

# Reject/Receive

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[0:00] please take your Bibles and go to 2 Corinthians chapter 6 if you're visiting with us or misplaced your Bible and you need one for this morning go in that chair underneath the seats you'll find a black Bible you can pull that out go to the back of that Bible find page 142 2 Corinthians chapter 6 I'm going to start in verse 1 and we'll read to chapter 7 verse 1 as that goes together chapter 6 verse 1 to chapter 7 verse 1 I'll read and then we'll do our study and working together with God we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain for God says at the acceptable time

I listened to you and on the day of salvation I helped you look now is the acceptable time look now is the day of salvation giving no opportunity for offense in anything in order that the ministry may not be discredited but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God in much endurance in afflictions in hardships in distresses verse 5 in beatings in imprisonments in tumults in labors in sleeplessness in hunger in purity in knowledge in patience in kindness in the Holy Spirit in real love in the word of truth in the power of God by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left by glory and dishonor by slander and praise as deceivers and yet true as unknown yet known as dying yet look we live as punished yet not killed as sorrowful yet always rejoicing as poor yet making many rich as having nothing yet possessing everything verse 11 our mouth has spoken freely to you

O Corinthians our heart is open wide you're not restrained by us but you're restrained by your own affections now in the same exchange as to children I speak you yourselves open wide also do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness or what fellowship is light with darkness or what harmony has Christ with Belair or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever verse 16 or what agreement has the temple of God with idols for we ourselves are the temple of the living God just as God said I will dwell among them and walk among them and I will be their God and they shall be my people therefore come out from their midst and be separate says the Lord do not touch what is unclean and I will welcome you and I will be a father to you and you shall be sons and daughters to me says the Lord Almighty therefore having these promises beloved let us cleanse ourselves from all defiance of flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God it's important to understand words and how those words were used in history if we don't up can mean down down can mean up for example

Antifa the anti-fascists today they're socialists anti-capitalists anti-white supremacists they're for total equality and for the use of violence and property damage as well I'm just reading to you what the information from USA Today CNN Wikipedia this is what they said about Antifa or the anti-fascists of today though there are similarities with historic anti-fascists what's interesting is historically anti-fascists did not believe in the things that are promoted today by anti-fascists for example in yesteryears anti-fascists embraced the doctrine of pacifism it was fascists who repudiated pacifism as a matter of fact fascists wanted war and violence interesting anti-fascists of yesteryears of the 1920s and 30s they embraced socialism or communism some embraced democracies as well anti-fascists of the 20s and 30s embraced the rule of the majority some embrace individualism others embrace total equality but they embrace total equality because they embrace communism why do I bring this up because people say well I'm this but this means that and that means this you're confusing people appearances can be deceiving is that not the principle that we've seen in 2nd Corinthians you cannot always go by appearances because they can be very deceiving we must be clear and this is exactly what the Corinthians were doing they thought this was good but it was really bad they thought this was very bad but in actuality it was good we've seen this paradox throughout the letter that Paul wrote to the

Corinthian church a church that was just very difficult to deal with and so here we come to this boasting in our weakness boasting in our Lord and to the Corinthians they go oh boasting

weakness is bad no it's actually good because we're boasting in our Lord no we're supposed to boast in our strength that's boasting in the Lord no that's bad you see what I mean they were confused and so once again we have another paradox reject receive what they thought you should reject Paul's saying you should receive what they thought you should receive Paul says you guys should reject you guys are confused reject receive or to put it in statements for you to receive God's grace is to receive Christ crucified and risen and everything that goes with it which as we have read it means suffering it means we separate from those who are opponents of his grace those who say they've embraced the shameful glorious gospel but they've really rejected it here's another statement for you without reconciling to

[7 : 56] Paul himself the Corinthians would not experience true reconciliation to God and receiving apostolic authority could not take place they must receive Paul and reject the opponents but they were doing the complete opposite they were rejecting Paul which means they were rejecting the gospel which means they were rejecting grace because they were judging based upon appearance this is what he looks like he was a loser we don't embrace him we embrace the super apostles I still got to get that picture I have that picture of my son Drew they're sick a few of them are sick so I don't want to put up there yeah it's a great picture of a super apostle it's like there am I it looks really good so I'll scan it in over the next couple weeks and that's they were confused like oh look at the super apostles we're supposed to embrace them and receive them or reject

Paul but you don't understand you're actually rejecting the gospel what are you doing God does his work in the gospel word and Paul was a messenger of this word not just in word but also by his body and life you realize ministers and pastors are the embodiment of the gospel not just in what we say but our very lives display it and suffering and hardships and difficulties and yet these were ways and terms not requested certainly not expected by the Corinthians oh they didn't want that but you see here you will see Paul was he was after their hearts

Paul sought their hearts and affections so he appealed to them to receive God's grace and to receive him as their apostle it went together and they would do this by embracing him and shunning or rejecting the opponents of the gospel and that's where verses 14 and following come in so first first point receive God's grace or truly reconcile to God and when you receive God's grace it means you will receive suffering notice how he begins there in verse 1 of chapter 6 and working together with God he's connecting that with what he says from verse 21 of chapter 5 we're working together with

God and with him we're working together we appeal or we exhort we encourage we're imploring you don't receive grace in vain God was the one who appealed to the Corinthians through Paul they needed to turn away from the world and turn toward God and receive grace grace is God's gift in Christ grace interesting what does this mean somebody asked me this a few weeks ago this church was treating Paul like this they weren't asking like Christians exactly so is Paul saying they're not Christians not necessarily and yet Paul would later encourage them to examine themselves to see if they were in the faith chapter 13 verse 5 the question wasn't if they were Christians or not this is the question in which

Christ did they believe did they truly believe in the crucified Christ proclaimed by Paul or another Christ remember the Christ this is our place where we designated that for 2nd Corinthians Christ and the cross their shame their disdain is disgraceful and yet in that weakness is power grace love compassion glory is that the Christ they've embraced because if they have that means they will suffer if they have it means they will show each other that same grace if they have it means they would embrace Paul I'm not so sure they wanted to do that have they believed in this gospel in vain had it really made an impact in their hearts and lives the evidence was pointing to the contrary they betrayed the heart of the gospel they denied the one who proclaimed it they pledged their allegiance to others so Paul appeals to them receive God's grace and notice he quotes something to give some oomph to what he's saying verse 2 for God says quotes Isaiah 49 verse 8 we read part of that this morning at the right time I listened to you on the day of salvation

[13 : 52] I helped you he's interpreting it as Christ appealing to God and God delivered him yet not apart from facing suffering at the right time God delivered you know what that means one writer put it like this quote salvation requires waiting in patience and hope end quote salvation means we wait with patience or as we will see a little bit later we persevere we persevere remembering friends God is always faithful did you not just sing it whatever my God ordains is right at the acceptable time against all sights and appearances promises the Lord promises and fulfills salvation at the

acceptable time the right time not when we deem it not how we deem it not when we deem it whatever my God ordains is right that's why we sang this song he brings light out of darkness he brings a flowing stream out of the desert joy comes in sorrow hope comes in hopelessness life comes in death sin is overcome that's how God does things in ways that we least expect times that we least expect it

God works that's why he says next part of verse 2 now is the acceptable time look now is the day of salvation why is he saying this well because Christ fulfilled the Lord's promise to his servant and that now God does his new work of recreation we just talked about that anyone is in Christ is a new creation God can change your heart now and the Corinthians must come to see that their life their identity and their future is found in Jesus Christ alone not in the appearances the now or acceptable time is seen in Christ because in him alone we meet and receive God in his grace because in the cross that's where we see his love in the cross is where we see his mercy in the cross is where we see his grace God will deliver his servant out of oppression injustice and even death itself at the acceptable time and that acceptable time is found in

Christ because in Christ we savingly meet God in all our miseries in all our sufferings in all our failures because he alone is our deliverance our satisfaction is found in Jesus alone that's the grace that we receive God always creates life and salvation when appearances say otherwise I mean look at Genesis chapter 1 verse 2 and the earth was formless and void darkness was there and yet out of formlessness God creates order out of the void God creates something and out of darkness and God said let there be light and there was light that's what God does when you least expect it when appearances and everything seems to go against you at the right time God saves and then notice what he does here starting in verse 3 but the apostle Paul he suffered as a way to accomplish God's work in his life because at the acceptable time God saves so receiving God's grace in Christ receiving Paul as their suffering apostle and it means receiving suffering in your own life Paul gives a self-commendation of himself but it's subordinate to God's work in him because not only was he a messenger of the gospel word by his words but by his very life notice what he says verse 3 giving no opportunity for offense in anything in order that the ministry not be discredited so Paul did not want to give an opportunity for the gospel for the stumbling of the gospel so that the mission entrusted in him would not be discredited and this is the irony of it he didn't want anyone to take offense right that's what he says but it was the

Corinthians who took offense at him that's the irony of that they took offense at Paul and his mission but notice he says commending there in verse 4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God he did not want to bring any reproach to that mission but he commended himself I'm God's agent I'm God's emissary that's who I am that's who we are as apostles yet God's way of salvation is a path of difficulty and suffering not a path of unchanging blessing contrary to the Corinthians thinking that's what they thought oh the Christian life should be your best life now I've heard that before that's the message of the prosperity gospel they do not speak about suffering hardships difficulties struggles oh press that all aside and yet here you have these prosperity gospel preachers in Africa who are driving their

[20 : 13] Mercedes and their BMWs although people have nothing Paul commended himself as God's servant enduring hardships and acting with integrity no matter his circumstances good or bad so so what did God's agent look like he appeared in weakness and distress that's the agent not like 007 James Bond no no not that type of agent no a weak distressing bold looking guy shorty just like Jesus though weakness distress and that and this this what he's about to describe it just blew up the Corinthians expectations it's like Paul put dynamite on it and went and it just blew it all their whole idea of what

Christianity was supposed to be gone but don't we need to be reminded of this too because we default or at least I do default to thinking that we shouldn't be suffering it's so cliché in our American culture we just don't know what it's like and notice how he begins this whole subject there in the middle of verse four in much endurance perseverance we persevere not only is this the first mark of an apostle this is the first mark of all Christians remember Paul's an apostle but he's a Christian well he's an apostle he's like oh yeah but remember it's just like watching a movie at an IMAX theater in 3D same movie it's just on steroids right same movie so he's a Christian and the first mark of an apostle and of all

Christians we persevere here's the thesis we persevere and then he's going to list it all out we persevere waiting for our salvation to come we are new creations who wait for the final creation at

the final resurrection that's what we are that's what we're doing we persevere through thick and thin economic distress or cancer hardships toils persecutions we persevere notice he begins in afflictions and hardships and distresses there in verse 4 burdens he had to endure repeatedly put in tight spots look at verse 5 he gives six concrete hardships three were sufferings by other persons three were being difficulties just being God's emissary in beatings and imprisonments and tumults in labors in sleeplessness and hunger this is what it's like to be an agent this is what it's like to face this suffering which you face by other people look at verse 6 he looks at moral qualities verse 6 impurity which means sincerity sincerity with God and with the

Corinthians in knowledge sincerity with the knowledge went with the knowledge of Christ in the glorious gospel in patience in kindness patience he was slow to anger tolerance long suffering with the weaknesses and difficulties of others kindness he was bearing with the faults of others by actively doing them good which Paul had done to the Corinthians they were very difficult to get along with notice next part he says in the Holy Spirit in real love endurance patience kindness sincerity love that's not found in Paul he didn't conjure those things up on his own gifts given to him by God in the Spirit that's why he says in the Spirit and then real love or unhypocritical love once again by the Spirit a fruit given to him which is given to all

Christians the fruit of the Spirit notice one fruit the fruit love joy peace patience kindness look at verse 7 in the word of truth and the power of God the word of truth is the gospel the knowledge of the glorious Christ and then you put that together with the power of God God's power is seen in the truth of the gospel the apostle was for the truth not against it notice his weapons he says there in verse 7 by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left by glory and dishonor by slander and praise the work of his mission was the work that he had he would proclaim the fact that people can be made right with God and become the righteousness of God so he's armed with shield and sword for the left and for the right hand the lord of glory was dishonored he was crucified God's agent also bore scorn and dishonor for the glorious

[25:51] Christ God's glory and praise was seen in the dishonored slandered apostle on behalf of Christ this is what he's describing this is what it means to be an apostle and then when he does here starting in verse 8 like towards the end of verse 8 and verse 9 and 10 he gives paradoxical experiences so on the one side how the apostle was appeared or was perceived by others but on the flip side was how he really was the reality so notice there in verse 8 he says as deceivers that's why you have there in your new American standard says regarded as deceivers and yet true oh is that not what the Corinthians thought maybe we got Paul some charlatan but in reality he was for real they were confused we should reject Paul and receive the super apostles are you crazy you're rejecting the grace of God to receive the gospel was to receive

Paul to receive Paul was to receive the gospel Jesus said that Matthew chapter 10 verse 40 whoever receives me receives the one who sent me receives my words receives me and the one who sent me the gospel is the truth but the world calls it deception right what the world presents as truth is really a lie and is unveiled by the gospel look at verse 9 as unknown yet well known or really another way to translate it is like this unaccepted and accepted Paul sought the acceptance of the Corinthians they would not accept him but whether they did or not it didn't matter God truly accepted him and notice he says dying yet look we live many situations where Paul was close to death and yet God delivered him he was not done with him as punished or disciplined is another way you can translate that yet not killed

God disciplines his children through sufferings and trials but in those trials Paul was not killed God spared his life and this is what the Corinthians thought they thought that Paul he's just some nobody so he relied on deceit to try and become a somebody he's just irresponsible he's in constant danger and with death so he suffered for his trouble he lacked the power that wealth could afford he was just a big dork as Paul that's what they thought but the opposite was true notice notice what he says next there in verse 10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing grieving in his very existence Paul would grieve he grieved over the churches he grieved over

Corinth and yet he says rejoicing always because he saw suffering in light of God's promises fulfilled in Christ he saw God's purposes he saw the big picture notice he says next there in verse 10 as poor yet making many rich Paul had nothing I mean according to today's standards he didn't own a house he didn't own a car I guess I didn't have many cars he didn't own a mule how's that better he didn't have a horse he didn't have anything Paul had little to nothing but as an heir of God's promises he was rich and by proclaiming the gospel and people responding to that message

he would be made rich in Christ because true riches is found in Jesus and then notice what he says the last part of verse 10 as having nothing you're possessing everything in this life we truly have nothing but in light of the eschaton eschaton means last things in light of the last things that's coming Paul we own the whole world we don't bank on the things in this world wisdom power wealth mere idols you look around Christian you own everything it's just a matter of time we will rule with Christ this world all things are yours he said to the Corinthians in his first letter 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 22 all things are given to us as followers of Christ we own everything everything we belong to Christ the crucified and risen [31 : 17] Lord and yet we have nothing and yet we possess everything all that to say Christ is the one who satisfies our souls more than the absence of afflictions and more than the abundance of wealth he satisfies here's the agents of God the emissary the ambassador and to receive his appeal is to be reconciled to God receive God's grace which connects with the next part receive God's agent and this is probably one of the most emotional appeals that Paul has ever done in any of the letters he's ever written look at what he says our mouth has spoken freely to you oh Corinthians literally our mouths has been made open in other words we're not holding anything back we're not kind of in the shadows with you we're wide open to you we're transparent with you he made himself vulnerable to them and he spoke to them as if he was right there they were close to his heart by him opening it wide to them and he was asking them excuse me he was asking them to welcome him and then notice that's why he says our heart is open wide you see that and then notice verse 12 you're not restrained by us but you're restrained by your own affections and what's he saying we're not the ones to restrain you so you can't be forthright real and loving and you're embracing us you are it's your affections oh Corinthians they were the ones that harbored the suspicions they were the ones that harbored the doubts they were the ones that rejected Paul they were the ones that didn't want him to be the minister it was them so that's why he says the problem was them not him you have chosen not to embrace or love us and then he says this in verse 13 now in like exchange in other words in the same exchange make an equal return for what he given to them but then he makes this little statement

I speak as to children you're acting like children who behave in childlike ways so stop behaving like children who are having bad attitudes toward their parent I don't want to do that notice he challenged their pride while expressing love tough love he was their parents notice he's basically saying I have apostolic authority based on Christ so what does he say you yourselves open wide also we've opened our affections to you why don't you open your affection to me I've given you my unrestricted affection for years now it is time for you to give me yours or else what's left for us to do where do we go from here if you do not give me your affection yes parents are sinners they are weak they'll never be perfect but to harbor ill will stubbornness pride holding it against you well years ago you did this and months ago you did this you're not living what you say you believe you have not embraced grace you see all of that the attitude is unchristian that's why he tells them when you receive

God's grace you're receiving me and then the last point we have reject God's opponents or separate from God's opponents break ties with them the ones who are causing all this ruckus reject God's opponents now a question how would Paul know that they have opened their hearts to him they broke ties with the opponents this is the connection of this this passage chapter 6 verse 14 to chapter 7 verse 1 it connects to the previous part see what was the thing that kept them from having a love and response towards Paul the rival suitors that vied for their affections stop doing things that bring division between us i.e.

listening to these disgruntled leaders the cranky super apostles they were super apostles yeah they were cranky you're not listening to me you're called to separate from these persons notice he's not telling them to separate from a practice and this is not just a general warning now we use this to say see this is why a Christian shouldn't marry a non-Christian right and i'm not saying you can't apply it this way it may have application in that way we need to understand what Paul actually meant when he wrote this he was telling the Corinthians to reject those super apostles stop being unequally yoked with people who say that they're Christians when they're really not that's what he's saying separate themselves from unbelievers who disguise themselves as believers that's what he's saying here that's what this passage means these so called believers as those called they're called by Christ to be apostles that's a lie no they weren't and he gives five rhetorical questions to contrast the identity of Christians and non-Christians and then he affirmed who they were as God's people

God's temple appealing to them based upon the promises notice how he begins there in verse 14 don't be unequally yoked together with unbelievers a common labor with unbelievers who's he talking about the opponents the super apostles and those are rhetorical questions for what partnership of righteousness and lawlessness they were the righteousness of God in Christ they share no participation in lawlessness all this sums up the world notice the next part what fellowship is light with darkness they were new creations in Christ seeing the light of the gospel in the glories Christ God created light out of darkness why are you having anything to do with them there in verse 15 what harmony is Christ with Belier or Belier they lived in a relationship with Christ who had become their sin and in him they became

[39 : 33] God's righteousness Belier or Belier it's Hebrew it comes from the Hebrew of Beliel where you get the word Baal or Bel it means worthlessness nothingness what does Christ have to do with these worthless opponents yikes he just went right these opponents and yet to the Corinthians they were highly prized weren't they see notice he says what common verse 15 what is a believer in common with an unbeliever nothing one loves Christ the other rejects Christ this is why I mentioned the gospel earlier in our service if you're here and you're not a Christian you need to respond to Christ today because as of right now you are rejecting Jesus and my friend God is rejecting you but if you come to Christ he will save you if you come to

Christ you will receive compassion if you receive his grace oh he'll give you his grace it's found in Jesus one loves Christ the other rejects Christ notice the next part there in verse 16 or what agreement has the temple of God with idols in first Corinthians chapter 3 and in chapter 6 he calls the Christians the temple of God believers are God's new temple built upon Christ and then so he climaxes here to the finale he says for we ourselves are the temple of the living God he's not just saying we in terms of the apostle but we collectively together God's promises all of God's promises are initially fulfilled in the church in Christ and all of his promises are yes and amen in Christ and notice he says of the living God as opposed to dead idols God communicates with his people in the living word given in the written word all of

God's promises find their yes hallelujah and amen in Jesus this is who you are what are you doing hanging out with these opponents and notice the proof the next part of verse 16 just as God has said I will dwell among them and walk among them and I will be their God and they shall be my people quotes from Leviticus chapter 26 Jeremiah 31 God has changed their hearts we're part of the new covenant he dwells among us he walks among us since we are his temple we're his people the promises of God are fulfilled in Christ God belongs to us we belong to God all in Christ crucified he's our God we're his people therefore verse 17 come out from their midst and be separate says the Lord and do not touch what is unclean now he quotes from Isaiah 52 and then later he quotes from 2nd Samuel chapter 7 verse 14 this is who we are in

Christ we're the temple God belongs to us we belong to him we've been changed new creations based on the promises they're all fulfilled in Christ come out from their midst he demanded them to act but it proceeds from what he has done in Christ because God's work in us has been done in Christ we should act and do separate from the persons so called unbelievers excuse me so called believers that are really unbelievers look if we belong to Christ we're different from the world then we should live differently from the world if we're identified as being in Christ God accepts us and welcomes us as his children we should be separate different we've been accepted by God in spite of who we are all because it's done in Christ and notice he says we're not just a temple we're of royal blood we're not just family we're blood look at what he says the next part of verse 17 and I will welcome you

I'll be a father to you you shall be sons and daughters to me says the Lord Almighty this is the promise of a son of David it finds fulfillment initial fulfillment in the resurrection of Jesus this is who we are not just a temple family he's our father we're his sons and daughters so with the appeal to receive grace and receive him with the appeal that he gives to separate from the opponents and then the proof that he gives exhort him this is who you are in Christ the temple come out from their midst chapter 7 verse 1 therefore having these promises beloved let us cleanse ourselves based on promises which find their yes and amen in Christ we act or live out the gospel the action cleanse ourselves of all defilement of flesh and spirit flesh that which defiles our bodily existence and our spirits which I take it to mean our attitudes so in other words we cleanse our total personality and then notice this last part that he says perfecting holiness in the fear of

[45:26] God what does he mean perfecting it could mean accomplishing or maturing maturing holiness in the fear of God so what does he mean to say when he says this as we stand in awe of God we have a sense of heaviness or weightiness is what means to fear God so as we have already been sanctified in Christ we grasp in life and experience what has been done to us in Christ we experience this in our lives we experience with the experiences of life and part of that is what he just mentioned we suffer that's what we experience it and one of the first things these Corinthians could do is repent of their rejection of Paul as their apostle pastor and truly embrace him as such receive grace receive me reject the opponents glory of

God and that's what we're going to look at next week there's repentance there there's repentance in the Corinthian church last point to receive to receive God's grace it's to receive Christ crucified and risen and everything that goes with it which means suffering it means we separate from those who are opponents of his grace those who say they've embraced the shameful glorious gospel but they've really rejected it reject receive and God we pray and once again in how we treat each other amongst us as a church that we will not reject grace but we'll display that same grace to each other that same grace that you've shown to us realizing that as we live this grace it means we live it in suffering so help us to persevere by the power of the Holy

Spirit who gives us the grace to persevere if you would take some time and let your mind dwell on these things may you think and ponder what we've seen from the scriptures here in 2nd Corinthians then after a few moments of silence we'll worship in our giving we'll worship singing two more songs our closing prayer we'll do those things but really want to encourage you to just these few moments this day just take in let your mind dwell on these things of what we've seen from God's word think about it and ponder it and ponder it Thank you.