

HOW TO SURVIVE WHILE SAVING OTHERS

2 CORINTHIANS 2:12-5:10

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INTRODUCTION:

Paul—the man. He was not reluctant to expose his humanity and to make himself vulnerable. The great example of openness is found in the section on ministry.

Paul—the minister. He is our model in his understanding of ministry. He had moved from being a minister under the law to being a minister under the New Covenant, and it was wonderful.

Paul—a troubled minister who would not quit. The troubles were plentiful, but there is no hint that he ever considered resignation. We need to learn from him about this ministry we have received.

I. TROUBLED AT TROAS (2:12-13)—Why some ministers quit!

- 1. Problems with the churches. (2 Corinthians 11:28, 29)**
- 2. The struggle with the false brethren. (2 Corinthians 11:1-15)**
- 3. The pinch in the pocketbook. (2 Corinthians 11:27)**
- 4. The burden of health problems. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)**

5. **The loneliness of the work. (2 Corinthians 2:12-13)**
6. **The weakness of the flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:7-12)**
7. **Fears within. (2 Corinthians 7:5-6; 1:8-9) He lived every day with the threat of death upon him.**
8. **The harassment of the Enemy. (2 Corinthians 10:1-7)**

SURELY THERE MUST BE AN EASIER WAY TO MAKE A LIVING! WHY WOULD A PERSON PERSIST THROUGH THIS KIND OF EXPERIENCE? HOW MANY ON THIS LIST HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED? WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADD TO THE LIST OF TROUBLING THINGS? WHY HAVEN'T YOU QUIT?

II. THE REVELATION THAT ENCOURAGES (2:14-17). Why ministers don't quit!

1. **We are captives. (A trophy of Christ's victory.) (2 Corinthians 2:14)**

“But thanks be to God, who always puts us on display in Christ, and spreads through us in every place the scent of knowing Him. For to God we are the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To some we are a scent of death leading to death, but to others, a scent of life leading to life.” (HCSB)

- His saving work.
- His selecting work.
- His sending work.

2. We are incense. (The fragrance of Christ's victory.) (2 Corinthians 2:15-16)

- God smells us and enjoys it.
- The ones being saved smell us and receive life.
- The ones perishing smell us and despise it.

3. We have another Audience. (The service in Christ before God.) (2 Corinthians 2:17)

WE ARE THE REAL THING!

And who is competent for this? For we are not like the many who trade in God's message for profit, but as those who with sincerity, we speak in Christ, as from God and before God." (HCSB)

- We are not peddlers. We are not operating as spiritual entrepreneurs.
- We minister in Christ.
- We minister before God.
- We minister as the real thing.

THE MINISTRY IS NOT A PROFESSION! IT IS A WORK OF GOD THROUGH US.

AND THERE IS MORE! IT IS ALL ABOUT THE NEW COVENANT!

III. THE MINISTRY THAT TRANSFORMS (3:1-4:12). (Another reason ministers don't quit.)

1. It transforms the people. (You can read it in their lives!) (2 Corinthians 3:1-4)

- **They are letters from Christ.**
- **They are the product of the Holy Spirit.**
- **We were His instrument.**

2. It transforms the minister. (He has a glow that gets brighter every day!) (2 Corinthians 3:5-18)

(Moses went to the mountain, came back with a glowing face, and the letter written on tablets of stone. It soon became obvious that the people had no power to keep the letter—so it produces death and despair.

It is different for us—we are agents of the New Covenant. We too go into the presence of God, but we come back with the message of the Spirit—and it gives life. These two orders need to be considered.)

- **We are not of the order of Moses—the Old Covenant. Paul had served under the order of Moses**

as a diligent young rabbi. He knew that it never transformed—it just kept demanding.

A. Moses received the letter—the law written on tablets of stone.

B. Moses came down with a glowing face.

C. Moses covered his face to hide the fading of the glory. Was the fading glory due to the inner struggles that Moses had with himself, or was it caused by the disappointments that he experienced with the people?

- We are of the order of Christ—the New Covenant.

A. We have received the Spirit.

B. We have received righteousness.

C. We have a glow that increases.

D. We have freedom.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE! THE GOOD NEWS OF THE NEW COVENANT CHANGES US AS WE RECEIVE IT, STUDY IT, AND SHARE IT.

AND THAT IS NOT ALL!

IV. THE HOPE THAT SAVES (4:14-5:10) (And even another reason ministers don't quit.)

1. The hope of exchanging our troubles for an eternal weight of glory. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

- **The troubles are real.**
- **The troubles are light.**
- **The troubles are momentary.**
- **The troubles are profitable. The troubles a part of the plan of God to make us what He wants us to be.**

Why resign and run away from God's process in our lives? Rather we must learn to rejoice in tribulations.

2. The hope of moving out of this tent into a heavenly house. (2 Corinthians 5:1-8)

- **This old tent we live in is—**
 - A. Fit only for earth.**
 - B. Destructible.**
 - C. Burdensome.**
 - D. Mortal.**
- **The new house is—**

E. Eternal and fitted for heaven.

F. Not made with hands—a work of God.

G. Our eternal dwelling.

H. Preferable to the tent in every way.

3. The hope of an eternal reward. (2 Corinthians 5:9-10)

- **It is consistent with our goal to please Him.**
- **It is for the work we are doing now.**
- **It will be presented by the Lord Jesus Himself.**

**IN LIGHT OF ALL THIS, WE SHOULD RECOMMIT. THERE IS
NO WORK ON THE EARTH THAT BEGINS TO COMPARE WITH
THIS.**