

Quarter Three: *1 and 2 Corinthians*

Jill Morikone

Lesson 10—Authentic Christian Ministry

Tuesday: Christ-focused Ministry of Reconciliation

September 1, 2026

- **Last Week:** “Love-driven Ministry”
 - 2 Cor 1, 2, & 5
 - Hardships in Paul’s ministry & the love from Christ that gave him purpose & desire to minister
- **This week:** “Authentic Christian Ministry”
 - 2 Cor 3 - 7
 - Paul’s authentic, apostleship ministry & what that looks like

Memory Text: “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies” (2 Cor 4:8 – 10, ESV).

The week in brief:

- 1. Sunday: Fruits of an Authentic Ministry (Ryan)
 - 2 Cor 3 – 4:6 – fruits of Paul’s apostolic ministry were the souls converted through his evangelism (believers in Corinth); 2 different responses to the same gospel
- 2. Monday: Suffering and Glory (John L)
 - 2 Cor 4:7 – 5:10 – suffering Paul experienced & hope believers experiences of heaven (by faith)
- 3. Tuesday: Christ-focused Ministry of Reconciliation (Jill)
 - 2 Cor 5:11 – 21 – Paul’s ministry is not self-focused but Christ-focused; Christ’s ministry of reconciliation, and, by extension, our ministry focus, too
- 4. Wednesday: Call to Holiness (James)
 - 2 Cor 6 – reconciliation with God, followed by reconciliation with others, and then call to holiness of life
- 5. Thursday: Comfort and Joy (SQ)
 - 2 Cor 7 – Paul’s comfort & joy by the Corinthians response (repentance & reformation) to his severe letter

Tuesday: Christ-focused Ministry of Reconciliation

2 Cor 5:11 – 21; Deut 10:12; 2 Cor 12:9; Gal 6:14; Col 1:19 – 23; Eph 2:13 – 16;

- What are the hallmarks of authentic Christian ministry?
 - Souls converted to Jesus - the lives of those converted & saved (Ryan)
 - Faith enduring, even under suffering (John)
 - Christ-focused, not self-focused ministry & call to reconciliation with God
 - Reconciliation with others, holiness of life (James)
 - Comfort & joy in Christ (SQ)

- 2 Cor 5:11 – “Knowing, therefore, the **terror** of the Lord, we **persuade** men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.”
 - Vs 10 – the coming judgment motivated Paul to proclaim the gospel with humility
 - He knew he’d appear before that judgment seat to give an account of his ministry for Christ
 - What is this terror or fear of the Lord?
 - Deut 10:12 – “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,”
 - Fearing God = obedience (walk in all His ways)
 - Loving Him
 - Serving Him with everything we have
 - Paul says since he loves Christ, he wants to obey Him & serve Him with everything he has
 - Therefore, Paul wants to share the gospel of Christ with others (we persuade men)
 - **Takeaway #1: Motive matters**
 - Why do we serve Jesus?
 - Why do we witness?
 - Approval of men or approval of God?
 - Or, because we love God and want to share Him
- 2 Cor 5:12 – “For we do not **commend** ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to **boast** on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart.”
 - Paul is not commending himself:
 - His ministry is not self-focused but Christ-focused
 - Paul only boasts of Christ
 - Gal 6:14 – “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”
 - Those who boast in appearance but not in heart = Paul’s detractors who gloried in appearance
 - 2 Cor 10:10 – “‘For his letters,’ they say, ‘are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.’”
 - Paul’s Jewish-Christian opponents
 - The Corinthians could now give an answer to the charges laid against Paul by false teachers
 - They were his best defense, because they were personal witnesses to his sincerity, integrity and love for Christ
 - **Takeaway #2: Defense of others matters**
 - Stand up for others integrity and love for God
 - Sometimes, we’re called to defend others or their ministry (not ourselves)

- 2 Cor 5:13 – “For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you.”
 - Paul accepts the charge from his detractors that he is insane
 - A completely dedicated life to Christ can sometimes look insane
 - Mark 3:21 – Jesus didn’t have time even to eat and people said, “Are you out of your mind?”
 - This apparent insanity is for the service of God & approved by God
 - It was all done for the church & the Corinthians had experienced the blessings of Paul’s ministry
 - **Takeaway #3: God’s approval matters**
 - Important to know whether it’s for God or for self
- 2 Cor 5:14, 15 – “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died **for all**, then all died; (15) and He died for all, that **those who live** should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”
 - Love of Christ = for the world
 - Compels = (KJV, constraineth) = love is the motivating factor
 - One died **for all** = Christ’s death on the Cross
 - **For** can be translated “on behalf of” or “in place of” = substitutionary atonement
 - Christ didn’t just die **for us** (as our Representative)
 - He died **in our place** (as our Substitute)
 - **All** indicates everyone
 - Jews & Gentiles (John 3:16... for God so loved the world...)
 - Christ’s death is universal in its range and significance
 - **Takeaway #4: Love matters**
 - The love of Christ, manifested on the Cross, is the deepest motivation for ministry
 - Everything we do is because God loves us & we pour that love into someone else
 - All died – did all literally die?
 - vs 15 gives us the answer
 - Those who live = those who died to self & were resurrected with Christ to a new life through baptism
 - Rom 6
 - **Takeaway #5: Self-denial matters**
 - Death to my own way of life & rising to walk with Jesus
 - Self-denial in ministry is imperative
- 2 Cor 5:17 – “Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a **new** creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”
 - In Christ = united with Him in death & resurrection
 - New = Gk, *kahee-nos*’ = new in quality, not necessarily in time / chronology
 - Indicates what God makes is radically different
 - John 3 – Jesus to Nicodemus – you must be “born again” / “from above”
 - Rom 6 – death to the old man & rising to newness of life

- **Takeaway #6: Transformation matters**
 - Those who minister are transformed by the gospel of Christ
- 2 Cor 5:18, 19 – “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the **ministry** of reconciliation. (19) that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”
 - Ministry = Gk, *dee-ak-on-ee'-ah* = attendance as a servant, “lit, waiting at tables;” Spirit-inspired service
 - Reconciled = Gk, to change mutually; come to an exact point, two parties reconcile / come to the same position
 - This word = the heart of the gospel = restoration of sinners to God thru the atoning work of Jesus Christ
 - Same Word in Romans 5:10 – “For if when we were enemies we were **reconciled** to God thru the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”
 - Heb 7:27 – “who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.”
- **Takeaway #7: Christ’s sacrifice matters**
 - His substitutionary atonement reconciled us to God
 - He took my place on the Cross
- 2 Cor 5:20 – “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.”
 - Ambassadors = has the same meaning as “apostles” – both being sent forth by Christ
 - Implore = by persuasion, not force
- **Takeaway #8: Witnessing matters**
 - Share this ministry of reconciliation with the world
- 2 Cor 5:21 – “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
 - **Takeaway #9: Salvation matters**
 - Great exchange = my sin for His forgiveness & righteousness

9 takeaways of Paul’s ministry & lessons for us

- 1. Motive Matters
 - Why do we serve God?
- 2. Defense of others matters
 - Stand up for others integrity and love for God
- 3. God’s approval matters
 - Is it for God or for self?
- 4. Love matters
 - The love of Christ, manifested on the Cross, is the deepest motivation for ministry
- 5. Self-denial matters

- Self-denial in ministry is imperative
- 6. Transformation matters
 - Those who minister are transformed by the gospel of Christ
- 7. Christ's sacrifice matters
 - His substitutionary atonement reconciled us to God
- 8. Witnessing matters
 - Share this ministry of reconciliation with the world
- 9. Salvation matters
 - Great exchange: my sin for His forgiveness & righteousness