

HOME CHURCH GUIDE:

- CHECK-INS: Introduce, check-in
- CARE: Needs in the group
- COMPASSION: What is the group planning? Are you inviting your neighbours to join in?
- GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS Church-wide and group-only
- DIG IN: "Breaking the Ice" question (group facilitator), discuss questions as a group
- PRAYER: Final questions, prayer huddles for personal requests. Consider breaking into small groups (huddles) of 2-4, by gender, if large enough.

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. When have you felt misunderstood? Describe the situation.
2. Read the passage. In 2 Corinthians 6:4-10, Paul gives a catalog of what he's had to do and face in his years. What are some of the things he mentions?
3. How did he respond to hardships?
4. What does Paul want them to understand about his ministry by providing them with this list?
5. Think of the criticisms leaders in our Christian community and the larger Lower Mainland Christian community may have faced. How do Paul's comments help us see things from their perspective?
6. This list reveals the mark of genuine, authentic Christian life. Sometimes we get caught up in an over-realized "heaven on earth, fully now" thinking. What are the dangers of living in this kind of shallowness instead of living in the truth of life as Paul depicts in the passage?
7. How does being honest about the full spectrum of life help you open your real self/ heart to others?
8. V. 11-13 What kind of invitation is Paul making to the Corinthians?
9. What is Paul's emotion behind the invitation he makes?
10. What does this mean for our local church community?

SECOND CORINTHIANS SERIES

"NOW!"

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

Time does not stand still. We can't go backwards, only onward. As life goes along, we can be reactive and closed, or choose an open posture to the "now". Paul could have let his reaction to pain decide many things for him, but he chose the opposite—his pain informs but does not control him. He doesn't stay angry but understands a greater power is at work to bring relationships into a better place. He chooses the open path.

TAKE OFF

Story and Flight Map (outline)

Ben Witherington's Rhetorical Commentary Outline:

5. The *probatio* [proofs] and *refutatio* [refuting opponents] (3:1-13:4), which includes:
 - a. Paul's defense of his ministry and of his anti-Sophistic rhetorical approach (3:1-6:13),
 - Argument I

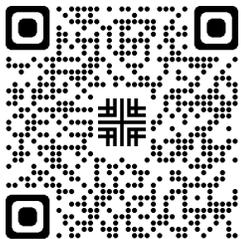
◦ Division 1: 3:1-18

◦ Division 2: 4:1-5:10

◦ Division 3: 5:11-6:2

◦ Division 4: 6:3-13

CONNECT



- Need Prayer?
- Meet with Pastor Shel
- Get information
- Make Comments
- Ask Questions
- Sign-up for our weekly e-newsletter
- Join a Home Church

FLIGHT: Through the verses

2 Corinthians 6:1 *Now because we are fellow workers, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain.*

- Previous passage - God initiated, sustained, dealt with sin/injustice—the call is not passivity but action. Grace enables it, not numbing us to injustice and sin.
- You can receive grace "in vain". This goes against the view that grace is coercive (e.g. you must believe if you experience God's grace), and that this grace is non-relational (e.g. God doesn't care about how you are formed if you said a magic prayer (or) elect from all time).

2 Corinthians 6:2 *For he says, "I heard you at the acceptable time, and in the day of salvation I helped you." Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation!*

- Now - the power of now

2 Corinthians 6:3 *We do not give anyone an occasion for taking offense in anything, so that no fault may be found with our ministry.*

- Paul is saying 'no intentional offense' yet he offended folks all the time. The problem lies with those in opposition taking offense at the nature of the essential character of a Jesus-shaped life.
- Today we have so-called Christians causing offense over their politics, elevating everything to the same status as the person and message of Jesus himself.
 - This causes the witness of the church to be marred
 - Politics has become the new fundamentalism in North America

2 Corinthians 6:4 *But as God's servants, we have commended ourselves in every way,*

- Character, level of giving; life, talent, etc.
- The negative list of hardships Sections:
 - 4-5 enduring hardship
 - 6 exemplifying virtue
 - 7 fearless speech
 - 8 indifference to surface reputation, 9-10 thriving in outrageous circumstances
- Two of three hardships catalog standard in ancient Cynic and Stoic philosophers' instructions
 - Paul is similar except, he readily acknowledges weakness, suffering, and lack of sufficiency in himself but rather his dependence upon God

2 Corinthians 6:4b *with great endurance, in persecutions, in difficulties, in distresses, 5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in troubles, in sleepless nights, in hunger,*

- Stoics like Musonius Rufus (a contemporary of Paul) used this.
 - According to Paul, sacrificial hardship strengthens character and promotes virtues—and he did this for them.

2 Corinthians 6:6 *by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by benevolence, by the Holy Spirit, by genuine love,*

- In the Holy Spirit, a strange mention here in a virtue list, but...

2 Corinthians 6:7 *by truthful teaching, by the power of God, with weapons of righteousness both for the right hand and for the left,*

2 Corinthians 6:8 *through glory and dishonor, through slander and praise; regarded as impostors, and yet true; 9 as unknown, and yet well-known;*

2 Corinthians 6:9b *as dying and yet—see!—we continue to live; as those who are scourged and yet not executed; 10 as sorrowful, but always rejoicing; as poor, but making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.*

2 Corinthians 6:11 *We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened wide to you. 12a Our affection for you is not restricted,*

2 Corinthians 6:12b *but you are restricted in your affections for us.*

2 Corinthians 6:13 *Now as a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts to us also.*

- Mutuality, reciprocity the marks of true friendship relationships.

LANDING AND FINAL WORD