

Text: 2 Cor 5.1-21

A Preliminary Outline of 2 Corinthians:

Opening (1.1-11)

Addressing Corinthian Perceptions and Paul's Ministry Philosophy (1.12-7.16)

Defending Paul's Conduct (1.12-2.17)

Exposition of Paul's Philosophy (3.1-6.10)

Appeal for Corinthian confidence (6.11-7.16)

Instructions concerning the offering (8.1-9.15)

Assertion of apostolic authority (10.1-13.10)

Conclusion (13.11-14)¹

Chapter 5 addresses the question of our destiny after death and before the resurrection, which motivates Paul in his ministry.

Preview: 4.16-18

Our outer man is decaying

Our present affliction is light

Our hope is in eternal things

I. The state of the dead in the Lord (1-10)

When a believer dies, he or she is immediately in the Lord's presence, awaiting the resurrection. Since part of the process includes the judgement seat of Christ, this serves as a powerful motivator for Christian life and ministry.

II. Conclusions concerning ministry (11-19)

Since he anticipates resurrection and evaluation, what occupies his ministerial mind? (11)

Paul constantly is persuading men

What does Paul hope the Corinthians see in him and his ministry priorities? (11b-12a)

The noble, God-approved ministry of selfless disciple-making

¹ Adapted from Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003).

Why does Paul want the Corinthians to see this? (12b)

So they can answer those who criticize Paul

In v. 13, Paul is aware that they could take his message one of two ways, critically: "he is beside himself," or uncritically: "he is of sound mind." What do his responses mean?

That he does what he does for God and for the people he is discipling

Besides anticipating Jesus' role as the believer's judge, what else about Jesus drives Paul forward in his ministry? (14-15)

The love of Christ [Christ's love for man, dying as his substitute, living for their eternal life]

What had changed in Paul's perspective concerning people and concerning Christ? (16)

He used to judge according the flesh [Jews = good, Gentiles = bad, Jesus = bad], but now he looks at things differently

What made the difference in Paul's perspective? (17)

Becoming a new creature in Christ

What did ministry did this transformation produce? (18-19)

The ministry of reconciliation (the same as Christ's ministry to us)

III. The urgent appeal to the Corinthians 5.20-6.10

To whom is Paul urgently appealing in v. 20?

To the Corinthians themselves

Who does Paul represent in this appeal?

God, he appeals to them as an ambassador from God

What does his appeal suggest about their spiritual condition?

Their divisions with Paul put them out of fellowship with God as well

What does Paul mean when he says the Lord was made sin on our behalf? (21)

He took our place and experienced God's wrath in our place

What was the purpose of this? What does that mean practically?

So we could become the righteousness of God in Him, that is, so we could live like Jesus

Contrast the appeal in 6.1 with the role of ambassador in v. 20. What appeal is Paul making in 6.1?

He is making a personal appeal for reconciliation with him, repenting of their division against him

What does receiving God's grace "in vain" mean?

That the believer hasn't used the grace God gave him for righteous living

Paul quotes Isaiah 49.8, reminding them of the acceptable time of their salvation. What is it time for now? (2)

Now is the day for reconciling with brethren and getting busy in God's service

Paul is describing the way he is urging them (v. 1) in v. 3-4. What does he mean by "giving no offense"?

His appeal to them should not be seen as rude or offensive

What is Paul's purpose in listing his ministry experiences, both negative and positive? (4-10)

To intensify his appeal for their reconciliation: everything he does is for the sake of the gospel

In vv. 8-10, Paul offers some contrasts. What do the negatives (which he contradicts) suggest?

These are charges the Corinthians had made against him

IV. The climax of Paul's appeal (6.11-13)

This section continues through the end of chapter 7.

First, Paul says that he has spoken freely. What does he mean by that, and by the reference to his heart? (11)

He has been candid and vulnerable — he wants a good relationship with them

What is the real problem between Paul and the Corinthians? (12)

They are holding themselves back from him, restraining themselves from reconciliation

Instead of their restraint, what does Paul call them to in v. 13?

Open your hearts wide