

[This 'sermon' was written hours before deadline for a class (which I nearly failed). It is mostly incoherent, but notes a few OT references from Paul that are interesting to consider in light of II Corinthians 6:14. I make this note because for some reason, this paper sadly scores high on a Google hit]

Sermon Transcription for II Corinthians 6:14-18

How often we focus on our own outward appearance and glory, desiring others to think highly of us. Bringing glory to ourselves, instead of glory to God, might very well be the root cause of a majority of sins in our life. Each day we awake with hopes and aspirations for the day. Right now, consider some of those you had this morning when you woke up... What were your hopes? What are your hopes right now? What motivates you? Now, after making an honest list, ask yourself, “Am I worrying **about my glory and my appearance to others in this life; or rather, am I actively concerned about others and our place with God in the next life?**”

Our passage this morning will be 2nd Corinthians chapter 6, verses 14 through 18. We'll be doing quite a bit of reading this morning to give us background, as Paul had an eventful past with the audience of this letter, and we'll need to establish this background for understanding the context. Place a marker in your Bibles at our passage, and turn with me to Acts 18:1-17. Here we read about Paul's first encounter in ministry to the people in Corinth.

“1. After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named

Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome.”

Here we're told that the Emperor Claudius had commanded all Jews to leave Rome, and that many had settled in Corinth. This is a notable point when we get to our passage: a large number of Jews were in Corinth.

“He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. 4 And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. 5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6 But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” 7 Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue. 8 Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized. 9 And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; 10 for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.” 11 And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. 12 But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat, 13 saying, “This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

Another notable item: the Jews were concerned about and accused Paul of worshiping contrary to the Law.

14 But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; 15 but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters." 16 And he drove them away from the judgment seat. 17 And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and began beating him in front of the judgment seat. But Gallio was not concerned about any of these things.

As Christianity grew and many Jews came to know the Lord, there was a large debate about how much of the OT Law should be observed. These proponents of keeping the OT Law were called Judaisers because they tried to tie salvation into faith + works of the OT Law.

Now let's turn back near our passage and look at the context just before our passage. In chapter 2, verse 4 we see that Paul had written previously to this region, chastising them for putting up with carnality in the church.

There seems to be a very specific purpose for this letter. Paul seems to have been badmouthed by some in Corinth. They claim to be 'super-apostles'. and they appeal to outward appearance and glory, but Paul continually appeals-- all throughout this letter-- not to anything 'super' he's done, but instead to the sufferings of Christ. We can reasonably conclude those opposing Paul were likely Judaisers. These accusers used Paul's previous letter of chastisement to accuse him of being weighty in letter, but weak

in person. Let's look at Chapter 10 verse 10.

[read 10.10]

Paul is trying to win back the favor of his flock. Let's turn again to Chapter 7 verse 8. He defends his heart for these people and restates that his purpose for his previous letter was for the wellbeing of his audience. Paul impugns his accuser harshly. Turn with me to Chapter 11 verse 12:

12 But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Let us now come to our passage, Chapter 6 verse 14, and let's read this in light of what we know from the background and occasion for the letter:

14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

Paul judges his accusers to be unbelievers (remember what we just read how later in this letter he calls them servants of Satan! Paul calls his audience back to Christ.

16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living

God; just as God said, “I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Paul continues to impugn the outward legalism of the Judaisers as false religion and slavery and contrasts their worthless teaching (idols) with the true Living God. But to get the full effect of this, we have to look at the passage from which Paul quotes. Turn with me to Lev. 26:1-13:

1 ‘You shall not make for yourselves **idols**, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for **I am the LORD your God.**

2 ‘You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the LORD. 3 ‘If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, 4 then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. 5 ‘Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. 6 ‘I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land. 7 ‘But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; 8 five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. 9 ‘So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. 10 ‘You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. 11

‘Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. 12 ‘I will

also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. 13 'I am the LORD your God, **who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you would not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke** and made you walk erect.

Notice also the subtle warning Paul might be giving his accusers in verse 7. It might be nothing, but we find something similar in his next citation of an Old Testament passage. Remember this for later.

Back to our New Testament text, again, Paul cites another passage from the Old Testament:

17 "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

Let's look at this passage in context. Turn with me to Isaiah 52:1-12

1 Awake, awake, Clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; Clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; For the uncircumcised and the unclean Will no longer come into you. 2 Shake yourself from the dust, rise up, O captive Jerusalem; **Loose yourself from the chains around your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.** 3 For thus says the LORD, "You were sold for nothing and you will be redeemed without money." 4 For thus says the Lord GOD, "My people went down at the first into Egypt to reside there; then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. 5 "Now therefore, what do I have here," declares the LORD, "seeing that My people have been taken away without cause?" Again the LORD declares, "Those who rule over them howl, and My name is

continually blasphemed all day long. 6 “Therefore My people shall know My name; therefore in that day I am the one who is speaking, ‘Here I am.’” 7 How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, “Your God reigns!” 8 Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices, They shout joyfully together; For they will see with their own eyes When the LORD restores Zion. 9 Break forth, shout joyfully together, You waste places of Jerusalem; For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. 10 The LORD has bared His holy arm In the sight of all the nations, That all the ends of the earth may see The salvation of our God. 11 Depart, depart, go out from there, Touch nothing unclean; Go out of the midst of her, purify yourselves, You who carry the vessels of the LORD. 12 But you will not go out in haste, Nor will you go as fugitives; For the LORD will go before you, And the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

Paul again encourages his hearers with another quote from the OT where Isaiah encourages Israel to loose the bonds from their neck and remember the deliverance of their God from slavery. Paul calls his hearers to come out as they have been set free from the **ungodly-- the very opposite** his accusers were claiming to be. Notice verses 8 and 10 and remember our speculation that our previous Old Testament citation may have had a warning from Paul. It might be nothing, but it's fun to consider.

The Gospel of God is a precious gift of freedom. Christ died to free us from the slavery of our sin and also from that of constant striving for praise from men, if we will just humble ourselves, recognize our need for, and sufficiency of, His sacrifice for us and rest in His salvation.

God wants us to be free from the slavery of putting on airs of outward religion-- looking good in the eyes of our fellow churchgoers. As God spoke through Paul to the Corinthians, He also has the same true love for us and wants us to embrace a service of humility for one another, so that we might show His humble Character here and hope for a rich life eternal to come.