

2 Corinthians Class 8 Transcript

Welcome back to FI Online. This is class number eight in our series on **2 Corinthians: The Ministry of Reconciliation**.

We received one question from class number seven. So let's begin by addressing that.

In **2 Corinthians 5 verse 20**, Paul tells us that he is an ambassador for Christ. But can that title or office be applied to all Christians or just to the ministry in this age?

Now when I first read that question I thought, "well, if we read the verse carefully, Paul says **we** are ambassadors for Christ." But then I read it again and I realized, "oh, I think I understand why this question has come up."

So what does the verse say?

*Now then, **we** are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: **we** implore **you** on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.*

Now if we read it with that kind of emphasis we could easily come to the conclusion that **we** refers to the ministry—and **you** refers to the members. After all, we've often noted that the Scripture is primarily written to the church, not to the world as a whole at this point.

So, that would certainly seem to indicate that Paul was saying we ministers are pleading with you to be reconciled. But the problem is if we begin to consider that, well first of all, if you read through in a modern translation you will see that the word "**you**" is in italics. Probably most of you already recognize that when a word is put in italics in our Bible translations, that basically means that translators have inserted something to try to clarify the meaning and sometimes it's very helpful. Other times, really not.

In this case, when we begin to read this verse we actually find that the word "you" is not there in the Greek. So what does it actually say?

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us. We implore on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Who's being implored? Who is it that's being encouraged to be reconciled to God? To be fair, the members have already been reconciled to God through the sacrifice of Christ. So this must be a reference to imploring those who do not yet have that opportunity.

So as we look through this, we perhaps should consider the metaphor that Paul is using in the first place. He does not actually claim for himself some kind of special office that's his own and no one else's. He didn't really try to develop the analogy at this point. But if we were to consider it a little bit more deeply, we would remember that an ambassador operates out of an embassy. And an embassy has many staff members who carry out various functions enabling the ambassador to do what he (or she) needs to do in representing his country properly.

If you were to visit an embassy, the chances are very good you would not be greeted by the ambassador himself or herself. But instead by a receptionist who would be very friendly and helpful, and try to direct you to someone who could take care of whatever your concerns were. You might end up speaking to the chargé d'affaires. You might talk to someone else who is a

department head or carries out some other function in the embassy itself. You might end up speaking to those individuals, you might ultimately speak to the ambassador. But the chances are good you would be dealing with primarily the staff of that embassy.

Now while the ambassador is the primary individual—the primary officer representing his or her country—all of those in the embassy are expected to represent the country as well. In a similar way, all of us represent the kingdom of God where our ultimate citizenship resides. Some have a more public function. Others faithfully carry out their responsibilities behind the scenes.

I think that teaches us a metaphor about how God intends us to function. We're all in a sense a part of the embassy staff. All of us faithfully recognize that our citizenship is in the kingdom of God, that that's what we represent, we're happy to do so. But we may do so at different levels as far as reaching out to the public is concerned.

We would hope that for all of us in our private lives, our lives themselves are an example to others of what it means to be in a right relationship with God. A relationship where we have been reconciled and where sin does not cut us off from that proper relationship with God. So all of us in that sense are examples, representations of the kingdom of God and what this reconciliation truly means. So again, it's not a matter of Paul claiming this office for himself.

Now is it true that in our present world that the primary outreach to the world is through the ministry and those with those responsibilities? Certainly true. But all of us carry out certain responsibilities as a part of the embassy. And I think that's the sense that we should have in mind.

We probably should understand this passage as Paul saying that all of us have a part to play as a part of the embassy of the kingdom of God and showing what it truly means to be reconciled to God. So, very good question.

Again, we'll remind you that you have one hour after the end of this class to turn in any questions you may have. We'll try to address those before the beginning of the next class. Now, as always, we want God's blessing upon us, and therefore we ask that you will join me in praying and asking God to bless this class.

[Prayer]

[7:05]

In our last class we talked a little bit more about that concept of why Paul uses that term of "Ministry of Reconciliation" and how he saw his function as being one to help men be reconciled to God. We spent a little time talking about the concept that we never find in Scripture that God is reconciled to man. It's always man being reconciled to God. We are the offenders, and we are the ones who need to be reconciled to a perfect and loving God. And, Paul explains that he had been given the opportunity to help men understand that.

But, as we moved through the first part of **chapter 6 of 2 Corinthians**, we found that Paul is very openly, very genuinely, in a sense, very emotionally addressing the Corinthian congregation. He cared about them a great deal, but because there had been so many difficulties and problems in the process of working through some of the issues, some that were found in 1 Corinthians, some that, as we have seen, have come up since that time, that there has been kind of a tension, kind of an arms-length relationship, at least with some.

And, Paul is reaching out to them to tell them that that isn't his desire at all. That he, as we'll see as we go further, hopefully in this class today, we will see that Paul is helping them understand that he knows that, yes, they made mistakes, but they very genuinely repented of those. And he's going to talk about how he knows that. So, we will see that as we go forward.

Last time we finished up through **verse 10 of 2 Corinthians chapter 6**. So let's pick up in **verse 11**.

He says: **[2 Corinthians 6:11]** *O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.* We are reaching out to you; we're speaking from the heart.

So, he's not only expressing his desire for a relationship with them. But remember, we're going to see, as we get toward the end of this book, that there's still a number of individuals who are there who have been troubling the Church, who have been undermining Paul. And we're going to see that, in some cases those individuals are still trying to undermine Paul, trying to be resistant. Even though most of the brethren are responding, there are some who are not.

So Paul is saying: "Okay, you want to judge me; you're going to judge me. I know that's going to happen." That's, in a sense, something that's always going to be a part of the way we look at certain things. We're told to judge with righteous judgement. So he says, "What's righteous judgment? My *heart is wide open*. I am not hiding behind something. I have no ulterior motives. I'm dealing with you from the heart. And," as he's going to go on to say, "that's what I expect from you too. That's what I'm asking of you."

So, **verse 12**, he says: *You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections* (your own thinking, your own approach).

Paul has, in many ways, abundantly demonstrated his love for [them] and by his actions, by his words, by his letters, the sacrifices that he has willingly made to try to serve these people. And, he's saying: "If you'll look at what I've been doing, you really can't doubt the sincerity of the care that I've sent to you, that I've provided. But," he says, "if you look at your own actions and attitudes, do you see the same thing toward me? Are you responding in the same way?"

[10:47]

One of the things that we sometimes see in dealing with human beings and sometimes even in our own lives—we have to be careful about it—is a problem that, let's say, is similar to what psychologists call "projection" —where an individual takes his own attitude, his own way of thinking—and, in many cases, he or she hasn't really even acknowledged the attitude themselves—but they project it on other people. Sometimes this is done toward people, sometimes toward congregations.

I remember, many years ago, an individual who came to me and said—I'd been in a particular area for a couple of years—and the person came to me and said, "Well, we just want you to know that our family really appreciates how you are dealing with the congregation here because we know it's not easy. This is probably the most unfriendly congregation we've ever been in." And I remember when the man told me that, I was a little shocked because, as far as I was concerned, it was probably the friendliest congregation I'd ever been in. They were a joy to work with. I really appreciated them. And yet, he felt they were unfriendly.

So it kind of illustrated to me that here was an individual who, for whatever reason, didn't really seem to have the ability to reach out to people in a friendly way. And, as a result, his conclusion was: "All these other people are not friendly." But, while I was there, I found the people to be very friendly and very warm. It's one of the best congregations we ever worked with. We enjoyed them a great deal.

So, I saw this aspect of "projection." That seems to be maybe what's taking place here. People will do that in a variety of different ways. It may be about the way that others treat them. It may be that, you know, we have this kind of an issue.

One of the ways that I've seen it come up sometimes is, an individual who already is struggling with some personal issues in their life, they will look at the congregation and say, "This congregation is just not a very loving congregation." And that's one of those things that when I hear that phrase, I say, "Okay, is that really true? Is it really true that the congregation is not loving?" Because oftentimes that's not really what I find to be the situation.

[13:08]

Sometimes I've gone to those individuals. I don't know that it's ever been all that successful, but I've tried to say, "Okay, let's take what you say at face value. Let's say you're right, that God has shown you that this congregation is not a very loving congregation. Why would He show you something like that? Would it be so that you can stand back and be judgmental and criticize them? Or would it be that maybe God shows you the congregation is not loving enough because He wants you to inject more love into that congregation, to make it more loving by your love being given?"

Now, of course, I would have to say that even when I've tried to do that, generally, no, it doesn't work very well. In fact, that phrase, "this congregation..." or "this church doesn't show enough love" is what we sometimes call an "exit line."

If you've ever seen a play on stage, you know that sometimes an actor or actress, as they're getting ready to leave, they have what's called an "exit line." They say something, and then they disappear. And, that kind of seems to be what sometimes happens, unfortunately, with people in the Church. They're getting ready to leave, and if you can put the blame on somebody else, then it doesn't seem so bad. So, if I can say, "Well, this Church just doesn't have enough love," and then I walk away—because, after all, "the Church doesn't have enough love"—somehow, I'm justified. No, you're not justified at all.

But it's that concept of "projecting" your own attitudes, your own ideas, your own approaches on other people and assuming that they think that way. Well, Paul is saying: "Okay, if you're seeing restriction here, [if] there's kind of an arms-length relationship, I want you to understand, it's not from me. I'm not the one who's restricting. I'm reaching out. I'm opening my heart. I have no more ability to open myself to you and reach out to you. You're going to have to reach back if you want the right kind of relationship."

[15:12]

So he says this in **verse 13 [2 Corinthians 6]**: *Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.*

“Now, this is what I’ve tried to be to you. I’ve tried to *be open* and genuine. That’s what I want from you. I don’t want some act that you put on. I don’t want something to appear one way when you’re really another way. I want a genuineness between us. *Expositor’s* puts it this way—it tries to kind of capture the sense. It says:

If there are any feelings of constriction or restraint in our relationship, they are on your side, not mine. I appealed to you as my spiritual children. In fair exchange from my unrestricted affection, give me yours too.

Now, it’s interesting that Paul does not express this as a command, nor does he express it as kind of a wistful wish that he kind of wishes things were that way. But he gives it as an instruction. You cannot grow in your relationship with others when your attitude toward them is closed. Even if you keep that attitude to yourself, even if you don’t tell anybody else about it, but it affects you and your relationship with them.

So Paul is saying: “What I need from you is genuineness. I need to—if we’ve got a problem, let’s work it through. But, we need this genuineness. We can’t just go through the motions because that’s really a form of hypocrisy.”

Now, Paul is going to go on from here, and it would almost sound like there is a change in subject. But I think what we’ll see is, no, it isn’t quite that way,

He says [**2 Corinthians 6 verse 14**]: *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? (And) what communion has light with darkness?*

Now he’s going to give us several metaphors, and we’ll look at all of these because I think each of them is important as we understand this, and I think he put them in there for a purpose. But, why is he suddenly talking about being *unequally yoked with unbelievers*?

Well, in a sense Paul has been saying: “Look, I am ready to be yoked to you. I am, in my mind, yoked to you, as those that I serve. And I am a believer, just as you are. And if we are believers together, then we can work together. We can go forward. We can accomplish something. But, on the other hand, when you encounter individuals who really are not walking the same way, who don’t have the same standards and values, if you yoke yourself to them, you’re going to be making a mistake.”

There were those individuals in this Corinthian congregation who are on a very different wavelength than Paul. And they may have been people with great personality. Paul implies that he was not an impressive person at all, and he implies that his personality was not particularly a great, flashy personality that attracts people, but instead he was just a normal, everyday person. Now, we may see that a little differently. Paul’s assessment of himself in that way may be a little different than ours would be.

[18:28]

But, many times we look at ourselves and think: “Well, I don’t really have that much to offer; I don’t have a great personality.” But, when we’re genuine, when we’re open with one another, there is a bond, an attachment that comes. And we don’t have to have the wonderful extrovert personality that is so highly-prized in our culture today. But instead, we just can be our genuine selves, and that’s what Paul is saying.

But he's saying: "Be careful, because here are these people who've been in the congregation, who may be very nice personalities in many ways—they may be really attractive people that attract people to them—but, are they really believers? Because if you yoke yourself to them, you're going to be making a mistake."

Now we're going to see that later when we get up even to chapter 11, where Paul talks about false ministers, false apostles, and how Satan masquerades in this way. But I think we could all see examples today of individuals who don't know the truth of God but may have **stunning** personalities. They attract hundreds or thousands of people to them, and yet, they don't have the truth of God. So, don't let yourself become yoked with someone who isn't a believer. And he goes on to give us several examples of this.

One of the reasons he tells us this, probably as well, is that when you begin to form your relationships outside of the circle of believers that are trying to live the right way, the more you associate with people who have a different set of values, the more those values begin to affect you.

Now you may begin to say: "Well, I know what my values are; I wouldn't be—I wouldn't be changed in those ways." But what often happens is that, as you begin to associate with people, with people who don't have that same outlook and approach and set of values, the people who are believers oftentimes begin to look a little bit more strange to you, a little bit more insular, a little bit more **not** like you'd kind of like to be. They may seem like they're a little more, oh, uneducated or unpolished, and they really would kind of like to associate with other people. This process begins. We begin to pull away in that way.

So Paul talks about being careful to whom you're yoked, and then he gives a couple of examples. But we need to consider this concept here. Now sometimes we have applied it, I think appropriately, when it comes to finding a mate, to how you're going to select a mate to spend the rest of your life with. Because certainly, in a sense, in marriage, you are *yoked together*.

The yoking, in this sense, is not considered something burdensome or terrible; it's a matter that you hook up animals to a yoke in order to accomplish something. And, likewise, when you marry, you are joining yourself with someone with the implication that together you're going to accomplish things that by yourself you couldn't accomplish. So, you want to make sure that you have the right person so that you are equally yoked.

[21:44]

Now there's an example that's given here, and I wanted to just give an illustration. You can find a lot of different ones on the internet that show you this. This actually—it just illustrates the concept of being *unequally yoked*. We have here a donkey and an ox yoked together. They're not going to work the same way. The biblical prohibition for this is found in **Deuteronomy 22** and **verse 10**. And it was a recognition there that trying to work two animals together that are not similar to one another is going to be counter-productive and probably harmful to the animals. The physical principle is carried over into human relationships as well.

There is no biblical requirement to keep these animals apart. It's not even something that says one is better than the other. In fact, it depends on what you need them to do. But, it's an injunction not to try to work two animals together that aren't going to work in the same way.

Now, if I can give an illustration: I remember talking to a gentleman a number of years ago who, back in the days before a lot of the mechanized equipment was available, used to cut timber in the woods, and he used oxen or horses hooked up to drag the timber out, move it around—the things that you had to do. And, he told me that one of the things they realized very quickly was that the oxen were much better for that kind of work.

Now the horses were great for some types of things. I don't know how many of you've ever had the opportunity to be around the draft horses. You probably are familiar with the Clydesdales as an example of that. There are many others—Belgians, Percherons—that are draft horses. I had the opportunity one time, working with an old German bachelor, to drive a team of draft horses. And it's really interesting the way that they work and the power that they have—very, very powerful animals.

And when it came to the strength of the two animals in the woods pulling timber, they were very similar. The horses certainly had the ability to pull it. But what they found is that, when the horses would try to pull the heavy pieces of timber out, they would lunge against the traces, and before long they would begin to break them. But where the oxen were concerned, they didn't lunge; they just leaned forward and kept leaning and leaning and leaning until the dewlap touched the ground, and then they would stop and get up, and they would lean again. But it was very smooth. And, as a result of that, it didn't break the traces.

So, both animals were useful. Both animals were powerful. It wasn't one superior to the other; it was simply a matter that they worked in a different way. So hooking oxen together accomplished one thing. Hooking horses together accomplished something else. Oxen move very slowly; horses move much faster. So, to move a heavy load over a distance where you didn't have that kind of lunging, then the horses were certainly superior.

So when we talk about not being equally yoked with different animals, we're not talking about: don't yoke yourself to someone who is inferior. That's not what it's talking about. It's talking about: don't yoke yourself to someone who has a different set of values, who works in a different way.

[25:07]

Now we can apply this—now, again, I don't want to go too far afield here because, obviously, Paul is talking about the relationships in the Church. But, we do at least apply this principle in a lot of different ways. Choosing a mate would certainly be one of these.

You don't want to be yoked with someone who has a different set of values. It's one of the reasons why Paul said in **1 Corinthians 7**, I believe it's **verse 39**, at the end of that chapter, where Paul is talking about a widow remarrying, and he tells her she should marry *only in the Lord*. You want to marry someone who is a believer, who is going to have the same set of values. But, probably many of you have noticed that even among believers, there are a lot of different personalities. And not every personality works together well.

I think of the years when my wife and I were back in college. Of course, we weren't married at that point. But as single students, you begin to get to know different ones, and certainly at that age in life, you're beginning to say, "Well, I wonder if I can have a relationship with this person?"

I remember especially, one of my wife's friends was a very lovely young lady, very attractive and so on. But, just the personality that she had, I knew that she and I could be friends, but there would never be anything more than that. Of course, she understood the same thing. And we were friends. And we enjoyed the friendship. But no, there wasn't going to be anything more than that because our personalities were just too different. We want to be yoked with someone that we can work with—not necessarily the same personality, but someone that meshes with our personality so that we work together. That's one of the ways that would apply.

Now we would apply this principle in a lot of other ways as well. Would it be good to be in a business partnership with someone who has a different set of values? Well, it would depend on the business, I suppose.

I remember one particular individual, a number of years ago, who owned a grocery store in partnership with a couple of other people. And then, when one individual was called into the Church, he was very concerned about things like selling pork and shrimp and tobacco and things like that that were normally sold in grocery stores. It created some conflicts that had to be worked through. So, we would want to be very careful in certain situations of business relationships with nonbelievers.

But on other situations, sure, we can do those things. We can go to a car dealership and buy a car. We don't have to go to a Church member to buy a car. We can work these things out. So, it depends on what the situation is.

But the principle that's being given here is: make sure that you don't bind yourself in a situation where the person you're bound to is, or, I might even say, the organization you're bound to has a different set of values. We don't go into that situation.

[28:01]

Now Paul, of course, is talking about the Church and the relationships we have within the Church. Relationships with one another, relationships between brethren and the ministry—all of those are a part of this. Paul is telling them: be careful to whom you yoke yourself. If you yoke yourself to an unbeliever, an individual whose life does not show that he or she is, in fact, a believer, then you're going to have problems.

So he begins to illustrate this with a series of metaphors.

First of all, he talks about **[2 Corinthians 6 verse 14b]**: (*For*) *what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?* (and then he says) (*And*) *what communion has light with darkness?*

Now, we're going to deal in a little bit more specific way with some of these words than what we may normally think of. He actually introduces five questions. The first two we've just mentioned there, about *fellowship* and *communion*. These are five challenges that relationships are going to have. And these words have a slightly different meaning. So we want to look at them.

He's talking about *fellowship*, *communion*, *accord*, *part*, *agreement*. Those are all just a little bit different. So let's understand a little bit about it.

The word that's translated *fellowship* here is not the one that's normally used. It is—in this case, the word is *metoche*, *metoche*. So let's look at each one.

[Fellowship.] It means “a sharing, participation; a relationship involving shared purposes and activities.”

So he asked the question: what can be the shared activity, the participating event, the shared purpose in activity between *righteousness* and *lawlessness*? How can there be—how can we work together where one standard or one member of the partnership is concerned about righteousness and the other is lawless? How do you do that?

You can't accomplish anything when one person is concerned about living in a right way and the other person is living as if there is no law. Now this tells us something else in the process. There are many people, millions of people, who believe that basically the law of God is set aside, that all you have to do is love one another.

We have an activity here at Foundation Institute where our students go out and research some of the other denominations and, in some cases, non-denominational groups that are out there. And, one of the things they consistently find is that, in many cases, there's virtually no doctrine. That basically, it's just “love one another” and that's adequate—that's all that God expects. As long as we love one another, God is pleased.

Well, that means we've set aside such things as the law of the Sabbath. We don't really have to worry about that because, after all, as long as we love one another, we set that aside. No, that's not true.

[31:18]

Righteousness requires us to be yielded to and obedient to law. Paul is making a series of comparisons here. They're five different comparisons, and, as the commentators even bring out, all five of the comparisons are intended to produce a negative answer. He's asking five questions: *what fellowship*, what shared purpose is there between *righteousness* and *lawlessness*? And the answer obviously is: well, there's none. It—we can't have a shared purpose when one's purpose is to be righteous and the other is to live as if there is no law. It doesn't work.

So, all five of these are intended to produce a negative response. And yet, here we are in the evangelical Christianity world of today that basically wants to overlook law, that basically wants to say: oh, you can do whatever you want. If you want to keep Saturday, that's fine. We want to keep Sunday; that's okay. As long as we love each other, it's all fine. No, there's a law involved. And that law says that you *remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*.

So, you cannot have righteousness and lawlessness together; they won't work. It's an impossibility. It's what we call an “oxymoron” —two things that will not go together. You can't have righteousness apart from law, no matter what the evangelical world says about “just loving one another is all the righteousness we need,” that Jesus imputes righteousness to us as long as we love one another. No, this says: righteousness and lawlessness cannot dwell together.

Now, I don't want to get too bogged down here, but consider: I just mentioned that all five of these comparisons are intended to produce a negative response. What if we turned this around and we say, okay, the evangelicals are right? Then you can be righteous without having law. It's okay because that's acceptable to God, as long as you're loving.

Okay. If we have a positive response to this comparison, then we have to have a positive comparison to all the rest. We have to have a positive answer to all five. All five of them intended to produce the same response. As we go forward we will see it's totally ridiculous to think that some of these things could go together; they just simply cannot. And we'll see that as we go just a little further in the very next metaphor that he talks about. They cannot be together; they are mutually exclusive. If the rest of them automatically produce a negative response, this first one must too. Righteousness and lawlessness cannot dwell together, period.

Now again, put it in the context of what Paul is saying. What kind of relationship are you going to have? With whom are you going to have a relationship as a Christian? You must not be yoked with an individual who sees righteousness and lawlessness as being something that can work together, that can have a shared purpose.

Okay, let's move on here.

[34:55]

The next metaphor he uses—he talks about **communion**. Okay, what do we mean by that? Communion is *koinonia*. It is a very common word that's often translated "a partnership" or "fellowship" —*koinonia*. It means "to have things in common; an association involving close, mutual relations and involvement."

So, he said: "Okay, we're talking about being yoked. How can you have a close association where you're together and involved with one another?" And the metaphor he uses is *light* and *darkness*. Okay. It is [an] absolute impossibility for light and darkness to dwell together. Now there are a lot of lessons we can draw from that, and I think they're wonderful lessons. They're very good for us to keep in mind.

But, think about a comparison. If you have a bucket of white paint and a bucket of black paint and you put them together, you get a bucket of grey paint. That's what happens when you mix those.

What happens when you mix light with darkness? The room is dark, and you turn on the light. Do you get grey? No. You get light. Light overcomes darkness, always. It doesn't matter how dark the darkness is. When the light comes on, the darkness is gone. You don't get grey.

Now, we can apply this in a lot of different ways. And I think there are some wonderful spiritual lessons. I've given sermons on it. Probably other ministers have as well. The comparison between light and dark—how God's way, God's Spirit, is described as being like a light, and when the Spirit of God shines on the darkness, the darkness has to flee.

You know, when we find right in **Genesis, chapter 1**, when we are told what the world was like after Satan's rebellion, it says, *darkness covered the face of the deep*. And *then God* came along and *said, "Let there be light."* Wham! There's light! There was not some struggle back and forth with it gradually getting lighter and darker and lighter and darker and Satan kind of throwing more darkness on to make it... NO! When God said, *"Let there be light,"* there's light! Period! And nothing can take it away. No darkness has the power to take away the light.

So, he uses this metaphor, and it's a very powerful one. Can you mix light with darkness? No, it is totally impossible to mix the two. So, he says, how can you have mutual relations, have things

in common with those who don't have the same beliefs? That's like trying to add likeness—light and darkness together and come up with something that's kind of in between. Doesn't work.

[37:56]

We'll move on to **verse 15 [2 Corinthians 6]**. He says: (*And*) *what accord* (Okay, what do we mean by accord?) *what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with and unbeliever?*

Okay, what is **accord**? The word is *symphonesis*, which, again, you will probably recognize as the root for "symphony" —which is where we blend a great number of instruments that are very diverse and produce sound in a variety of different ways, but bring them together and blend them into a beautiful whole. We use that as the root word.

Accord means "to agree with, to come to an agreement with someone; it implies a type of joint decision" —that when it comes to making a decision, we can make it together. Okay, so he says, in using this word, accord: "*What is the accord? What is the kind of a joint decision that can be made between Christ and Belial?*" Now, what's *Belial*?

Belial was a word—it was a Hebrew word which probably meant "worthless." It is, as one commentary puts it: "a transcript of the Hebrew, meaning worthlessness or wickedness." So, basically, it's a word that's sometimes used to apply to Satan.

But whether it applies to Satan in a personified way or it simply applies to this worthless, wasteful, meaningless existence, how can there be a connection, a mutually shared decision, between Jesus Christ and something which has no value or worth whatsoever, which is empty, which is meaningless?

You wouldn't weigh some kind of meaningless thing against the opinion or decision of Jesus Christ and come up with some kind of a compromise. There is **no** compromise between Jesus Christ and that which is going in an entirely opposite direction. You can't compromise the two. There is no way to do that.

He goes on to say: *what part...*? Again, this is kind of an unusual word, *meris*, which means "a share" or "a portion." It's, in a sense, as if you had an inheritance that's being distributed. And you can say: okay, here is one brother's part; here's the next brother's part; and, here is the guy down the street getting a part. Wait—why would he get a part? This is an inheritance; it's passed on from a family.

So, he's saying, in this case: "What sharing" —in that sense of family, of an inheritance—"can there be between a believer and an unbeliever?" How do we have a part—how can we each merit a *part*, a share, a portion of what God is doing when one is a believer and the other is not?

Now again, understand that in Scripture many times, when you find the term "believe," it includes—"belief" is fine; it's a good translation—but it includes with that the concept of obedience. One who believes, obeys, because of that belief. One who is an unbeliever doesn't obey because of their lack of belief.

[41:28]

I remember an individual telling me one time—it was a—not a Church member, but it was a new visit. And this individual—we were talking about the Sabbath, and I remember he made the comment, “Well,” he said, “I’m not really sure about the Sabbath, so I’m just not going to keep it until I’m sure.”

Well, we talked a little further, and we brought out how foolish that idea was. What if we followed that same principle for the others of God’s laws? “Well, I know I’m not—I know it says not to steal, but I’m going to go ahead and steal until I believe, until I come to prove that it’s right.”

No, that’s not the approach we take. But his approach was: “Okay, I don’t know. I’m not a believer in the Sabbath so I’m not going to keep it.” And that was his way of approaching things. He never did come along. That individual never made it any further than that. But, that was his approach. And that’s going to be the approach of a nonbeliever: “I don’t need to obey because I don’t believe; I’m not convinced of that.” A believer, on the other hand, is going to live a different way.

So, how can you *share* life? How can you have a portion? I mean, again, consider, in a family there are—we’re each sharing. A husband, a wife—each one is sharing responsibility, blessing, all of the things that are involved. But if one’s going one direction and one another, how can there be that kind of relationship? It simply isn’t there.

Then he goes on to say, **verse 16 [2 Corinthians 6]**, the fifth one of these: *And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”*

So what do we mean by **agreement**? Again, we note from the slide, it means “a union; a binding together; to work out a joint agreement; to arrange something together; to have a mutual agreement.” How can there be a mutual *agreement* between *the temple of God* and *idols*?

Temple of God is seen as the place where God dwells. Now we realize that the physical temple cannot hold God. God made that clear all the way back in the days of David and Solomon and certainly always was understood [to be] that. God’s presence was at the temple at certain times. He demonstrated that with what was called the “Shekinah Glory,” the cloud of glory that was there. There were certain times and it was there.

We also find one of the prophets—I believe it’s Ezekiel, if I’m not mistaken—talking about the glory of the Lord, the Shekinah Glory, departing from the temple and not being there anymore.

So, God did demonstrate His presence there. The point is, the temple is seen as a representation of the dwelling place of God. How do you put into it an idol that represents another god? Now, think about it. It would be, in a sense, like you’re living in your home and suddenly someone comes along and places into your home someone who has a totally different set of beliefs and says, “They’re going to live in your home from now on.”

No, that’s not going to work. This is my home, and, we do things in a certain way, and, while I may open my home to a guest from time to time, someone who has a totally different set of values is not welcome here. And God doesn’t welcome idols, which represent false gods which, in the long run, when we understand, actually represent demonic powers. God does not welcome that into His temple.

So he says, how can there be this sharing, this mutual agreement? “Oh, okay. Well, let’s just divide up the temple, and you sit there, and I’ll sit here.” No, that isn’t going to happen in the temple of God.

[45:16]

Now he uses those metaphors to help us understand the relationships that we should have in the Church with one another, and, how we relate to those in the world around us. So he tells us: how can there be any *agreement* between *the temple of God* and *idols*?

And then he goes on with the rest of this, which, again, is a very important concept: **[verse 16b]** *(For) you are the temple of the living God*. You are the place where God dwells.

Now, we can take that collectively of the Church as a whole; we can take it as an individual level because in **1 Corinthians** he shows it in both ways—that God is supposed to be dwelling in each of us through His Spirit. Remember what Jesus Christ said. He said that when we serve Him, when we yield ourselves to Him, [when] we are faithful servants, then He and His Father will come and dwell in us.

So, God dwells in us. Can we have within us something that’s contrary to God? Is that something God will be fine with? That it’s okay for us to have God dwelling with us, but, at the same time we’re going to have this relationship with those who have a totally different set of values? That’s not going to work.

Our relationship with God is an exclusive relationship. We don’t have a relationship with God **and** a false god. Doesn’t work that way. God demands exclusivity. Just as we expect that in a marriage relationship, that we have that exclusive relationship. And, we understand that the exclusiveness of it is one of the things that makes it so binding, so helpful, so uplifting. That this isn’t a relationship that can be shared with anyone else. Likewise, our relationship with God cannot be shared with God and... That’s what ancient Israel tried to do over and over again. They tried to worship God and...

Just this past Sabbath we had someone bringing out the example that after ancient Israel was carried into captivity, that the Assyrians brought in those from other places who had other gods. And, then they also—over a period of time, without going through all the details—they brought in some of the priests from Israel to teach them how to worship, as they saw it, the god of the land. And over and over it says: they feared God, and, they worshipped their idols. They tried to have what’s called “syncretism.” They tried to syncretize those two together. And you can’t syncretize God and idols. You can’t syncretize God’s way with another way.

[48:04]

He goes on to say: **[verse 16c]** *God has said* (in the past, and it is true today): *“I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”* God says He’s going to dwell within us and walk among us.

Now remember, we’ve talked about this several times, that, when you read in Scripture the term *walk*, the reference is not simply to literal walking, but how we move through life—the decisions we make, what we do—all of those things that we are involved with.

So when God is going to *walk* among us, it means He accompanies us through everything we do in life. He's there. There's not some part of our life where God's involved: we go to Church on Sabbath and God's involved, but on Sunday, we go out and do something else, and God isn't there. No, God walks with us on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc. When we are doing different things, God is there. When we're at work, when we're at home, when we're at play, God is there, walking among us.

So, part of the lesson given to ancient Israel, but given to us here as well, is that God is there. He is constantly aware of what we're doing, what we're failing to do, what we're avoiding, what we should avoid, and what we're doing about the temptations that come along. God is there. When He comes and dwells within us, He's always within us, wherever we go, whatever we do. So he's telling us that, and he's telling us, think about that in the relationships that you establish.

It's also interesting, this phrase here—I don't want to skip over it: "... *I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*"

Yes, there is a quotation involved. But, as one of the commentaries brings out—and I think it's a very good point—they make the point that what that statement—that's not just a poetic statement: "I will be their God; they'll be My people." It describes the relationship that's supposed to exist between us and God. God functions for us in the role of God and **all** that that implies. And we function in the role as **His** people and **all** that **that** implies. We are His servants. We belong to Him. He is our God we can **always** rely upon and go to. We don't need another god. We have the true God. We are to be His people. He can rely upon us in that way.

So, He goes on to say: [**2 Corinthians 6:17**] *Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."* It's a beautiful passage here in this verse and the next verse. It's a very important thing to keep in mind.

There may be a reference here—again, it seems to be a quote—there may be a reference here to **Isaiah 52:11**: *Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord.*

What an amazing instruction that is! You and I are kind of like those ancient Levites who carried about God's vessels. We are to be clean. You are coming in contact with a holy God. And these things belong to a holy God and are therefore holy themselves. You must be a clean and holy people to take hold of them, to move them, to do what God would have you to do with those vessels.

Likewise, for you and me, we are the ones who are vessels of God, carrying about the Spirit of God within us, and we are to be clean. So we are told: *Come out from among them.*

[51:54]

Now in the original source, this was a call to *come out* of the paganism of Babylon and not to be defiled with the false religion that was there. So it tells us as well, when you look at this world, it's very easy to be—I mean, most of us are called from this world when God calls us. So, it's very easy, in many cases, to not even recognize the degree of bonding we have with the world and its values. We have to look at those things. We have to depart, to *come out* from among all of that that's evil.

Now you and I have seen some very practical examples of that—the holidays that are very often kept in this world. We have to come apart from that. We can't be in the midst of that. We have to leave that behind. We don't compromise with that. We have to *come out*. Don't be among them; *be separate*.

And God says: (If you) *don't touch what is unclean*—notice it doesn't say **who** is unclean; but it says **what** is unclean—then don't be defiled by those things that are defiled in this world. Leave it behind. Don't try to hang on to it or compromise with it. Leave it alone, *and*, God says, *I will receive you*.

There's a longer section I'm not going to take the time to read, but if you have access to go to William Barclay's *Daily Study Bible*, he has a longer section here, talking about the things that Christianity often requires us to separate from. And, he lists three different things. He mentions things that people may sometimes have to say: "You know what, I've done this in the past, but as a Christian, I really can't do this. I have to leave it behind." So, I think he makes some interesting points about coming out from this world.

Then finally, the last verse, God—where God has said that *I will receive you*, He says in **verse 18**: "*I will be a Father to you* (Okay. He further defines His role as: He will be a Father to you.), *and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.*"

It's interesting to me, and again, I don't want to get too bogged down here. Haven't covered nearly as much as I'd hoped to in this class. But, when you look at this, notice that when it comes to God's role as a Father, we're not the ones who determined God is our Father. He's the one who announced that to us. He's the one who told us: Here's the relationship I want to have with you; I want to be your Father. And I want you to view me as your Father.

Now, again, the concept there is a very positive and encouraging one. The role that a father plays in a family is unmeasurable. There are many studies that have shown that homes that don't have a father in them, the children really struggle. Doesn't mean they can't succeed, but having a father there is so very, very important. It has profound impacts.

And again, we—I'm not in any way implying that those who are in single-parent homes, where maybe there's only a mother, that there's something wrong with them. No, not at all. But we do have to understand that as hard as a mother tries to do everything she can, she can't be a father. Neither can a father be a mother. Those are unique roles that God created.

[55:22]

But He describes Himself as a Father for us. And He says, how will I view you? Will I view you as My servants, My ants that I can send around doing whatever I want? Some meaningless automaton that I have the power to move about like a chess player moves chess pieces? No, He says, "I'll see you as My sons and daughters."

Well, those of you that have sons and daughters, how do you see them? What do you feel for them? What would you do for them if they were in need? God says, "That's My role. I'm your Father. You will be My sons and My daughters."

Often there's a unique relationship that parents have, that the relationship between a parent and a son is different than the relationship between a parent and a daughter. They're both very

wonderful relationships. They're very powerful; they're strong; they're important. And God says, "That's the way I'm going to view you."

You know, this is the only place in the New Testament where both sons and daughters are mentioned as the children of God. It's possibly a reference to **Isaiah 43 verses 6 and 7** that prophetically talks about God bringing back His sons and His daughters from captivity after Christ returns. That may be a part of it. But sometimes, just because of the way the Bible is written, we often talk about "sons of God." We are sons of God. And that's true. But understand that there are also daughters of God who are just as dear, just as precious, just as much a part of God's plan as the sons are.

I think it's important for us, and I'm really grateful that God inspired Paul to put this verse in here where God says, "You're My sons **and** My daughters. And I love you like a parent loves sons **and** daughters." It's a very special thing to keep in mind.

[57:15]

Alright, we have just a few more minutes. Let's move on to Chapter 7. Chapter 7 has some of the most helpful sections in it as it talks about the concept of repentance.

Now Paul says first of all: [**2 Corinthians 7:1**] *Therefore, having these promises* (Okay. Don't make a separation between **chapter 6 and chapter 7**. We've just talked about God's promise: I will be your Father; you'll be My sons and daughters. You are My temple; I will dwell within you.) *having these promises, beloved*, (What do we do? What's the response that's appropriate to those promises?) *let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

What a tremendous verse all by itself—what it tells us! First of all, it tells us we have to *cleanse ourselves*. We have to **make** ourselves clean. That seems to imply that we, as Christians, are expected to actively clean up our lives. It's not the same as saying we have to avoid getting defiled or getting dirty. That's obviously included with it. But it implies a recognition on our part that there are things about me that need to be cleaned up. There are spiritual areas where I need to exercise effort to clean up my life.

And you may notice something there. He calls them "beloved." *Having these promises, beloved, let **us** cleanse ourselves*. Paul includes himself. He doesn't say, "You Corinthians need to clean up your lives." He said, "We **all** need to clean our lives. We **all** need to look at ourselves."

Now remember, we said 1 Corinthians was probably written around the Days of Unleavened Bread. And we understand the cleaning that takes place there. Now this is considerably later, I understand, but I simply want to use that illustration. When we clean for the Days of Unleavened Bread, we look for leaven. We search for it. And, we all know that every once in a while, something shows up at a place we never imagined. And it teaches us through that process that the cleansing that has to take place requires a continuing vigilance. It isn't: "I cleaned my life up once. Okay, all done. Everything's fine." No, I have to keep looking. I have to keep doing that.

Notice what is to be cleansed from our lives: *all filthiness of the flesh and spirit*. So, Paul is emphasizing we don't just clean up the things we do. We have to clean up the things we think. We have to go beyond—and we'll see this further in this chapter—we have to go beyond just cleaning up our actions. We have to look at what our attitudes are as well, and those have to be cleaned up.

Some people have the idea that it's okay if you think wrong thoughts as long as you don't do anything about them. No, that's not true. Wrong thoughts have to be cleaned up. Paul tells us we've got to bring *every thought into captivity*. [2 Corinthians 10:5]

[1:00:25]

And then he talks about this sense of—what does he mean by *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*? Oftentimes the term that's used here for *perfecting* means “to complete something.” We're in the process of it. It's not a matter that we haven't made any efforts at all. But there is more to be done. There is a completing of the process that needs to take place.

It is “an aggressive and progressive holiness,” as one commentator puts it. It's not some sudden attainment that, suddenly, we're all there. There's a process that we continue setting ourselves apart. Remember, *holiness* here has the sense of “that which is set apart.” So we are continuing in the process of cleansing, of setting ourselves apart from those bonds with an unclean world. And that's going to be a lifelong process that we work at.

And he tells us that we do this *in the fear of God*.

I like *Expositor's* translation of that: *in an atmosphere of reverential fear for God*. That we don't take this lightly, but we look at our lives, and we take it seriously. That God expects us to be cleansing, to be perfecting, to be completing the holiness that He wants us to have, the holiness that's supposed to dwell within us, as He tells us in Peter to “be holy, as He is holy.” [1 Peter 1:16]

That's a lifelong process. And we do that, not simply because **we** want to be better, but we do it with a deep sense of respect that **God** lives in and walks among us. And that with that knowledge, that respect, that awe toward God, we want our lives to be cleansed and to be more fitting as *the temple of God*.

Well, that's as far as we can go in this particular class. We appreciate your patience with us, and God willing, we will pick up next class, class number 9, in **verse 2 of 2 Corinthians chapter 7**.

Thanks for joining us.

[1:02:30]