2nd Corinthians

Series: More Than Extravagant

July 8, 2018

Message 2:

**Rise Above**

2nd Corinthians 6

*Guests - Handout designed with you in mind - Info and notes especially for you - won’t call or visit -*

*Growth Track*

*Generosity - Motion Conference $$ for 8 - $600 more will add 4 more students - $1000 more will include their leaders & fill up our bus!*

*Notes on Handout and in YouVersion App*

Series Title comes from 2nd Corinthians 9:10-11 MSG - This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God.

Last week - **We’ve been given a tremendous gift and an urgent task.**

* **We will live beyond this life.**
* **We influence others.**
* **We see people as Jesus sees them.**
* **We share the greatest gift.**

2nd Corinthians 6:1-2 - As God’s partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God’s kindness and then ignore it. For God says,

“At just the right time, I heard you.

On the day of salvation, I helped you.”

Indeed, the “right time” is now. Today is the day of salvation.

**Big Idea: For the sake of God’s gift, for the sake of ourselves, and for the sake of others, we must rise above.**

What must we rise above? Paul lists three areas -

**> We rise above attacks.**

2nd Corinthians 6:3-10 - We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry. In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food. We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love. We faithfully preach the truth. God’s power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense. We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors. We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

There are a lot of attacks against Biblical Christianity today …

According to Open Doors:

* 215 million Christians experience high levels of persecution in the top 50 countries where persecution is taking place. This represents 1 in 12 Christians worldwide.

Every month

* 255 Christians are killed
* 104 are abducted
* 180 Christian women are raped, sexually assaulted or forced into marriage
* 66 churches are attacked
* 160 Christians are detained without trial and imprisoned

We face attacks of different kinds in our culture -

* I could cite examples of people losing their jobs because they are Christians.
* I could cite examples of businesses being sued because the owners are Christians. and having to spend tens of thousands of dollars to defend themselves or seek charitable help.

We don’t face as much opposition in physical form as do people in other nations - but there are those who have a great animosity toward Christianity -

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.: “There’s more explicit hostility toward Christians in some sectors of power [in America] —that is real and not imagined.”

Article in Time By [MARY EBERSTADT](http://time.com/author/mary-eberstadt/) June 29, 2016 -

“Some of the faithful have paid unexpected prices for their beliefs lately: the teacher in New Jersey [suspended](http://www.christianpost.com/news/nj-teacher-suspended-for-giving-student-a-bible-sharing-verse-88401/) for giving a student a Bible; the football coach in Washington [placed on leave](http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/29/us/washington-football-coach-joe-kennedy-prays/) for saying a prayer on the field at the end of a game; the fire chief in Atlanta [fired](http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2015/01/07/atlanta-fire-chief-was-fired-because-my-christian-faith.html) for self-publishing a book defending Christian moral teaching; the Marine [court-martialed](http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2015/05/26/marine-court-martialed-for-refusing-to-remove-bible-verse.html) for pasting a Bible verse above her desk; and other examples of the new intolerance. Anti-Christian activists hurl smears like “bigot” and “hater” at Americans who hold traditional beliefs about marriage and accuse anti-abortion Christians of waging a supposed “war on women.”

“Some Christian institutions face pressure to conform to secularist ideology—or else. Flagship evangelical schools like [Gordon College](http://www.nationalreview.com/article/417788/gordon-college-keeps-its-faith-and-its-accreditation-david-french) in Massachusetts and [Kings College](http://e-edition.timesnews.net/article/9010459/king-college-accreditation-at-risk) in New York have had their accreditation questioned. Some secularists argue that Christian schools don’t deserve accreditation, period. Activists have targeted [home-schooling](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/may/08/christian-home-schooling-dark-side) for being a Christian thing; atheist Richard Dawkins and others have even called it tantamount to [child abuse](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2312813/Richard-Dawkins-Forcing-religion-children-child-abuse-claims-atheist-professor.html). Student groups like InterVarsity have been [kicked off campuses](http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865575315/InterVarsity-Christian-Fellowship-gets-booted-off-another-college-campus-for-membership-policy.html?pg=all). Christian charities, including [adoption agencies](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/frenchrevolution/2015/09/23/christian-adoption-agencies-under-attack-again-from-gay-couples-with-hurt-feelings/), [Catholic hospitals](http://www.ncregister.com/blog/kschiffer/courts-deflect-aclu-attack-against-catholic-hospitals) and [crisis pregnancy centers](http://www.weeklystandard.com/democrats-launch-attack-on-crisis-pregnancy-centers/article/1020940) have become objects of attack."

Why?

* Demonically inspired

Ephesians 6:12 - For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

* Bad experiences with Christians -
  + Friends, family
* Ignorance - they really don’t know - have never heard - have never experienced true love -

THUS - one way we rise above these attacks is by not sinking to their level.

2nd Peter 2:20-22 - And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before. It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life. They prove the truth of this proverb: “A dog returns to its vomit.” And another says, “A washed pig returns to the mud.”

Do not respond -

1st Peter 3:9 - Don’t repay evil for evil. Don’t retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing.

Matthew 5:11-12 - God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

Matthew 5:44-45 - But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven.

This is how we rise above the attacks - this is how we show the love of Jesus.

We know His purpose will prevail! We know that Christianity cannot be extinguished -

That has been attempted through the centuries …

Joshua Bowman on [CatholicVote.org](http://CatholicVote.org) -

“There is not a corner of the earth which has not been soaked in the blood of Christian martyrs and yet we are still here.”

In the first persecution in Jerusalem there was an attempt to kill Christianity in its cradle just as there was an attempt by Herod to kill Christ in the cradle.

* Persecutions from Rome under Nero, Domitian and other Caesars
* We could chronicle the murder and martyrdom of believers and the attempted elimination of Christianity in every century and in virtually every country where the Good News has been - yet we are still here! It is still going on today - but the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church and where persecution intensifies, the Church grows!

John Lennon said the Beatles would be more popular than Jesus Christ - Jesus has lasted just a little bit longer than they have. They are just a blip on the radar of history - Jesus is the entire scope of history!

We rise above by enduring attack - not responding -

Psalm 35:23 - Wake up! Rise to my defense!

Take up my case, my God and my Lord.

Lamentations 3:58 - Lord, you have come to my defense;

you have redeemed my life.

We must rise above so that no one will find fault with our ministry - with our lifestyle - with the cause of Christ -

**> We rise above disunity.**

2nd Corinthians 6:11-13 - Oh, dear Corinthian friends! We have spoken honestly with you, and our hearts are open to you. There is no lack of love on our part, but you have withheld your love from us. I am asking you to respond as if you were my own children. Open your hearts to us!

The people in the Corinthian church had believed lies about the Apostle Paul from outsiders - lies about his ministry.

Their teachings proved that they were not true followers of Christ, so it was an outside attack on the Apostle Paul that they believed.

We should not be quick to believe accusations -

2nd Timothy 5:19 - Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it is confirmed by two or three witnesses.

Leviticus 19:16 - Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people.

Give our brothers and sisters the benefit of the doubt -

I am not inclined to believe the first report -

Especially if it regards a fellow leader …

We reap what we sow - I don’t want people to believe the first bad report they hear about me …

**> We rise above defection.**

2nd Corinthians 6:14-18 - Don’t team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? And what union can there be between God’s temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said:

“I will live in them and walk among them.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Therefore, come out from among unbelievers,

and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord.

Don’t touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you.

And I will be your Father,

and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

He’s not saying to have no contact with people who don’t follow Jesus …

Keep in mind the pagan practices of the Corinthians - and false teachers were trying to justify participation in such things as ok -

… i.e., worshiping at the pagan temples … orgies … prostitution …

1st Corinthians - you can eat meat - but you can’t participation in the worship!

We will not defect! We will not desert!

We are now soldiers of a sort - soldiers of love. Not a physical warfare, but a spiritual warfare -

2nd Corinthians 10:4 - We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments.

Weapons of love - the power of the Holy Spirit -

We cannot defect … desert … go back … retreat …

For our own sake - as well as for the sake of those who have never come into a relationship with Jesus!

Go back to vs. 1 -

2nd Corinthians 6:1 - As God’s partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God’s kindness and then ignore it.

Paul was concerned for the Corinthian people whom he loved -

He was also concerned for those whom they could influence, but they would not influence if they turned back from following Christ.

Following Christ makes a difference - we must live differently - we must live above the destruction that sin brings!

God loves divorced people - He loves people going through divorce - He loves people filing for divorce - but He hates the pain and destruction divorce brings -

The same is true for:

* drug abuse …
* Alcoholism …
* Dishonesty …
* Cheating …
* Unfaithfulness
* Spreading gossip …

1st Corinthians 6:9-11 - Don’t you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don’t fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Galatians 5:19-21 - When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

These are warnings of love …

**Invitation** - if watching by video pray with us.

Connection Card - if watching on video - let me know via email.

**Blessing**