

'Overcoming Distraction" – 2 Corinthians 6:14

This morning, 2 Corinthians 6:14 - out of all of the passages I think that Paul now brings forth in this Book, he is seeking to lay the foundation of really the importance of the context of the verse. He talks about not being unequally yoked and you have heard myself and other pastors share with you the danger of you being unequally yoked in business or in dating or often times in marriage. Sometimes you got married before you understood anything about Christianity and now you need to live for the glory of God and believe that God is going to change the one who is not saved. But for you to be dating or for you to be in business or go into business with a non-believer it is contrary to the word of God and it is disobedient to God. And I think that when you come to understand the reason why, I think that is really the heart of God. So often we believe that God is being unfair, that He's not going to take care of us, and so we need to do it ourselves, and God seeks to hold back and He doesn't want to bless your life. Well that is so far from the truth. In the context of this verse it is God weeping over the loss of those who have not surrendered their life and to those who have walked away from the goodness of God. So it's God seeking to bring His people back, and God has always had a problem with His people. They have always wandered like the nation of Israel and God did so many things for them and God blessed them, but they began to walk away from the Lord. He said He would give them houses that they had not built, vineyards that they had not planted and when God finally brought them into the land all that God ever asked is that they would not intermarry and that they would not have other idols. But left to themselves, immediately they intermarried and begin to defile their life. And God is a jealous God; He does not want any other lovers within your life. He seeks to be the Lord preeminently in you and therefore, He is unwilling to share that position with anyone. Not even the wife or the husband. So your relationship is to God first, after that relationship has been established then God will

take your life and build it and God will give you a great marriage and a great relationship but without that foundation, that understanding, then oftentimes marriages pull away from the heart of God, from the work of the Kingdom doing what God wants them to do because they call it family time. Well God wants the family time to be with Him. After your devotions, after your fellowships, after you have come to know the greatness of your God, then you can take it to your wife, take it to your husband, take it to your dating relationship and you will be safe and secure in the arms of Christ. So in that context, Paul now comes and says listen, you've made a mistake in your life. You married or you allowed this man to live with his stepmother and I dealt with you and you listened and you broke away from it, but I want to remind you of the danger of being unequally yoked.

The Word we are going to look at this morning is called "separation" or the word that I don't really want to use because it will probably turn you off is "sanctification". It's tragic today, we have these idioms with words like commitment or consecration or dedication. I love looking at the teenagers today because when we were getting married, we gave the diamond ring and we were going to get married. Today, they have a new thing called the promise ring. Now what in the world is up with that? Is that like, I'm not going to give you the diamond until I am really sure this thing is going to work. So you kind of hesitate and really when you look around you realize this world, this society it's hard for men and women to commit to anything in their life and so we kind of go half way and God is saying that's not good enough. He desires a real commitment. He desires real separation and it is interesting, the word separation comes from three different words. In the Greek Lexicon, it's a word that means pure or clean or free from stain. In other words, I'm not living so much in the world that the world has now stained my life. Oh I'm in the world, but I'm not of the world. I'm able to walk through this world without being stained allowing this sin to come into my life, to ponder or to do certain things that I know that I shouldn't do for all of a sudden my conscious is stained and my heart is stained and I'm no longer pure before God. Then in the Young's Concordance it mentions to separate or set apart, I really like this.

There's a scripture in the Book of Deuteronomy that says, "**that he brought you out that he might bring you in.**" (4:37-38) And, the case oftentimes is that God brings you out, but you don't get in. We come out and sit in church, but we really don't get into what God is doing in our life and through the community and through our life of a church, as a family. And so it means to be set apart, it means that in a very wonderful way that God has taken you out of sin, but He also has set you next to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. And the third word is in the Webster's dictionary to set apart for a holy use, and it means like the different instruments that they would use in the Old Testament concerning the Tabernacle. These were sanctified, set apart, consecrated, they were sprinkled with the blood, they were anointed and they could only be used for this one purpose. And when I put the three words together, I begin to kind of get a picture of what God's after. I see the very first word as separation, that God desires that my life be separate from the world. You remember when Jesus came into the Synagogue, He saw a man with a withered hand. He said to that man, "**standup.**" (Luke 6:8) And the Pharisees thought that He was going to embarrass the man, but He said, listen would you like to be healed and the man said, "**I will to obey**" (Luke 6:8) and God healed the man instantly. But there he was standing separate, standing out, for God wanted to know that He had blessed this man. That He had ordained this man, that this man was very different in all the sanctuary, in all the congregation, this man got touched. Now, I'd like to be touched, and if I'd like to be touched, then I need to stand for the glory of God. So there are moments where I see that "yes" it's embarrassing, but if God is going to do a work, I'm for it.

Then I remember the woman with the issue of blood. She said if I could just touch the hem of His garment. For eighteen (18) years she bled. She was kicked out of the synagogue, could not worship according to the law because she was unclean and finally she used all of her money; spent everything she had. And she finally came, and she knew that touching Christ was not according to what she should do, but she was willing to take a chance and she did, and Jesus stopped, turned around and said, "**who touched me.**" (Mark 5:30-31) And Peter, our beloved big mouth,

“how can we tell with so many people, and Jesus said to Peter, **“someone touched me – power went out of my life.”** And so she stood and there He looked at her and said, **“daughter you are totally healed.”** (Mark 5: 28-34) It wasn’t to embarrass her, it was to single her out and to show her that she was special. She was out of fellowship but when He put His hand upon her life she’d be back into fellowship, and so it means to be separate. And I wonder this morning if we could say that our lives are really separate from the things of this world. Oh we are in the world, we enjoy the things that we can get from the world, but when it comes to the world’s spirit we are not even part of it, our Kingdom is Jesus Christ.

The second word I put together is the word that means to be cleansed – purity, and though God wants to do an outward work, He also desires to do an inward work. And this is where God begins to go inside and prepare the instrument for the hand of God. Where God now takes the instrument and begins to work in your life through difficult times, beginning to allow the Holy Spirit to broaden His territory within your life. And so your eyes now become His eyes. Your body now becomes His body. You kind of begin to understand that God is looking for someone to use and my body is now committed to God and my very being is God.

And then lastly, I come to the word called dedication. It means to be set apart. I am now an instrument in the hand of God. I think of that great scripture in 2 Timothy where he says that **“...cleanse yourself and prepare yourself a vessel unto honor sanctified for the Master’s use...”** (2 Timothy 2:21) So, here’s the challenge today. “Oh I don’t like that word.” Well, listen to this. You have the possibility of being touched by God. You have the possibility of being used by the Almighty God in Heaven to do a work through His life and through yours. He desires to work in you and through you in a very powerful way, and the only thing that can begin to hinder His purpose, His plan is when you and I become unequally yoked then the blessings stop, and God cannot work through that type of a relationship because He’s jealous. Now let me bring it down to earth. If I am

married, which I am - have a wife and she starts seeing another guy what would I do? I'd kill him. You think, oh Pastor, you're just going to be real loving. No, I'd go after the guy. I would fight for my wife, I'm jealous. In other words, she is worth fighting for and what's going on? Well God is fighting for you. The one thing that God has always had a problem with is keeping His people by His side. He has chased them, ministered to them, healed them, and worked in their life. God is out of trouble, but we still have a tendency to say we don't like these words. Well, these are the words that sets you free and so I read, **"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion has light with darkness, and what harmony has Christ with the Devil, or what part has he, the believer with the infidel or the unbeliever, and what agreement has the temple of God with the idols? For ye are the temple of the Living God. As God has said: I will dwell in them, walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be My people. Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. Touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father unto you...** (underline that word Father, we will come back to that) **and you shall be my sons and daughters sayeth the Lord Almighty."** (2 Corinthians 14-18) And, then in 7:1 **"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God."** So, I come to realize very simply that God is after something, and three things I'd like to have you jot down or mark down or try to remember:

1. The need of separation (2 Corinthians 6:14-16)
2. The call to separation (2 Corinthians 6:17)
3. The benefit of separation (2 Corinthians 6:18)

Let's take a look at the first one. The need of separation - I want you to notice the contrast. He says in verse 14-16 **"...what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness or what communion has light with darkness, or what**

harmony has Christ with the devil, or what part does a believer have with an unbeliever..." (2 Corinthians 6:14-16) The thing that I notice here – very crystal clear, is that God is not allowing any question to how He feels. There are no gray areas absolutely in this teaching. He is saying that either I am for the light or I'm for darkness; either, I am governed by Jesus Christ or I am governed by the enemy; either I am serving God or I am not. In other words, when you come to real Christianity, He is very simply putting a sword between my flesh and my spirit, and God is saying in the blessings you need to understand that you need to make a separation. The light is speaking the truth - darkness is lying. You are filled with righteousness – those things that you are doing are unrighteous. You have been touched by the power of God. You ought not to be going steady with a non-believer. You have been used by the power of God. You ought not to give yourself to the things of the devil. So the contrast is extremely important, and God once again is trying to build a point. He is saying to us there's a separation. But not only is there a separation, or the need of separation, I come to the next in verse 17, there is a call to separation. Notice the **"...wherefore..."** in verse 17, **"Wherefore,"** which points backwards to **"...therefore come out from among them and be separate, sayeth the Lord. Touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you"**. Three things He mentions in verse 17:

1. Come out from among them
2. Separate yourself from them
3. Touch not the unclean thing

Probably the best way to illustrate this is from an Old Testament story in the life of Samson. It's an incredible heart-wrenching story about a man who wasted his life. The story goes all the way back to his mom and dad, before he was even born. That the Angel of God came to this couple twice, not once, twice and spoke to this couple that they were going to have a very unique child, and God came back to the mom and said you need to sanctify your womb and you need to sanctify your life, and so she took the commandment of God. She would not drink any wine, not touch anything and she vowed to do what God told her to do. The time came that the child was now to be

born and Samson came forth. So he was born in the womb, sanctified in the very heart of the belly of this woman. She had sanctified herself and she had set this child aside, and the father's name means separate one and so they raised the child. They allowed the Nazarene vow to be rich, in other words let the hair begin to grow and not touching any dead thing and not drinking any wine and the boy grew with tremendous power, and God had a plan, and God had a purpose, and God knew exactly what He was going to do. God was going to use this child to minister to the life of those in the book of Judges because the Bible says, **"...they have gone every other way..."** In other words, they all did that which was right in their own eyes and the nation of Israel was falling apart, and God wanted to save it. So He brought Samson into the world. So Samson was ordained. He was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. He was tremendously strong. He was able to catch 300 foxes by himself and tie their tails together and light the cornfields of the Philistines on fire. He was able to take the jawbone of a donkey and smite a thousand men at one time and stack their bodies up. He was able to take the gates off the city and march 10 miles up a hill and stick them once again into the ground, and it took a whole city to come get them. This was the man, he was ready to go after it, Godly parents, a great relationship, he was now ready, but he had a problem. You see Samson loved Philistine women. There was a slow-burning lust within his heart. He couldn't stay away from the Philistine people, and so he went down. His parents said, "don't do this. You have been called, consecrated, set apart, chosen, we've raised you our whole life. God wants you." He said, "I don't care. I'm going." So, he went down and married one of the women at Tamah. All of a sudden he finds that the Philistines killed his wife. For the next 20 years of his life, he was an angry mad man causing tremendous havoc within the enemy's camp, destroying everything he could destroy and not doing the will of God.

Finally, he falls in love with Delilah. I think a name like that ought to warn you a little bit. She wanted to give him some milk and take a little nap in her lap and tell me the secret, but he wouldn't do it, but he was willing to flirt, willing to tease, willing to get close and finally, his heart took over. He gave her the secret – the vow of his

commitment to God. She shaved his head. He jumped up and he knew not the Spirit had departed. They came in, they plucked his eyes out, and they tied his hands. They tied him to a grinding mill around and around and around, and there as he was grinding, blinded, bound, he began to realize the voices around him Dagon, his god, Jehovah is not. They made sport of him and made fun of Jehovah, and it broke his heart. All of a sudden, he began to realize what he had done. Twenty years he missed the call of God; twenty years he wasted his life; twenty years he was unwilling to heed the warning of God. He was unwilling to sanctify his life, set it apart, and God wanted to use him.

So, he was able to hinder the very work that God wanted in his life. So what it tells me here is the call of sanctification or separation, wherefore come out from among them. God was seeking to bring him out of the Philistine's camp. He wouldn't do it. God was warning him through his parents, he wouldn't listen. The prophets were coming to him, he wouldn't listen, his own people were begging him, and he wouldn't listen. He was set in his own mind that he was going to do what he wanted to do, but God had a plan, and God had a calling, and God allowed this child to be born and you have been born by the same Spirit. God has predestined you and gave you a name and called you in your mother's womb. God has filled you with the power of his Holy Spirit and you too, as well as I, am to fulfill the destiny that God wants. But I can hinder that work, I can have too many other things that are not pleasing to God. All of a sudden I find the **"...wherefore..."** Notice in 7:1 there's a **"...therefore."** And, **"...Therefore, cleanse yourself. Having therefore the promises deeply beloved, let us cleanse our self from all filthiness."**

And then lastly, what I really want to leave you with on a very positive note – the benefit of separation. You say, well Steve, if I choose to live a dedicated life – let's say that I'm willing to really consecrate my life to God, or let's say that I'm really willing to make that separation like the light and dark, between Christ and the devil. I'm really able to distinctively make that decision. What will happen in my life? Well let me tell

you what will happen. You notice in Chapter 7:1 these promises. Well these promises go back to verses 16, 17 and 18. He says here, **"...what agreement has a temple of God with idols. For we are the temple of the living God..."**. God has said, and underline, **"I will dwell in them."** **"I will walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people..."** (2 Corinthians 6:16-17) towards the very end, **"...I will receive them."** (2 Corinthians 6:17) and, then **"I will be a father to them and they will be my sons and my daughters."** (2 Corinthians 6:18) So, here is the benefit of surrendering your life.

When I choose to live a separate life, not being tempted or having a double standard, the first thing that I'm going to understand is I will receive the promises of God. Now what are the promises of God? Here it tells me in verse 16, **"I will dwell with them."** So, God desires to live inside of you. God desires to be all over your life, we live, we move, we have our being in God. God desires that you would know that He's around. That you would take Him to work - take Him to the things that you do. Bring Him part of your life and let Him have that common denominator within your life - that, He dwells in your life. Here's the Almighty God saying, "I will dwell in you." I hear so many people say, "Well, I am so lonely today." God says He will never leave you nor forsake you. That, you are worth more than anything to Him - that that which He has begun He's able to complete until the day of Christ. So He's willing to dwell, but not only that, it says here, **"...He's willing to walk among them..."** (2 Corinthians 6:16) He is willing to walk through all the difficulties of your life, the good the bad and the ugly. He's willing to walk you through your children, walk you through your older life, walk you through being fired from your job, walk you through the new position that God has given to you. God is willing and wanting to walk you through life.

To the men on the Emmaus Road Jesus dropped in. He said, "What are you guys doing?" They said, Man haven't you heard, He died, and Jesus begins to speak to them, the word of God and when they got to these two men's home, they invited Him in, and when He broke the bread their eyes were open and they knew that it was

Christ. You see God opened their eyes and they saw the Lord. For He's with you, He's in you. He's walking with you. He never leaves you, forsakes you. Through the busy days, the difficult days, He said, **"...I'll walk with you..."** (2 Corinthians 6:16) And, then it says, **"I'll be your God."** (2 Corinthians 6:18) And, when I think about this, I realize, what an incredible thing. You think about how God made the Heavens and the Earth. God can make a guy just for you, if you are not married, and maybe you're saying, I hope He does make this guy, I can't find him. God can do it. God can do anything. If we believe that God made the heavens and the earth, God has the ability to finish the children's ministry overnight, if He wanted to. If I say well I don't think He can, then I don't believe in Genesis 1:1. God can do anything. He can change a heart – He's never going to change this marriage – He can change a heart, He can change a life, He can change a child's life. He can bring a child back. He can do anything He wants. In fact, when Moses was being hassled by Korah God took care of the problem. God just opened the earth and Korah fell in, and God shut it up, and he said to Moses, your problem's taken care of. That's the Guy to have around – God. You can walk down the street and have a wonderful time because God's with you and I need to know that God's with me and that God's walking with me, and He's my God. But then He says also in verse 17, "I will receive you." I'll take you just like you are, I'll accept you in all the situations you find yourself in, and I will always receive you. Oh, there are times that we are not received because our life has not been pleasing to other people, but God will always receive you. There is not a time that you can't cry out to God, and say God forgive me, and He is not there because He'll never leave you nor forsake you.

And, then the last thing He says is a favorite of mine, He says, **"I will be a father to you..."** (2 Corinthians 6:18) Some of you are saying well, I understand that, He wants to be a father, no I don't think you really understand the way it's written. He is saying that if you would just surrender your life then I could be your father. You say, well, are you saying that I am not His son – no, you're His son, you're His daughter, but because of my disobedience, I can hinder my Father's blessing. Let me put it in terms that you can really understand.

My son, we have a great relationship, we go to hockey games, and we hang out together. Let's say all of a sudden he said, "I want nothing to do with you anymore." "I have found somebody else in my life, I don't like you any longer - you're too strict or whatever." Would he no longer be my son? Yes, he would be my son. Would I no longer be his father? I would still be his father, but from his perspective, he doesn't want a father, and so he doesn't desire to have the things I can give him. If he would say to me "Dad, I'm sorry, can we just restore what we had, then like the prodigal son, I could give him a robe, I could give him a ring, I could give him everything, and what I'm trying to say is that God said, "that if you are unequally yoked and you live your life for the glory of God, He will be able to do wonderful things through your life. So the blessings that you get so upset about, that God isn't doing in your life, you are the cause of that stoppage in your life, no one else. You see when I become bitter and not trusting God, I close the door to God working within my life. If I desire to see all that I am and the goodness of God in my life, then I will say, "Jesus, I understand I need to have a separate life." He'll say, I'll be your God, and not only that, I'll be your Father, and I'll show you how wonderful your life can be.

Well, people talk about, you have got to give it up. What are you going to give up? Your car, your money? What are you going to give up? Sin, selfishness, in other words the moment I say to God I surrender, God says "good - I've got a bunch of promises for you I've been wanting to give. I'm going to dwell with you, walk with you, talk with you, and do God things in your life. You are going to be my son, you are going to be my daughter, but most of all now I can really act as a father, and the greatest curse from a father's heart is when his kids won't let him be there. When our kids say we don't want you around they tie our hands, but when that kid comes back and says, I made a mistake would you be my dad? You know something, I'll buy the world for you, I'll be the best father you ever had, and God is saying you're stopping me from blessing you, because I cannot bless disobedience. I need to have a surrendered life.

Closing Prayer: Father, we thank You for Your goodness, and Father for Your word. How we can come to a place in our own heart that we can quietly say, God I surrender. I surrender everything to your hands, and God these are one of these messages that we just need to ponder, very strong but yet God, very crystal clear in my own mind. That Father, I thank You that You have not made this Christian walk difficult. The difficulty is my own will. I know exactly what You desire. You would have me to talk in the Light to fall in love with Jesus Christ. You would have me to walk away from the things of this world - the things of Satan. You would have me, Father to hang out and to minister to brothers, and God you would have me to be very careful about being unequally yoked with the world. And God, when I make that commitment that I'm serious Lord, the wonderful promises You have said, that I will dwell with You, I will walk with You, I'll be your God, I will receive You, and I will be a Father to you, all because we took You at Your word. So God give us strength, help us to answer that question. Thank You Lord, that we can purge ourselves by the work of Your Holy Spirit that we might present to You a vessel unto honor, sanctified for the Master's use. God use us. Don't let us be like Samson. Don't let us write over our tomb, "here lies a wasted life." God grab us, hold us, and Father remind us that the purpose and the plan that you have for us in Jesus Name.