

Clogged Arteries – Part 4

Pastor Alex Lindsay – NBC – 10/03/2021

Scripture Reading: II 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!” (II Corinthians 6:11-13 – NLT)

Our text shows us Paul making an impassioned plea for the Corinthian people to open their hearts to the ministry of the Word that Paul and others had been giving them. Those who had ministered to the church did it with an open heart. But the Corinthians had mixed affections. Like clogged arteries, they were not completely open to the things that were offered to them.

Our goal is to look at portions of Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians and determine what things can either clog or open the heart to the ministry of God’s Word, to the ministers of God’s Word, or to the fellowship of the saints. Three main areas of consideration are:

- **Christ’s love creates ministry – II Corinthians 5:14-21**
- **Christ’s reputation needs protection – II Corinthians 6:1-10**
- **Christian response to the gospel call needs purification – II Corinthians 6:11 – 7:1**

Christian response to the gospel call needs purification

II Corinthians 6:11 – 7:1

After Paul’s impassioned plea in II Corinthians 6:11-13, He gets right to the point: *“Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...”* (II Corinthians 6:14). Jesus described our relationship with Him as joining Him in a double yoke (Matthew 11:28-30). In this position, we are relieved from our weaknesses and burdens. It is Christ who is willing and able to use His strength for us (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 4:13; II Timothy 2:1). This position also brings us into intimacy with our Lord. We are able to learn of Him and find rest for our souls. We find Christ to be gentle and approachable to those who are weary and cumbered with care. Are you burdened with sin? Does religion seem like another set of duties to perform? Do you find the troubles in the world overwhelming? Come to Jesus! As we behold the glory of Christ, we are also able to become like Him. See Hebrews 2:9-18; 4:14-16; II Corinthians 3:18; II Peter 1:2-4).

There is a principle of the double yoke also taught in the Old Testament. God required that two of the same kind of animal be yoked together. Two different animals could not work together pulling the same load. The ox and the donkey were cited in Deuteronomy 22:10. Their temperaments and physical qualities were not compatible. Also, according to the dietary laws of Leviticus 11:1-8 and Deuteronomy 14:3-8, an ox was a *“clean”* animal (suitable for eating) and a donkey was an *“unclean”* animal (unsuitable for eating). Paul is about to confront the Corinthians with the concept of unacceptable unions with people and ideologies. He has done this before (I Corinthians 5:9-11; 6:9-20). He is now pressing the point harder. Since we are

“yoked” with Christ, we cannot also be *“yoked”* with those people and those worldly systems which are ungodly and anti-Christian.

The Great Divide – II Corinthians 6:14-16

In geography, a divide is the elevated area that causes river systems to drain in different directions. In North America we have **The Great Divide / The Continental Divide**, going from Alaska down through Central America, which separates the flow of waters. Some water systems will go west to the Pacific Ocean. Other water systems will go eastward to the Arctic Ocean, Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. Christ and the Gospel are like a great divide. Throughout time, people have been going different directions with their lives. There is basically only one division. You are either following Christ and are members of His Kingdom or you are following the world, which is under the influence of Satan and his kingdom. Your ultimate destination is either the new heaven and earth or the lake of fire (II Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 20:10-15; 21:1-8 cp. Matthew 25:31-46; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; John 3:16-21, 36; I John 5:12).

As we consider this great divide, it becomes imperative that we make careful choices when it comes to partnerships, and loyalties to ideas/institutions. This affects such areas as marriage, religion, business, economics, education, philosophy, entertainment, and other social institutions. Paul dealt with separation from the world and its sinful ways in his first letter to the Corinthians (note chapters 5-8; 10). Now, in this second letter, as Paul makes his plea for the Corinthians to become whole-hearted in their reception of gospel truth and the fellowship of the saints, he draws a thick black line between the things that are right and wrong. There can be no straddling of this line. Their divided affections must become united for the cause of God and His truth! It is time to unclog their arteries and make their hearts wide-open!

- There is no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness (lawlessness).
- There is no communion between light and darkness.
- There is no concord (harmony) between Christ and Belial (Hebrew idiom for “wicked and worthless” used to describe Satan).
- There is no union with believers and infidels (unbelievers).
- There can be no agreement/no compromise between the temple of God and idols (note the temple of God is defined as a spiritual house, made of living people cp. I Peter 2:5).

The Call to Separation and Purity – II Corinthians 6:17 – 7:1

II Corinthians 6:16 sets the stage for us to see that the gospel is a call to come out from the realms of worldliness / the kingdom of darkness and come into intimate fellowship with the Lord. This call to join God’s family sends us in a different direction (180 degrees). The gospel call begins the “great divide” between us and the world. As we go the other direction from the world, we are faced with tests and trials. Our sanctification, from worldliness to Christlikeness is a day-by-day process. See John 1:10-12; Acts 26:13-20; Galatians 6:14; Colossians 1:12-13; II Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 2:1-7; 5:1-17; 6:10-13; II Timothy 2:3-4; I John 2:15-17).