

Paul's Theological Defence of his Apostleship

Paul's 'Death' leads to 'Life': 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

⁷. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹. persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰. always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. ¹². So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Life = Ministry of Reconciliation: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

¹⁴. For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵. And he died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. ¹⁶. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹. that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making an appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Ministry of Service: 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 9

¹. We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; ². for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of

generosity on their part. ³ For as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, ⁴ begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints – ⁵ and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us.

⁹ For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

Letter of Commendation: 2 Corinthians 10:18; 3:1-3

10:18: For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends.

3:1-3: ¹ Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely, we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? ² You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts (NRSV; not 'your hearts'), to be known and read by all; ³ and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts'.

Paul the Protective Father: 2 Corinthians 11:1-4

¹ I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! ² I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. ³ But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴ For is someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough.