

# **TO SERVE IN HUMANITY WITH DIVINITY**

**By Titus Chu**

## **MESSAGE THIRTEEN: THE APOSTLE PAUL'S UPLIFTED HUMANITY WITH DIVINITY IN SECOND CORINTHIANS: TO LABOR WITH THE NEW COVENANT MINISTRY AS A NEW COVENANT MINISTER (4)**

### **TO LABOR AS A CONSTITUTED NEW COVENANT MINISTER (2)**

#### **Living to Him**

Paul determined to be well pleasing to the Lord because he realized that “we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ,” and each one will reap of the things done through the body according to what he has practiced. The New Testament ministry is not an inspirational leading, neither is it a matter of incidental victory or failure. The New Testament ministry has its practice. Paul not only possessed this ministry and lived this ministry, he also practiced this ministry. His practice of the New Testament ministry was his person and his living. This practice brought in a manifestation. Therefore Paul declared, “We are made manifest to God; yet I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.”

Paul desired that the Corinthians boast on his behalf. Although his outward appearance (face) was weak and his speech contemptible, yet in reality (in heart) he had an unveiled face (Greek, *prosopon*, meaning “appearance”) beholding and reflecting the glory of the Lord. Paul desired the Corinthians to see such an appearance and boast accordingly.

While Paul lived to Christ, he actually lived to the church in Corinth, because the invisible Christ can be practically seen through a local church, and the life-giving Christ can be

practically experienced through a local church. He testified, “For whether we were beside ourselves, it was to God; or whether we are sober-minded, it is for you.” Without the experience of being beside ourselves to God privately, we cannot have a sober mind for the saints practically. Paul was strong in stating his private experience of being beside himself to God. He didn’t merely pray, groan, speak to the Lord, call on His name, or even intercede. He had a constant experience of touching the Lord to the point that the Lord filled him, causing him to indulge in the presence of the Lord and even causing him to be beside himself. This became the root of the exercising of his ministry and produced a sober mind in him toward the church in Corinth. From Paul’s example we see that all the rich spiritual experiences of a healthy spiritual man should produce an uplifted humanity in which this man has the ability to care for the church he serves.

Eventually Paul concluded, “For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.” Paul testified that he lived to Christ, and he also admonished the Corinthians to do the same. He desired that the saints in Corinth would be constrained by the love of Christ and live only to the crucified and resurrected Christ.

### **Being Ambassadors**

The apostle Paul was judged, misunderstood, and even despised by the Corinthians. Surely in the eyes of the Corinthians there had been enmity between them and the apostle. Hence the apostle presented his ministry, the New Testament ministry, in a very wise way. Firstly he mentioned that this ministry cannot be known according to the flesh, even as Christ cannot be known according to the flesh. Secondly he declared that if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, and all the old things have become new. The situation may not have changed, the events may not have changed, and even the persons may not have changed, but

praise the Lord that both the apostle and the Corinthians were in Christ, and were therefore one new creation. Paul wanted the Corinthians to see the situation, the events, and the persons, according to the new creation.

The Corinthians were divided, and their practice of the church life was unhealthy. They had enmity among themselves, towards Christ, and towards the apostle. Paul had every right to rebuke them and point out their unhealthy condition. Yet instead Paul stated, “All things are out from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” Paul fully realized that in order for the Corinthians to have a proper relationship with everything around them, they must first have a proper relationship with God. If a New Testament minister can bring people into a proper relationship with God, then everything else will come into its proper order in due time. In an uplifted humanity Paul sweetly stated, “God in Christ was reconciling the world to Himself... and has put in us the word of reconciliation.”

Paul was an ambassador on behalf of Christ. He beseeched the Corinthians to be reconciled to God, which was the entreating of God Himself. Because the Corinthians were saved, and therefore justified by God, they had already experienced the first step of reconciliation. However, they needed to grow in this reconciliation. Paul desired to present the church in Corinth full-grown in glory. Such a growth is the reconciliation process. We must realize that reconciliation should not only be a fact of salvation but also an experience of being saved daily. God, as the God of reconciliation, is so gracious and merciful to us. He is able to bring us out of whatever state we are in and bring us into a deep inner peace in grace. Thus, He brings us to enjoy the reality of reconciliation on all occasions, whether we are in victory or in failure.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that the church, though it might be degraded outwardly, still can become the righteousness of God in Christ, because Christ who did not know sin was made sin on their behalf. How sweet was Paul’s commitment! He was

an ambassador, sent by God and representing God, who did not come with judgment, nor with demands. Rather, he came with the ministry of reconciliation. Reconciliation comes from the operative New Testament ministry. When the New Testament ministry operates, it produces reconciliation.

### **Being Constituted**

Paul declared that he worked together with God and entreated the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. He further declared, “Behold, now is the well-acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (6:2). He realized that there must be exhortation as long as this day was called “today.” However, he also realized that “today” was the time for him to give no occasion of stumbling in anything that the ministry might not be faulted. In everything he commended himself as a minister of God. In his exercise he was in much endurance, in affliction, in necessities and in distresses. In his environment he was in stripes, in imprisonments, and in tumults. In his living he was in labors, in watchings, and in fastings. In his virtues he was in pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, and in kindness. In his manifestation he was in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love, in the word of truth, and in the power of God through the weapons of righteousness on the right (to offend) and on the left (to defend). His testimony was produced through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet well known, as dying yet behold he lived, as being disciplined yet not being put to death, as made sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet enriching many, as having nothing and yet possessing all things. Eventually Paul concluded, “Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged. You are not constricted in us, but you are constricted in your inward parts....Be enlarged” (6:11-12).

Few realize how the New Testament ministry is constituted. Even fewer see that in this ministry there is a bountiful life supply. No natural man could have lived Paul’s life, no natural man could have gone through these experiences, and no natural

man could have borne such a burden. Surely the life Paul received and enjoyed was all-fitting, all-sufficient, and all-mature. Such a life was manifested through an uplifted humanity in Paul. In all his experiences we see no self-pity and no murmuring. Rather, we simply see a commending to the Corinthians with a loving request: be enlarged.

### **Being Operative**

Paul further exhorted the Corinthians that in being reconciled to God they should exercise a practical separation from “what is unclean.” Thus he said to them, “Do not become dissimilarly yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? And what concord does Christ have with Belial? Or what part does a believer have with an unbeliever? And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols?” (6:14-16a).

Paul continued exhorting the Corinthians to realize that they were the inner temple of the living God. They were the Holy of Holies, and the Lord would dwell in them and walk among them, and the Lord would be their God and they would be His people. The Lord would be a Father to them and they would be sons and daughters to the Lord. Paul’s exhortation concluded in this way: “Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit.” Both the flesh and the spirit are crucial in God’s testimony. The flesh is where God is manifested, and the spirit is where God abides.

### **Being Bold and Joyful, and Boasting on Behalf of the Church**

Paul testified of his purity, “... we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one,” and beseeched the Corinthians, “Make room for us” (7:2). This indicates how much Paul desired the Corinthians to have a healthy affection toward the one who had given birth to them. He

declared boldly, “You are in our hearts for our dying together and our living together” (7:3b). After hearing a good report from Titus, Paul was overwhelmed with joy because of the earnestness that the church had for them. It seems he was beside himself. He thus declared, “Great is my boldness toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf; I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction.”

When Paul came into Macedonia, he had no rest. He was afflicted in everything; without were fightings (for the gospel), within were fears (for an unrepentant church). But the Lord comforted him when he was downcast by the coming of Titus, who conveyed to Paul the longing, the lamentation, and the zeal the Corinthians had toward Paul. Because of this, Paul testified, “I rejoiced the more” (7:7b). Paul was happy, because the Corinthians were made sorrowful to repentance, and he realized that their repentance had led unto salvation. “For behold this very thing, your being made sorrowful according to God, what earnestness it has worked out in you, indeed what defense, indeed what indignation, indeed what fear, indeed what longing, indeed what zeal, indeed what punishment!” (7:11). Paul’s labor in his New Testament ministry with an uplifted humanity was now so fruitful. Eventually Paul testified for them, “In everything you have commended yourselves to be pure in the matter.” Because of this Paul and his co-workers were comforted. What a beautiful picture: a repentant church in tenderness, a New Testament minister as a father (the source of life and truth), and the abundant joy of his co-workers who work in the New Testament ministry.

Paul no longer merely had an expectation for the degraded church in Corinth. Not only had Titus’s spirit been refreshed by the whole church, but now, because of his report, Paul rejoiced that in everything he had boldness because of them. Titus previously may have been reluctant to visit the church in Corinth because of their degraded condition, and thus he needed Paul’s encouraging boast on their behalf. Now Paul realized that his boasting turned out to be the truth, and Titus became abundantly affectionate toward the Corinthians. How sweet! How

marvelous! Here we see an apostle, in his New Testament ministry with his uplifted humanity, producing such a sweet result in his labor, and his co-workers sharing his burden and developing a love toward the once dissenting church. Furthermore, this previously degraded church became both obedient to the co-workers and healthy in their relationship with the apostles.

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