

## 10-24-04 THE FOUNDATION OF MINISTRY (OUTLINE FOR STUDIES)

2 Corinthians 2: 17, 3:1-6

Intro: Two weeks ago we began our study on ministry. We said that ministry may be a very different concept than what we think of. There are church, television, print, and social ministries that often come to mind. How often we think of ministry as this big position deal. It is easy for us to lose sight of ministry unless we always look at Jesus, who was the visible expression of the Father. In our study today let's look at the essence and the source of ministry.

### REVIEW OF 2 COR 2: 14-16

Our ministry first consists of a triumphant procession *always* in Christ. This creates a flow in me that cannot be ignored. I can be ignored, but the fragrance of Christ's triumph in me cannot. We are always in victory no matter what the circumstance, because Christ is LIFE. He doesn't have life only, He is life. The fragrance of Christ in me flows to the Father and to the world system, and that system cannot stay neutral. They will react to us as their death or their life. This life is not something I am doing or trying to achieve, but the Father is at work in me and it is His work in me that creates this tension. I am not walking around trying to prove ministry in my life, in fact I am often not aware what is spilling out of me. I just know He is moving in me. Remember Jesus saying in Luke 8:46, "Who touched me, I feel power has gone out of me?" This is all brought about by *abiding in that Vine* that Jesus talks about in John 15. Abiding is not a 15 minutes a day concept, a worship service on Sunday, or a goodnight prayer. This is a living in Him that is 24-7, and that cannot be achieved without having all the elements of an intimate relationship. Something is **always being pressed out** of us as a fragrance.

### NOT A STRATEGY

**2Co 2:17** ( *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.* ) Paul states that we are not **peddling** the word of God for profit. This is not a ministry that is causing people to flock to me to bring big gain to me, but there is much more to this word: *From kapelos (a huckster); AV translates as "corrupt" once. 1 to be a retailer, to peddle. 2 to make money by selling anything. 2a to get sordid gain by dealing in anything, to do a thing for base gain. 2b to trade in the word of God. 2b1 to try to get base gain by teaching divine truth. 2c to corrupt, to adulterate. 2c1 peddlers were in the habit of adulterating their commodities for the sake of gain.* This word was only used once in the whole New Testament, and never in the Septuagint which says to me that this word was carefully chosen for this occasion. The way that these "hucksters or "peddlers" would function was to put the best looking fruit on top of their baskets, and water down their wine, or mix wines together to make it pass for the vintage. They came to be despised and if you had been in that business you could not hold an official position. Now this is not the same as people being paid to perform ministry, as Paul even encouraged that. The word, kapelos, means more what you do with the word of God than anything else. Jesus never played with scripture. The adding to or watering down is a dangerous journey. We may not always understand meaning, but when we saturate in the word of God and recognize that the secular world is not the standard, that God's word is the standard, we will receive more revelation and see more accomplished. There are elements of truth found many places but if it is not consistent with God's word, it is not truth. If it is not consistent with the teaching of Christ who doesn't just have truth, but IS TRUTH, it is meaningless.

### THE RIGHT SOURCE

**2Co 2:17** ( *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.* )

WE ARE OF GOD. Now this idea "OF" God, is important. It is the word transliterated "EK", which is a primary preposition and means out of or from in our context. Now let's take a look at another place it is used.

**Joh 8:42** *Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.* This word "from" used by Jesus describing where He is operating out of, is the same word. This word EK, has the following essence and definition: *A primary*

*preposition denoting origin (the point whence motion or action proceeds), from, out (of place, time or cause;)* (Strong's concordance).

Even as Jesus has been sent from the Father, Paul is capturing the idea that we are not of ourselves but out of Him. Your ministry is a flow out of the Father and He is the *origin* and the *substance* of your motion, or activity.

**WE ARE IN THE SIGHT of GOD!!**

**2Co 2:17** *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, **in the sight of God** speak we in Christ.* It is a powerful thought enough to think of being in the vision of God at all times, but it really takes on more meaning when we look at the original languages here. This Greek word encompasses far more. The word "**katenopion**" means "*directly in front of: - before the presence of, in the sight of.*"

**Let's look at another scripture: Jude 24 (KJV)** *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless **before the presence** of his glory with exceeding joy,*

There are other scriptures that speak of "before" God. Our ministry flows out of Him and must be driven by the sense of His presence. This is far different than trying to perform, hoping God will bless us.

**WE MINISTER IN CHRIST!!**

**2Co 2:17** *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we **in Christ**.* Let's examine this word IN here:

The Greek word is "**EN**" A primary preposition denoting (fixed) position (in place, time or state)... a relation of rest, rarely with verbs of motion, and then not to indicate direction..(excerpts from Strong's). This is a completely different picture from the work **EK**, which indicated motion and the place from which that motion proceeds. This is a "rest" concept. There is an activity that is coming out of the Father into my life, which at the same time results in rest. That is because we are not speaking on our own but speaking the words that come from a position in Christ. Even as Christ spoke what the Father told Him, we speak what flows from Jesus.

### **A SINCERE RESULT**

I cannot think of anything the world needs more than sincere ministry with results. This is going to raise some real controversy. You see the meaning here in the original language of sincerity also incorporates purity. The word is: **eilikrines (i-lik-ree-nace')** From *heile* (the sun's ray); judged by sunlight, **that is, tested as genuine** (figuratively): - *pure, sincere*. We translate this as sincere in most standard versions. It really means, clean and pure. Let's take a look at where Paul uses this word and concept again:

*God's Word Version: (2Co 1:12) We are proud that our conscience is clear. We are proud of the way that we have lived in this world. We have lived with a God-given holiness and sincerity, especially toward you. It was not by human wisdom that we have lived but by God's kindness.*

*Contemporary English Version: (2Co 1:12) We can be proud of our clear conscience. We have always lived honestly and sincerely, especially when we were with you. And we were guided by God's wonderful kindness instead of by the wisdom of this world.*

*King James: (2Co 1:12) For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.*

**Message: (2Co 1:12)** *Now that the worst is over, we're pleased we can report that we've come out of this with conscience and faith intact, and can face the world--and even more importantly, face you with our heads held high. But it wasn't by any fancy footwork on our part. It was God who kept us focused on him, uncompromised.*

Paul had grave concerns that any ministry that was not flowing out of God, rooted in Christ and pure, clean truth was a detriment to the lives of people. The culture of Paul's time was not very different than what is going

on now. Philosophies were more popular than the Scripture on which Jesus founded every word and deed of His ministry. Adultery of mixing the wisdom of this world system with biblical truth is mentioned more in the old and new testaments than sexual adultery. There may be some value in world systems, but if they cannot be found to be based on truth, they will not hold water. People will not be changed except by the One who is the Truth. Every secular program that is successful will be based on the application of Truth, not opinion, and it will be His truth, even if they don't know it. Jesus didn't say He is one of the truths, He said He was the Truth. Truth is not a concept, a psychology, a medicine, or a profession. It is a person and His ministry never failed. The world order is expected to be based, on fancy footwork as the Message Bible says. Our ministry is to be focused on God, NOT COMPROMISED.

**Maybe this verse from the Message Bible will sum everything up in a way we can swallow it:**

*(2Co 2:16-17) But those on the way to destruction treat us more like the stench from a rotting corpse. This is a terrific responsibility. Is anyone competent to take it on? No--but at least we don't take God's Word, water it down, and then take it to the streets to sell it cheap. We stand in Christ's presence when we speak; God looks us in the face. We get what we say straight from God and say it as honestly as we can.*

### **Reflections and application:**

1. Have you had a time in which you felt you backed off sharing or watered down something you wanted to say due to fear of repercussion?
2. How can you be sure you are moving “of God” in your activities?
3. You are having an exceptional time of personal worship and praise and someone knocks on the door:  
How do you feel?                      What do you do?
4. Someone at school, home, or outside work speaks against Christ... What is your response?  
What if that person is in authority over you?