

II CORINTHIANS 6:11-18
COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to II Corinthians chapter 6 as we continue our in-depth study of Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth.

This morning we are going to deal with a very controversial subject. And what we will be looking at is this. Are we to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever.

The reason this is so difficult for so many Christians is that they get involved in relationships with someone who is not a believer and they feel that they can change them.

Let me just give you some insight into that kind of thinking – ***YOU CAN'T!***

But we think we know better than God. We think we can change a person. We might even convince ourselves that maybe they are a Christian and they don't even know it yet. And we can make all kinds of excuses why this is okay, and it is not!

Think about this for a minute. The wisest man in the world, Solomon, fell because he did not believe that what God had said was for him, maybe for someone else but not him!

God warned the Kings of Israel what they were to do when they came into the Promise Land and had a King back in Deuteronomy chapter 18.

Solomon multiplied horses, which God said they were not to do. In fact, he even traded with Egypt for horses, again, he was not to do that!

Solomon multiplied wives, which God said they were not to do. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines! He definitely multiplied wives, which he was not to do! In fact, it was these foreign wives that caused Solomon to set up pagan places of worship for them!

He was not to multiply wealth and yet, that is exactly what he did. You can read the book of Ecclesiastes and see all that he tried to fill that void in his life with, and it didn't work because only God can fill that void!

And he was to write a copy of the book of the Law for himself so that he could read it and apply it to his life. He may have written it, but he surely did not apply it to his life!

And what I want you to see here is that with these foreign women, these unbelievers, they drew him away from the Lord! He was unequally yoked together with them. But God did warn him.

In Deuteronomy 18:17 we are told, **“Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away . . .”**

God is very clear and yet, we see Solomon disobey God and the results of that is just what God said.

In I Kings 11:1-8 we are told, **“But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites - from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.’ Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of**

Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.”

What God told King Solomon and the rest of the Kings of Israel He is telling us through Paul here in II Corinthians chapter 6.

And I know, there are some that have the argument that they are missionary dating or that through their witness that person will come to know the Lord.

Again, let me be clear on this. Chances are that is not going to happen and what will happen is that as you continue to date this person, you will fall in love with them, and you will become unequally yoked together with them.

Let me show you how this plays out as Spurgeon had to deal with this situation. We are told,

A Christian girl once told Charles Spurgeon, the legendary preacher, that she was about to marry a man who didn't attend church or make any allegiance whatsoever to Jesus.

Spurgeon, true to form, quickly reminded her of the command from 2 Corinthians 6:14-15:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? (N.K.J.V.)

But the young woman had another plan. She explained that she would lift the young man up spiritually after they were married.

Spurgeon listened to what she was saying and then asked her to stand on a chair.

The girl was puzzled by such an odd request, but she obliged.

Once she was standing on the chair, Spurgeon said to her, ***“Now you try to pull me up to your level.”***

The girl tugged hard on the portly preacher, but no matter how hard she pulled she couldn't pull him up on the chair with her.

Now it was Spurgeon's turn. He said, ***“Now I am going to pull you down, and I want you to do your best to remain where you are.”***

You can guess what happened. Despite the young woman's best efforts, Spurgeon easily pulled her down from that chair.

Then he said to her, ***“That is what will happen if you marry that man. You won't lift him up, but he will pull you down.”***

Whether the unequal yoke is a marriage, some other type of personal relationship, or a business partnership, it is never God's will for the Christian.

As for an illustration of why it isn't, I've never read anything better than Spurgeon's demonstration to that young girl.

Over the course of time in the yoke, as the Christian and the lost person try to work together to pull the plow, the great differences between the two will eventually become evident.

Mismatched priorities, contrasting opinions, conflicting worldviews, and incompatible standards will be the rules rather than the exception.

And what will the end result of all those differences be?

The inevitable will happen as the Christian will, at least to some degree, get pulled down to the level of the lost person.

Again, that is a powerful illustration, and you may not agree with me on this, but let's see what God has to say, and, in the end, it is up to you who you will believe, your own emotions and feelings or God's Word!

I have called our study this morning – ***COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM!***

And I have broken down the verses we are going to be looking at into the following main points. They are,

KEEP YOUR HEART OPEN – II CORINTHIANS 6:11-13

DIFFERENT NATURES GO IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS – II CORINTHIANS 6:14-16b

THE SCRIPTURES TELL US – II CORINTHIANS 6:16c-17

THE DESIRE OF THE FATHER – II CORINTHIANS 6:18

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in II Corinthians chapter 6, beginning in verse 11 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic –

COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM!

II CORINTHIANS 6

VERSES 11-13

Notice the passion in Paul's heart as he says to them, "**O Corinthians!**"

He wants to appeal to them to take these principles that he has given to them and apply them to their life! He wanted them to grow, to mature in the Lord and not to remain carnal!

And Paul wants them to understand that he did not try to hide anything from them. Paul opened his life and his heart to them, he corrected them in love and yet, the Corinthians refused to love Paul because of the things Paul said to them.

They, in a sense, were playing the *“victim.”*

And Paul tells them that he does not cause this restriction, but by their own hearts, they are refusing to let it go.

They are saying, *“Yes, we want to be reconciled to you, but you have hurt us so much that we just can’t let it go, we can’t get over it!”*

This *“victim complex”* I have seen far too often with Christians.

The reason people can’t let go is because of pride, because they love themselves too much, because they love this world too much and refuse to let go of it and surrender to God!

It is as John tells us in I John 2:15-17, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”**

Who do you love more, the world or God?

If you love God then you will forgive, you will be open, you will not put a wall up around your heart. As we are open, as we expose our heart to others, will it get stomped upon at times?

You bet it will. That is not a *MIGHT*, it *WILL*!

The key here is not to put the wall up but always be open to others and let God be the One to comfort your heart!

You see, if you are restricting your affections towards others, I would admonish you to be open, to search your heart and reconcile yourself to the person or persons you have been restricting yourself towards.

It is as John once again tells us, **“We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.”** I John 4:19-21.

And then, listen to how Jesus put it in Matthew 5:23-24, **“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”**

In other words, before you serve the Lord, be reconciled to your brother or sister in the Lord for how can you serve the Lord when you can’t love your brother or sister in the Lord?

But for these Corinthians, it was their own affections that restricted them from loving Paul and receiving from him.

One writer put it like this, because this persecution from the brethren did not only happen to Paul, but it also happens to servants of God throughout the ages, although it does seem that Paul suffered greatly.

We are told,

The most difficult, painful experience for a faithful minister is to be misrepresented, to be falsely accused, to have one’s integrity unfairly attacked. Such assaults have the potential, by destroying people’s trust and confidence in the minister, of devastating his ministry.

Such slanderous attacks are hard to retrieve and correct, because those who make them are not interested in the truth. Nor are they motivated by virtue, love, or righteousness, but rather by hatred, revenge, bitterness, jealousy, and self-promotion.

Purveyors [Spreaders] of such falsehoods do not seek the unity and blessing of the church, the glory of the Lord, or the good of those they attack.

Throughout history, God's faithful servants have endured such slanderous false accusations. The whole early church was wrongly accused of atheism (because Christians rejected the Roman gods), cannibalism (based on a misunderstanding of the Lord's Supper), and immorality (based on a misunderstanding of the "holy kiss" [Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14]).

The papal bull excommunicating Martin Luther said of him, ***"This Luther favors the Bohemians and the Turks, deplores the punishment of heretics, spurns the writings of the holy doctors, the decrees of the ecumenical councils, and the ordinances of the Roman pontiffs, and gives credence to the opinions of none save himself alone, which no heretic before ever presumed to do"*** (Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1950], 148).

Charles Spurgeon's unwavering defense of biblical truth earned him many enemies.

Speaking of the vicious attacks he endured, Spurgeon said, ***"Scarce a day rolls over my head in which the most villainous abuse, the most fearful slander is not uttered against me both privately and by the public press; every engine is employed to put down God's minister - every lie that man can invent is hurled at me"*** (cited in Iain Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1986], 60) . . .

Profoundly concerned, the apostle vigorously defended his integrity, not for his sake, but for the Corinthians'.

He was the Lord's personally chosen channel through which divine truth flowed to them.

To allow the false teachers' lies to go unchallenged would allow that flow of divine truth to be blocked.

Worse, it would allow it to be replaced with false doctrine.

Again, here, he reminded them of the integrity he had manifested during his long stay in their city (cf. Acts 18:11), in this text defending his love for them.

- John F. MacArthur Jr., 2 Corinthians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 234

But again, for these Corinthians, they loved the world way too much and Paul is going to deal with that in a minute, giving them a correct perspective on the situation.

And they also loved themselves too much and because of that they refused to look at their heart and let God remove those things that were hindering their relationship with Him. And because of that, they remained carnal and so will we if we don't deal with those issues of the heart!

Make no mistake about it, the rift between Paul and the Corinthian church could be healed, but it was in the hands of the Corinthian Christians to do it. They had to also be open.

As we read on, we will see that Paul is going to deal with relationships, which is a very touchy subject for some.

I believe Paul speaks of these relationships because of the way the Corinthian believers were acting, that the relationships they had were affecting their behavior and specifically their reconciliation to Paul.

Now, one last point before we move into this section and that is this. I am sorry if I step on any toes here.

If anyone is offended by what I have to say, please understand this. I am just the messenger, these words are in the Word of God, the Bible, and thus, if you have a problem with what I am telling you, your problem is not with me but with God!

And if you are struggling in this area of relationships, I would encourage you to heed the warning by Paul, and really, by God!

Because, as we will see, the church has partnered with the world today and that is never a good thing!

When the world gets into the church, there is always death and destruction to the things of God because they move us away from the Word of God and thus, away from God Himself!

We have seen that we need to – ***KEEP YOUR HEART OPEN!***

As we read on, we will see how – ***DIFFERENT NATURES GO IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS!***

VERSES 14-16b

I think when we read these verses we tend to apply them to marriage, which it does apply. But remember that the context here is false teachers and partnering with them. Tragically, that is what many in the church today are doing, they are becoming like the world to reach the world.

We never see that in the Scriptures because once we let the world into our lives, we are sunk. We are to be like Jesus and yes, we can meet people where they are at, but not that we become like them in the sense of their sin or false teaching!

And let me also say this. This has nothing to do with the value of a person, the importance of a person, that one person is better than the other person.

Paul is speaking of the nature of each person.

Let me give you the example of Jesus.

We are told in the Scriptures that Jesus was a master carpenter, and we tend to think of Him building furniture, maybe homes.

I see this a little differently. You see, I tend to see Jesus as a person who made yokes. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus said, **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

I think the reason He said, **“Take My yoke upon you . . .”** was because He did make yokes for the animals. And I am sure that they were the best yokes, perfect for each animal!

Then, in Deuteronomy 22:10 we are told, **“You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.”**

I think that is what Paul is speaking about here!

Why can’t you plow with an ox and a donkey?

Because they have different natures and thus, they will be going in different directions, and nothing will get done!

Imagine entering a three-legged race. But instead of picking your best friend who runs at your pace, you decide to tie your ankle to an Olympic sprinter, or perhaps to a 600-pound draft horse, or even a stubborn little donkey.

Because you are tied together with a literal **“yoke,”** you can’t go anywhere without each other.

If you are tied to a racehorse, you will be dragged violently across the finish line (or face-first through the mud).

If you are tied to a stubborn donkey, you will spend the entire race pulling, kicking, and ultimately going in agonizing circles.

A yoke is meant for two animals of the exact same size, strength, and pace, working toward a shared destination.

When it comes to your spiritual walk, business partnerships, or marriage, being unequally yoked means, you are tethered to a purpose, pace, and destination that isn't aligned with God's kingdom.

That is what Paul is speaking about!

And if we are yoked together with an unbeliever, we are both serving a different master who is leading them in different directions! I hope that makes sense.

For a Christian and a non-Christian to work together in any close relationship, a business partnership, will not work because of the two different natures.

One nature is controlled by the Spirit the other by the flesh.

One nature seeks after the things of God the other nature seeks after the things of this world.

Paul, in Ephesians 2:3 tells us, **“among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”**

And Peter tells us in II Peter 1:4, **“by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”**

And notice what Peter says of those who are not saved, their nature and what they are headed for in II Peter 2:9-12, **“then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption.”**

Now, how does this play out in our daily lives?

If you are dating an unsaved person you need to stop for you are not to marry, you are not to even date an unsaved person, someone who does not know the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why is that?

Isn't that harsh?

Isn't there something called *“missionary dating”* where you date an unsaved person hoping to lead them to the Lord?

I don't know where that came from, but it is not from the Word of God!

Again, you miss the point if you think these things are okay. You will be unequally yoked together, and you will be going in different directions.

And let me say this. Chances are you are not going to affect them, but they will affect you and your relationship with the Lord.

Listen to this true story and you will see what I mean. We are told,

Mark Twain married a Christian lady. She at first didn't want to marry, but later did.

He at first went through the motions of religion with her, but later said he couldn't keep up the hypocrisy.

In time, she came to the place where she no longer believed in a personal God.

During a time of deep grief, Twain said to his wife, ***"If your Christian faith will comfort you, go back to it."***

She replied, ***"I have none."***

- Source Unknown

Was she even saved in the first place?

I don't think so, but look at how Mark Twain affected her life and her belief in God and the same will happen to you.

Your walk with the Lord will suffer because the other person is moving in a different direction than you are!

And we see here that Paul lays it all out for us as he contrasts the two natures.

How can you have fellowship with lawlessness when your nature is righteousness?

You can't!

How can light and darkness commune together?

They can't because light and darkness don't mix!

And if Christ is in you, how can you be in harmony with the Devil?

You can't!

Again, that may seem harsh but if Christ is not in a person, then they are being controlled by the Devil whether they like it or not. You are either for Christ or against Him; there is no middle ground!

And think about it. You are the Temple of the living God and the Spirit of God dwells in you, and you are hanging around with idols, with pagan temples you might say, people that don't know the Lord!

That should not be.

Now I am not saying you can't talk with any unsaved person, but what I am saying, what the Lord is saying is they can't be your close friends, your intimate friends because the two don't mix and if they are, then something is wrong!

Now we need to understand that this does not just apply to marriage, it applies to business partnerships, close relationships, sharing an apartment or home together and so on.

You may think you will influence them, but the reality is, they will influence you and bring you down.

Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:33, **"Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'"**

Or as The Amplified Bible puts it, **"Do not be so deceived and misled! Evil companionships (communion, associations) corrupt and deprave good manners and morals and character."**

I know, some of you still doubt that. You think you are going to influence them, but most of the time, that is not the case, it is the other way around.

Let me show you what I mean with this story,

In his commentary on Isaiah, H. A. Ironside tells of some boys who caught two chirping baby linnets. [A linnet is a small brownish finch.]

They decided to teach these birds to sing by placing them in a small cage and hanging it next to the cage of a pet canary.

The canary, of course, sang beautifully, so the boys thought if the linnets were close to it, they too would become good songbirds.

Several weeks went by with no apparent results. Then one day the youngsters were startled by a strange sound coming from the canary's cage.

"Listen," said one of them, ***"the canary is cheeping like a linnet."***

A similar danger awaits the Christian who fellowships with ungodly people in the world. He will become like them.

But worse than that, he will incur the disfavor of the Heavenly Father, whose will it is that His children separate themselves from sin and evil.

As Christians, we shouldn't be isolated from the world. We have to live in it, but we do not have to be ***"of it."***

Our Lord said to the Father, ***"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil"*** (John 17:15).

Only a separated Christian can bear witness to a sinful world.

- Our Daily Bread, Sunday July

I truly believe that is the key. To be in the world but don't let the world be in you.

You can have friends that are unsaved, but they can't be your close, your intimate friends, once you look for in regard to advice, or they will affect you.

You may disagree, but we will see in a few minutes what happened to a man who also thought he knew better than God and how it affected his life.

You need to surround yourself with Christians and then go out into the world to share Jesus, but don't make it your home as Lot did and Peter tells us how it affected his life in II Peter 2:7-8, **“and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds).”**

The Amplified Bible puts it this way, **“And He rescued righteous Lot, greatly worn out and distressed by the wanton ways of the ungodly and lawless - [Gen 19:16,29.] For that just man, living [there] among them, tortured his righteous soul every day with what he saw and heard of [their] unlawful and wicked deeds.”**

May we learn the lesson, may we heed the warning of Paul to us, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”**

The principle is simple - what God has joined together we must not separate. And what God has separated we must not join.

The bottom line is this – ***DIFFERENT NATURES GO IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS!*** May we not forget that!

As we read on, we will see that it is what – ***THE SCRIPTURES TELL US!***

VERSES 16c-17

The Scriptures clearly teach this principle; that we are not to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever!

The Bible warns us of the consequences if we don't heed the warning.

It is as this story illustrates for us. We are told,

A schoolteacher lost her life savings in a business scheme that had been elaborately explained by a swindler.

When her investment disappeared and her dream was shattered, she went to the Better Business Bureau.

“Why on earth didn’t you come to us first?” the official asked. ***“Didn’t you know about the Better Business Bureau?”***

“Oh, yes,” said the lady sadly. ***“I’ve always known about you. But I didn’t come because I was afraid you’d tell me not to do it.”***

The folly of human nature is that even though we know where the answers lie – God’s Word – we don’t turn there for fear of what it will say.

- Jerry Lambert

That is so true and many have turned from what God has said and feel that it really is not for them, or they just don’t want to hear it, they know better.

Let me be clear on this! God is right and we are wrong!

Make no mistake about it. God is calling us to come out from the pull, the desires of the world and separate yourself to Him.

The solution is simple and it was given to the Kings of Israel and as a child of God, it is given to us.

Back in Deuteronomy 17:18-20 we are told, **“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.”**

Stay in the Word of God, believe it, and apply it to your life so that you will not think you know better than God. So you will not think you are some spiritual giant, wiser than others and thus, this does not apply to you, because it does!

God means what He says and says what He means!

Let me give you an example of how light and darkness don't mix.

Jehoshaphat was the King of the Southern Kingdom of Judea, and he was a godly King, he loved the Lord.

And yet, in II Chronicles 20:35-37 we are told, **“After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, ‘Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works.’ Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.”**

Ahaziah, the son of a wicked King, Ahab, was the King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and he was very wicked like his father.

Thus, as Jehoshaphat makes an alliance with Ahaziah, God does not bless this endeavor he had with an unbeliever and God puts an end to it, he did not prosper from it!

You may think, “*Joe, how long are you going to hammer us on this subject?*”

Until we get it!

I have seen people brought down because of the people they are living with, unsaved people or people that are living in a backslidden condition, friends they hang out with and I want everyone to understand that God says, “**Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord.**” May we heed the warning from God for the Scriptures clearly teach us to come out, not to dwell with them!

God says – ***COME OUT*** and instead, we ***WELCOME THE WORLD IN!***

Some Christian leaders wonder if the American church retains any meaningful influence in a society when it has been so strongly dominated by other cultural forces.

In the book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience*, theologian Ron Sider laments that evangelicals do not seem to live by biblical standards.

A professor at Palmer Theological Seminary, a school affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA, Sider asked, “*Why are Christians living just like the rest of the world?*”

In the book praised by conservative and liberal theologians, Sider details several examples.

Research shows about the same percentage of U.S. born-again Christians are divorced as the overall U.S. population and the rate of unmarried cohabitation is only slightly less among born-again Christians than in society as a whole.

Sider also notes that evangelicals - and especially Baptists - are more likely to object to black neighbors and that few evangelicals actually tithe.

[That is the problem. We have let the world influence the church and thus, we compromise our faith to fit into the world. That is not what God desires as we see here in what Paul wrote in II Corinthians chapter 6. Now, listen carefully to this.]

Cheryl Harader, associate pastor of spiritual formation at First Baptist Church in Lawrence, Kan., has heard these statistics and still believes church remains important. She finds many of the similarities between Christians and others unsurprising since non-Christians can also be good people.

[Is that true? Can Christians and non-Christians be good people? Absolutely not and the reason I can say that is that the Bible tells us that NONE are good, not even ONE! So she is already wrong, and yet, she goes on to say,]

“I think what we make of those statistics is something that some Christians are reluctant to admit: that there are an awful lot of good people in the world who have never claimed to follow Jesus,” she said. “I think people are kind of afraid to admit that God does good in a number of ways. It’s not just through Christians.”

She added that *“the teaching of a lot of churches is that Christianity is the only good. You’re either in or you’re out, there’s no in between.”*

Harader pointed to Gandhi as an example of a good person who never claimed to be a Christian, though he expressed admiration for Jesus. She stressed there are biblical teachings - like Micah 6:8 and Luke 4 - that teach Christians to do good deeds. Yet she still recognizes others could come to follow those actions without biblical admonitions . . .

[First of all, the Bible tells us that all our righteousness is like filthy rags, so there is not much good in that. Secondly, even the Devil quotes Scripture and I am not saying that Gandhi is the Devil, but if he was not a believer, and because we say these things about him people follow him instead of Jesus, have we helped them? Absolutely not! This is so dangerous when we see the church and the world being the same!]

Author and leadership coach Bob Dale sees the problem of culture keeping churches from making the difference they could otherwise make. A native of Missouri who now lives in Virginia, Dale has served as pastor, seminary professor and denominational leader.

“Does culture control the church or does the church shape culture?” he offered.

“There’s no question in my mind that culture has been very powerful in the American church and often shaped it in particular ways.”

- <http://bit.ly/2GH4DKN>

That should not be! The world should not influence us; we should influence them.

We are not to be a thermometer that just tells the temperature!

We are to be a thermostat that can turn up the heat and influence our surroundings!

Amen to that! I hope so.

And do you see what God calls us to do here?

God calls for us to come out of that darkness, we are His, He dwells in us.

Of this Redpath tells us, ***“It is not a question simply of trying to empty your heart and life of every worldly desire – what an awful impossibility! It is rather opening your heart wide to all the love of God in Christ and letting that love just sweep through you and exercise its expulsive power till your heart is filled with love.”***

Make no mistake about it – ***THE SCRIPTURES TELL US*** that we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers!

The Lord tells us to – ***COME OUT!***

Why is this so important?

That is our next point, it is – ***THE DESIRE OF THE FATHER!***

VERSE 18

Again, let me make this clear. When the Lord says that He wants us to **“Come out from among them and be separate . . .”** He is not saying that we are to isolate ourselves on some island.

We are to be in this world but not let this world get in us!

I have used this illustration a lot, but it does drive home the point.

A boat does not function out of the water. It may look nice, but that is all it can do.

But when you put that boat in the water you can see how it functions as it glides across the water.

Thus, a boat needs to be in the water to function correctly.

The problem comes when water gets into the boat and if you allow enough water to get into the boat, it will sink!

The same is true in our lives.

As Christians, we don’t function outside of this world or be isolating ourselves from the world.

But when we are in this world, living in this world, we function the way that God wants us to, by being a witness of Him to the lost.

The problem comes when we allow the world to get in us and our light diminishes, and eventually, if we let enough of the world into our lives, we, like the boat will be sunk!

I hope that makes sense.

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

In our interactions with the world we need balance.

Don't *isolate* yourself from the world, but neither should you *assimilate* values and relationships.

We need a healthy mix . . . *friendship with sinners*, but *fellowship with saints*.

Remember 1 Corinthians 15:33, "*Evil company corrupts good habits.*"

Hang out with bad people and you'll eventually get *hung out* to dry.

A mom tried to teach this lesson to her sons. She was in the garden and held up her white gloves.

She said, "*Boys, notice when I stick these gloves in the dirt, the gloves become dirty, the dirt doesn't get glovey.*"

Don't let the folks you're lifting up - drag you down.

- Sandy Adams, II Corinthians 6

And then here in II Corinthians 6:18 Paul lists a very good reason why we should come out from among them, why we should not touch that which is unclean.

What is that reason?

Because God the Father desires you to be separate. He loves us that much that He wants what is best for us. We are the children of God and may we act that way, may we trust in what our heavenly Father is telling us.

Let me illustrate this with this story. We are told,

One day, while my son Zac and I were out in the country, climbing around in some cliffs,
I heard a voice from above me yell, ***“Hey Dad! Catch me!”***

I turned around to see Zac joyfully jumping off a rock straight at me.

He had jumped and then yelled ***“Hey Dad!”***

I became an instant circus act, catching him.

We both fell to the ground.

For a moment after I caught him, I could hardly talk. When I found my voice again I
gasped in exasperation: ***“Zac! Can you give me one good reason why you did that???”***

He responded with remarkable calmness: ***“Sure . . . because you’re my Dad.”***

His whole assurance was based on the fact that his father was trustworthy. He could live
life to the hilt because I could be trusted.

Isn’t this even more true for a Christian?

- Tim Hansel, Holy Sweat, pp. 46-47

Do you really think that God is some kind of Cosmic Kill Joy in our lives?

Of course He isn’t – He has what is best for our lives, we can trust in Him, like I have
said.

Think about when you were a child, your father may have restricted you from doing
certain things and you didn’t like it, he was ruining your fun.

But now that you are an adult, you see the wisdom of your father.

I think the same is true of Father God. We may be immature and not understand, we may not like what God has said, but we need to listen and obey and as you grow in the Lord you will see the wisdom of God!

I truly believe God's instructions to us are very clear, it is up to us to accept what God says or reject what God says.

But please, don't reject it, for God's Word to us is for our good, not for evil, not to hurt us, not to hold back something that is good for us.

We must be separate because our nature and the nature of the unsaved are going in opposite directions.

Like I have said, this doesn't mean we avoid the unsaved, but having them be your closest friend, your intimate friend, ones you are seeking to consult with, will have consequences upon your life.

We must be separate because the Scriptures tell us to be separate.

It is not some veiled verse or subject, but it is clearly seen in God's Word that we are to be separate from the unsaved in the sense of close friendships.

And lastly, we are to separate ourselves from the unsaved because it is the desire of the Father and like me, I'm sure your desire is to please Father God!

As I begin to rap this study up this morning, listen to this and you will see how things that we allow in our life that are not of God can have affects upon us.

This is what we are told,

A group of dolphins got stranded on a beach near Boston.

Scientists feel that they may have run aground because of a hearing problem.

The animals, which use sound waves to judge depths, were found to have worms clogging their sinus cavities and inner ears, possibly making them hard of hearing.

The dolphins were unable to gauge the depth of water in which they were swimming.

They thought they were in deep water, but found themselves stranded on the beach.

- Prairie Overcomer

How true that is as we allow things to get into our lives and we lose perspective of where we are at, how deep we have sunk from God because we refused to heed His warning to us because we think we know better than God.

May we listen, may we obey and again, let me just close with the words from Paul that we have been studying this morning.

Paul said, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.’”** II Corinthians 6:14-18.

Remember when you were a kid and you went out to play, what did your mother tell you?

My mom would always tell me, *“Joey, don’t get dirty!”*

Now our Father God is telling us the same, don’t fill your life with evil, don’t surround yourself with evil, because it will affect your life. I don’t care how strong you think you are, Father God knows best!

Fill yourself up with the things of God as Paul tells us in Philippians 4:8-9, **“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”**

I know we have covered a lot of difficult teachings and a lot of things for you to think about. But this is so important.

And I will leave you with these words from Hodge as he speaks of this call for purity and how it is also a call for reconciliation.

Hodge tells us, *“A man cannot accept reconciliation with God and live in sin; because the renunciation of sin is involved in the acceptance of reconciliation. Paul never assumes that men may accept one benefit of redemption, and reject another. They cannot take pardon and refuse sanctification.”*

Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 3:16-17 Paul said, **“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.”**

Thus, **“Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”** II Corinthians 6:17-18.

May we do that!

And I will close our study with this, I promise. Listen to what Paul says in II Corinthians 7:1, because it flows from what Paul wrote here in II Corinthians chapter 6.

He wrote, **“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”**

Please understand that this is not speaking of salvation. What Paul is doing is he is exhorting us to do this, and it speaks of practical holiness, and we will look at that more next time.

For us – ***MAY WE COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND SURRENDER OUR LIVES TOTALLY TO GOD!***