold forth among the children of Israel. But it was practically a lost cause because of Israel's unbelief. So the reason Paul has to constantly defend his apostleship is because of those Twelve men in Jerusalem who refused to give up their authority. And that's just human. I have nothing against Peter. I'm going to be just as anxious to meet Peter one day as any of the rest of them. But all this just shows their humanity,
that they weren't ready to relinquish that power and authority and admit that this Jew is now in the place of God using an instrument. Come back to II Corinthians. Verse 6.

**II Corinthians 11:6-8**

"But though I be rude in speech, (he didn't have all the grammar in the exact order, evidently, but he wasn't rude when it came to knowledge.) yet not in knowledge; but we have been throughly made manifest among you in all things. 7. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? 7. I robbed (he took evidently a certain amount of wages from) other churches (in other areas of Greece) taking wages of them, to do you service."

Paul, I think against his better judgment, actually took some offerings from those poor, poor people up in Macedonia and Achaia. I pointed out several weeks ago that Greece was mountainous and usually there was very little means of making a living by growing crops and so forth, so these people were poor. But nevertheless from that poor destitute area he did take money so that he wouldn't have to take a dime from Corinth which was a wealthy commercial city. And I wouldn't doubt that there were some pretty well-to-do people in that congregation. In fact we know there was. We read about them goofing up the Lord's supper by bringing all their expensive food and wine? So Paul says, "I spared you who could have afforded it from giving me money, but instead I took it from those poor folks up in the mountains." Now reading on:

**II Corinthians 11:9,10**

"And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia (Northern Greece, poverty stricken Greece, they) supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. 10. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia." (Southern Greece)

Now why do you think that the apostle Paul condescends so much to these carnal, fleshly, believing Corinthians" His answer is because he loved them as we see in verse 11.

**II Corinthians 11:11,12**

"Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. 12. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we." In other words, steeped in truth of the
revelations from the ascended Lord. Now verses 13, 14, & 15 are tremendous doctrinal verses:

**II Corinthians 11:13**

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ."

What do you suppose they were doing? They were using much the same language that Paul did. Oh, they would make reference to Christ, they would make reference to His death, burial, and resurrection, and to the Holy Spirit. Does that sound familiar? I hope it does because that's exactly what we're up against. They use all the seemingly right terminology, but it is totally empty of doctrine.

**II Corinthians 11:14**

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." He appears as though he is the one to be worshipped, and to be listened to. But it's still Satan. He doesn't' change except for his outward appearance. So he's transformed into an angel of light.

**II Corinthians 11:15**

"Therefore (since Satan is driving this, and he has people totally confused because of his outward appearances then therefore) it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

Now that's not me talking. God's Word says that these people who seemingly can almost shine forth like an angel of light, and they seemingly have got all the power, and the world is full of it tonight, yet their end is going to be according to their works. As a great old Bible scholar from England said back in the early part of this century (referring to these kind of things), "I can envision the day when these people will stand before the great White Throne, which is a place for only the lost. They will stand there and suddenly realize that their faith wasn't what they thought it was." This is where we have to be so careful when what we see and hear doesn't line up with the Word of God, then those who are proclaiming it, (and I say it cautiously) might very well be a minister of Satan who is the angel of light. Remember Satan will do anything (II Corinthians 4:3,4) to keep people from hearing the Gospel of salvation.
Let's review what you've heard over and over since we've been in Corinthians, and that was the sufferings and pressures the apostle Paul came under in order to get the Gospel to us. Remember, our salvation is based on what Christ has done for us, (His death, burial, and resurrection) but the one who got that message out to the Gentile world was this man. Paul was literally sold out to Christ.

**II Corinthians 11:16,17**

"I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little." (In other words he said, "Let me just tell why I think God has used me as He has.) **17. That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting."** Remember I've told you that when Paul says, "I speak not by commandment as he did in Chapter 8:8.

**II Corinthians 8:8a**

"I speak not by commandment,..." Paul says in effect that it was his own words, and yet we know that he was inspired to write those words or else it wouldn't be in here. Remember not a word is in here that the Holy Spirit didn't cause each of these writers to write.

**II Corinthians 11:21**

"I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also." Now verse 22 gives us a clue.

**II Corinthians 11:22**

"Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I."

Who do you think he's talking about? The people that are constantly opposing his apostleship. They were Jews! Now, I'm not going to say here that it was definitely the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, but way down deep I kind of think so. Because they are still not ready to accept the fact that these pagan Gentiles could enter into a salvation experience without becoming a part of Judaism. But that's speculation. The Scripture doesn't say, but whoever he is referring to was Jewish. Because that's what he says: Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Now let's come on back to Acts Chapter 3. Now this was the very bulwark of these men. And Peter here is speaking:
Acts 3:12-13a

"And when Peter saw it, (the arousing of the crowds when they healed the lame man) he answered unto the people, `Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? v13. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, ....''

What does that tell you? That was the very engine of everything they were doing. Their heritage went back to the father of the Hebrew race, Abraham. And the Covenant men, Isaac and Jacob. And this is what just motivated these Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. And so Paul says, "You think I'm not part of that? You think I'm not an Israelite? Well, I'm a Hebrew of the Hebrews." And in Philippians he said, "A Pharisee of the Pharisees."