Rejoicing in the Ministry

2 Corinthians 1:12-14

10-11-2026

Introduction: The Challenges of Ministry are many; But so are the Blessings!

**** Like The Apostle Paul, we can rejoice in our ministries!***

2 reasons why Paul rejoiced in his ministry among the Corinthians:

I. *Paul rejoiced in his ministry because:*
He had a <u>CLEAR CONSCIENCE</u> regarding his ministry toward others (v.12-13)

Paul's conscience was clean in regards to :

A. His <u>Motives</u> (v.12a – "simplicity")

B. His <u>Sincerity</u> (v.12b – "Godly sincerity")

C. His <u>Wisdom</u> (v. 12c – "not fleshly wisdom")

D. His <u>Conduct</u> (v. 12-13)

1) His conduct in <u>the World</u> (v.12)

2) His conduct with <u>the Believers</u> (v. 12-13)

II. *Paul rejoiced in his ministry because:*
He had a <u>FRUITFUL MINISTRY</u> in the lives of others (v. 14)

A. The Corinthians would <u>rejoice in Paul</u>
(Others can rejoice when God uses "me" to produce fruit in their lives)

B. Paul would <u>rejoice in the Corinthians</u>
(I can rejoice when God uses me to produce fruit in others)

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Introduction: The Challenges of Ministry are many; But so are the Blessings!

The ministry – Whenever you deal with people you will face trying challenges.

The ministry has its hardships, its trials its challenges its burdens.

Perhaps nothing in life is more difficult than pastoral ministry (if done Biblically). However, nothing in life is more rewarding either.

The ministry has unparalleled blessings (ILLUS: God giving me the privilege of leading Guy Recupero (Grace Lorini's brother-in-law) to Christ just a few days before he passed into eternity on Christmas Day, 2006, with stomach cancer that had spread throughout his entire body.

Some encouragement for weary servants:

1. ***Serving the Lord*…Returns the Greatest <u>Gratitude</u>**

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

2. ***Serving the Lord*…Fulfills Life's Greatest <u>Purpose</u>**

1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

3. ***Serving the Lord*…Meets People's Greatest <u>Needs</u>**

2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

2 Cor. 9:12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

4. ***Serving the Lord*…Taps into the Greatest <u>Power</u>**

Col. 1:29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

5. ***Serving the Lord*…Receives the Greatest <u>Honor</u>**

John 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

6. ***Serving the Lord*…Pays the Greatest <u>Rewards</u>**

1 Corinthians 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

7. ***Serving the Lord*…Fills the Heart with the Greatest <u>Joy</u>**

1 Thessalonians 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

8. ***Serving the Lord*…Brings God the Utmost <u>Pleasure</u>**

2 Cor. 5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

Notice the word **"rejoicing"** (v. 12, 14) begins and ends Paul's opening statement regarding his defense of his own integrity in the ministry.

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2 reasons why Paul rejoiced in his ministry among the Corinthians:

I. *Paul rejoiced in his ministry because:*
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v. 12

"Rejoicing" – the word speaks of glorying or taking pride in something. Here, Paul's heart takes pride in the fact that **"by the grace of God" (v. 2)**, he had a clear conscience regarding his lifestyle (**"conversation"**) both in the world and in relation to the Corinthians.

Despite the ill-founded suspicions and false accusations made against him by some at Corinth, he could say that his conscience was clear. I find that Paul often becomes a target of attack by Satanic forces seeking to discredit the powerful Word which God gave through this man.

It really does not matter what others may think about you or say about you. What really matters is – what does your conscience say about you? In answering that question, we have a more accurate idea s to what God thinks about our character and conduct.

"Testimony" - witness; the conscience speaks to us. God has built within mankind a talking moral detection device. It bears witness to our guilt or innocence; it speaks to us as to the pleasure or displeasure we bring to God.

"In Paul's through, conscience – a clear conscience, a good conscience – is foundational to ministry. Three times in his Pastoral Letters he referenced conscience, urging 'love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith' (1 Timothy 1:5). He said that church leaders 'must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience' (1 Timothy 3:9). Substantiating his own ministry he said, 'I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors with a clear conscience' (2 Timothy 1:3). The rest of the New Testament testifies to Paul's empowerment through 'a good conscience.' He courageously took his stand before the Sanhedrim, looked them straight in the eye and declared 'Brothers I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day' (Acts 23:1). And standing before Governor Felix he confidently declared ' So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man' (Acts 24:16).
To the Romans Paul voiced his amazing affirmation of love for his people as true because it was spoken with a clear conscience: 'I am speaking the truth in Christ---I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Hoy Spirit' (Romans 9:1)." (Hughes p. 39)

“Paul faced his critics many accusations against his character and integrity (thy had accused him of being proud, self-serving untrustworthy, being proud self-serving untrustworthy and inconsistent mentally imbalanced incompetent,,,,, unsophisticated, and an incompetent preacher) by appealing to the highest human court--- his conscience” (John MacArthur, Study Bible note p. 1764).

The conscience is “the soul’s warning system, which allows human beings to contemplate their motives and actions and make moral evaluations of what is right and wrong” (MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1764).

Definition:
English "conscience": "con" = along with; "scio" = to know
Greek "συνειδησις" ("suneidesis"): "sun" = with; "oida" = to know

Hence, the word means "to know with" - to have a "co-knowledge" with oneself (Vine, p. 228).
Man, being created in the "image of God," has an intuitive ("oida") awareness or "consciousness" of: 1) self 2) God and 3) morality

Everyone, even unregenerate man, has a basic awareness of the moral law of God. No matter where you travel in the world, you will always find people with an inner sense of right and wrong (a moral standard). This basic awareness or consciousness is based upon truth that God has written upon every man's heart (via creation).

This "conscience" is man's power to judge or make a moral decision about whether something is right or wrong.

SEE: Romans 2:14-15. Bible truths about the conscience:

a. **All men have a conscience**
(Rom. 2:14 - "Gentiles . . . do by nature")
"Do by nature" = to do something instinctively; or without being taught by men.

b. **Man's conscience basically gives either a Yes or No answer** (Rom. 2:15)
The conscience will either "accuse" (say, "No, definitely not, that is contrary to God's Law).
Or it will "excuse" (say, "Yes, that is permissible or allowable, I will do that, it is in accordance with God's standards).

c. **The conscience functions like a mediator between man's "heart" (with its written law code) and the "thoughts" (reasonings which instigate one's action and will)**

d. **The conscience does not legislate law (make the rules), but merely interprets it**
Example: Like a judge, the conscience either approves or disapproves based upon the moral knowledge (law or standard) it has available.
1) The Law (standard) ----2) The *Judge ----3) The Verdict

Example: Like a referee, the conscience receives the rules from the rule book and sends a message to our thoughts (reasonings), saying either:
"Fair" or "Foul"
"Safe" or "Out"
"Yes" or "No"

1) The Rule book ----2) The *Referee ----3) The Call or Decision

No one should ever violate or go against his/her conscience
Examples:
1) Paul's clear conscience before God and men (Acts 23:1, 24:16; II Tim. 1:3)
2) The citizen's obedience to government (Rom. 13:5)
3) The believer's questioning eating meat offered to idols (I Cor. 8:7-12)
4) The deacons who serve the Lord (I Tim. 3:9)
5) The believers who suffer for Christ (I Pet. 2:19; 3:16, 21)

Beware: A conscience can be defiled (Titus 1:15) or seared (I Tim. 4:2) by deliberately violating its promptings
1) Defiled=Stained, polluted, impure (the conscience does not function right)
2) Seared=Cauterized; made insensitive, numbed (the conscience does not function at all)

Paul's conscience was clean in regards to :

A. His Motives (v.12a – "simplicity")

"Simplicity" – singleness; undivided motives; one motive – that being to please and glorify God.

(cp. 2 Cor. 8:2; 9:13)

Singleness of heart describes a oneness of purpose (not a divided heart; cp. Mt. 6:22; Lk. 11:34)

[Note: The variant reading of "holiness" fits the context but not as appropriately as the T. R.'s "**singleness**" (or simplicity). The association of thought with the word "sincerity" (genuineness) best fits with the idea of being single-minded (without multiple motives).]

B. His Sincerity (v.12b – "Godly sincerity")

"Godly sincerity" –

"Sincerity" = *eilikrineia* (from *eili* = light; and *krineia* = to judge). Lit. to judge from light.

The word was used of holding vessels (ceramic jars or containers) up to the light to see whether or not there were cracks that had been re-glued. If the jar had had a fracture and was reattached, the light would reveal it.

The **"light"** that revealed Paul's **"sincerity"** was God (hence, "Godly sincerity" or literally: sincerity of God; sincerity that was produced and revealed by God).

C. His Wisdom (v. 12c – "not fleshly wisdom")

Paul's conscientious ministry and conduct was not a product of "fleshly wisdom" (it was not a human manufactured insight and skill) but it was the production of God's grace.

Any good conscientious ministry that we do is of God's unmerited kindness and favor. He does the work in us and through us.

D. His Conduct (v. 12-13)

1) His conduct in the World (v.12)

"Conversation" – manner of living; lifestyle; conduct; a principled behavior.

Paul had a clear conscience that he had behaved himself with pure motives and genuineness both **"in the world"** (with the lost) and **"to youward"** (with the saved).

Such consistency should mark everyone of us. We should not live one way in the presence of the saints and another way in front of those without Christ.

We should have a clear conscience regarding our behavior . . .

--at church and at home
--with ministerial service and at secular work
--with Christians and with non-believers
--with saints and with sinners

2) His conduct with the Believers (v. 12-13)

"More abundantly" - especially; with more attention to details.

Why would Paul be even more conscientious with the Corinthian believers?

Basically for the same reason we are to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

For a conscientious soulwinner, it is sometimes easier to let our guard down in front of the saints thinking: "They will understand"; "they will forgive," etc. But just as "charity begins at home," so our best behavior should be "at home" with God's people.

The Corinthian saints were Paul's fruit (v. 14); he did not want to harm the fruit God gave him.

How clear is your conscience about your conduct both in the world and in the church?

Do you have a clear conscience regarding:

--Your use of time
--Your treatment of others
--Your speech
--Your service (lesson preparation; prayer, etc.)

You can't have joy and at the same time have a bothered conscience (i.e. an inner voice that is screaming out because of a violation you are allowing in your life).

The Christian's conscience is the Holy Spirit's voice (who is bearing witness to your human spirit – cp. Rom. 8:16).

You can't be Spirit-filled while acting contrary to your conscience.

v. 13

"The Apostle was also sure that he had communicated clearly in his most recent correspondence to the Corinthians (the so-called 'severe' letter, 1 Corinthians 2:5 cf. 2 Corinthians 13:10), and that what he was now writing consonant with what he had already written" (R. Kent Hughes, p. 40).

As Paul pens this letter of 2 Corinthians, what he says is what he means. There is no hidden message; no secret agenda. No need to read between the lines. I appreciate people who say what they mean and mean what they say.

Paul was not baiting them with attractive words so as to accomplish some hidden agenda. He communicated clearly to the saints so as to be understood clearly.

His goal was spiritual <u>edification</u> through spiritual understanding.

Did you ever meet someone who seeks to impress you with words you don't understand so as to draw attention to themselves rather than the message they are communicating? That was not Paul! He spoke so as to be understood and understood all the way until the end of one's life.

Conscientious ministry is all about communicating a forthright, honest frank sincere message. In our witnessing, discipleship, etc. let's speak the truth clearly, not cleverly; with a goal to help, not impress.

"Acknowledge" - understand, to know with certainty. The goal of all communication is to understand and to be understood.

II. *Paul rejoiced in his ministry because:*
He had a <u>FRUITFUL MINISTRY</u> in the lives of others (v. 14)

A. The Corinthians would <u>rejoice in Paul</u>
(Others can rejoice when God uses "me" to produce fruit in their lives)

"Acknowledged us in part" – The Corinthians understood Paul's message but not every minute detail of it.

"We are your rejoicing" - To the degree the Corinthians understood Paul, they rejoiced in Paul. Why? Because God taught them many things through Paul. Paul was the human instrument God used to open their eyes to the Gospel message; and because of this they were eternally grateful for Paul.

I am forever thankful for the man God used to lead me to Christ. And I take (in a good sense) pride in him (and will do so until Jesus comes back or I meet the Lord in death).

Sometimes we "bite the hand that feeds us" when we should deeply appreciate those who bring us God's Word.

B. Paul would <u>rejoice in the Corinthians</u>
(I can rejoice when God uses me to produce fruit in others)

"Ye also are ours" – Just as the Corinthians could rejoice in how God used Paul in their lives, Paul himself could rejoice in how he was used in their lives.

When you have conscientious ministry in the lives of others, they appreciate you and you appreciate them. The saved are thankful for the soulwinner and the soulwinner is thankful for those saved.

This concept of Paul's rejoicing in the fruit of his labor is reiterated to the Philippians and Thessalonians.

> *Phil. 2:16 - Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*

> *1 Thes. 2:19-20 - For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.*

"The day of the Lord Jesus" - refers to the day of His second coming when he will resurrect the dead in Christ and reward His saints for their ministry works.

Rev. 22:12 - And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.