

DEFENDING OUR MINISTRY

OPEN HEART | LIVING IN CHRIST WITH NOTHING TO HIDE 2 CORINTHIANS 10

January 31st, 2016

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OPEN HEART

“2 Corinthians reveals, more than any other letter, Paul’s concern as a pastor. He passionately desires to win the Christians in Corinth back to himself, convinced that the the Good News is above all a message of reconciliation. Forced to defend himself, Paul opens his heart to this congregation to a degree not found in his other letters.” NLT Study Bible Introduction

Have you ever had to defend yourself?

- *Maybe you were mugged or robbed*
- *Maybe you were accused of trying to get a promotion instead of helping the company*
- *Maybe a gift was suspected as a bribe when it was meant as a show of love*

It hurts when we are attacked and especially when we are accused falsely. We must defend ourselves by showing our hearts.

BY ITS COVER

Neither Jesus (Isaiah 53:2) nor Paul looked particularly powerful in appearance.

- Paul was described in the 2nd century as, “*a man of small height, almost bald, with crooked legs, but with a good body and eyebrows meeting. His nose was hooked...*”
- Someone once told George they couldn’t attend The Shoreline Church because they felt everyone was too beautiful there!

MINISTRY POWER

The power of our ministry is not in how bad or good we look, but in how well we conform to the character and authority of Christ!

- V1 Paul makes his appeal to them based upon his likeness to the character of Jesus in 2 ways:
 - *Meekness and Gentleness! (Meekness is power under control and gentleness is ‘seasoned reasonableness’)*
- V8 Paul was not ashamed of his ministry because it was based upon the authority of Christ!

CHRIST-LIKE WEAPONRY

- The ministry of Gospel-Reconciliation is essentially a battle, not against people, but against worldliness, the flesh (sin), and Satan.

- “We use God’s mighty weapons...”

OUR POWER IS UNSEEN

- **Ephesians 6:10-18 tells us to put on truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the offensive weapons; ‘the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,’ and prayer.**
 - In 2 Co. 10:4-5 the strength of the ministry is in refuting human reasoning and false arguments. We must recognize rebellious thoughts and ideas that resist Christ’s authority and teach them the truth! Speak the truth in love publicly!

The Word of God is powerful! Paul was writing it and we are wise to use it!

- “Paul’s letters are demanding and forceful” (V10)
- Paul was writing under the power of God!

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

AUDIENCE OF ONE

Our ministry will be evaluated by One person and One standard- God Himself!

- It is good to get feedback and have to look at criticisms and questions of our ministry, but we evaluate ourselves by the standard of God’s Word.

“The Bible is to be used in a thousand different ways within the pastoral work of the church, the caring and building up of all its members... the individual world-views and God-views of Christians... need to be constantly adjusted and straightened out in the light of the story which is told in scripture... To be sure, the regular use of scripture in private and public worship is a regular medicine for many of the ills that beset us.”

N.T. Wright - The Authority of Scripture

DAILY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORD

MONDAY - Psalm 23 - What does this reveal about God’s heart as your source of authority?

TUESDAY - John 12:44-50 - What does this reveal about Jesus’ authority?

WEDNESDAY - Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19-21 - What does this reveal about the authority of God’s word?

THURSDAY - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 - How do you respond to God given authority?

FRIDAY - Colossians 1:15-23 - Who is Jesus to you?