1211 Day of acceptance, not yoked together, sanctification, repentance - 2Co(6)1–(7)16 (by Whirlwind)

First, we discussed the "day of acceptance" and Paul, whom God used. We examined how the former concept is addressed in the Old Testament, while the latter is exemplified by Paul himself as a model. We explained the meaning of the passages beginning with "as" one by one. Second, we discussed the principle of separation—that believers and unbelievers should not be yoked together—citing a previous article to explore this principle and addressing some of what the Almighty Lord has spoken in both the Old and New Testaments. Third, we mentioned how Paul exhorted believers to walk the path of sanctification and was willing to live and die with them, presenting an example of one who rejoices always through the Lord. Finally, he spoke of his joy at bringing Titus the message of the Corinthian church's repentance and briefly mentioned Titus himself.

Please note that this article is an expansion of the topicwise Bible study held on Sunday (10/11/26). Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. If this article refers previous articles, they can all be found on our website, 'https://a-christian-voice.com/'; click on 'Understanding Spiritual Life'.

1. The day of acceptance and Paul, God's servant

"And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation"— giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry (G1249, deacon) will not be discredited, but in everything commending ourselves as servants (G1249, deacon) of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things. Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide to us also."(2 Corinthians 6:1-13)

We must emphasize once again that when sharing the gospel, we can only follow Paul's example by offering gentle persuasion; at most, we can serve as role models. The final decision rests with others, not on whether we ourselves are "spiritual." The best example is Jesus Himself—we know there is no one more spiritual than Jesus, yet the vast majority of the Jews did not listen to Him and even crucified Him. Yes, no one has ever been baptized and immediately taken on the image of Jesus; therefore, baptism is only the beginning. We must walk the path of sanctification, pursuing a spiritual life until we are

ultimately conformed to the image of Jesus. This is the path every Christian must walk, but we must understand that this process is slow—it cannot be rushed—and requires patience.

Then this scripture was quoted: "Thus says the LORD, “In a favorable time I have answered You, And in a day of salvation I have helped You;
And I will keep You and give You for a covenant (H1285) of the people, To restore the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages."(Isaiah 49:8) The New Covenant was established through Jesus, so the "You" here refers to Jesus. Indeed, "...now is “the acceptable time,” behold, now is “the day of salvation”."(2 Corinthians 6:2) Wasn’t Paul preaching the gospel? In fact, we can also see in the Gospel of Luke that "And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”"(Luke 4:17-19) But Jesus did not quote the verse followed: "...And the day of vengeance of our God; ..."(Isaiah 61:2), because that was a day of salvation, and the time for God’s vengeance had not yet come.

He then went on to explain that we should not allow our apostolic ministry to be slandered, but rather set an example in every way, demonstrating that we are God’s servants (G1249, deacon). Please look at the Scripture to see the many examples He gave. Also note that these examples are quite clear, except for the last one: "...by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left."(2 Corinthians 6:7) The weapons refer to "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."(Ephesians 6:11-13) As for the details of the armor, we will elaborate further when we share on the Book of Ephesians.

He said, "by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true."(2 Corinthians 6:8) Indeed, he experienced all of these things; they did indeed seem to be a stumbling block, yet he faced them with integrity—calling right right and wrong wrong. Whether among those who opposed him or among believers, everyone knew him—is this not something that seems unknown to people, yet is actually common knowledge? As for appearing to be dying yet being alive, this is due to God’s work in him. The most severe instance of this occurred when he had fainted to the point of death, as described in this passage: "But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe."(Acts 14:19-20)

His sufferings, though they appeared to be punishment, did not result in his death; they were permitted and foreseen by God. This is what is meant by "But the Lord said to him (Ananias), “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the

Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.""(Acts 9:15-16) He had met Ananias, so he knew this all along, yet he still chose to follow the Lord.

He knew very clearly, "...In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I (Jesus) have overcome the world."(John 16:33) Though these sufferings seemed like sorrow, he was always joyful, for even before Jesus was crucified, he had said, "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you."(John 16:22) Because Paul possessed this joy that no one can take away, they were able to do this while imprisoned in Philippi. One night, "...about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."(Acts 16:25) He set an example for us, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"(Philippians 4:4)

Regarding the fact that he seemed poor yet made many rich—this refers to his ministry of leading people to faith in the Lord, enabling them to obtain a more abundant life. Those people would know this Scripture: "I (Jesus) am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."(John 10:9-10) How could this not make many people richer?

As for "...as having nothing yet possessing all things."(2 Corinthians 6:10)—this is what the Scripture says: "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."(Philippians 4:11-13)

Therefore, "Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide."(2 Corinthians 6:12) Therefore, "Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide to us also."(2 Corinthians 6:13) Paul was their spiritual father (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:15), and he truly spoke these words as if to his own children.

2. The principle of separation of not being yoked together with unbelievers

"Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them;
And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty."(2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

From the very beginning, it is logically stated that believers and unbelievers should not be yoked together; this speaks to the principle of separation. An example from the Old Testament states: "“You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. “You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together."(Deuteronomy 22:10-11) The true essence lies in separation, not in keeping the law to the letter. Today, wrinkle-free clothes are all made from blended fabrics. If you want to buy wrinkle-free clothes, how could you possibly keep the law to the letter? In fact, God applied the principle of separation from the very beginning of creation. We previously discussed this point in "1144 Made, created and separation principle – Genesis(1)6-25," specifically in section "2. Creation of the sea on the third day and the principle of separation." Please locate that article and review the Scripture passages to see Paul’s logical deduction.

When he refers to God’s words, he is speaking of the Old Testament era. The Scripture clearly states, "I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me. I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God."(Exodus 29:44-45) Therefore, He expected, "They shall know that I am the LORD their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am the LORD their God."(Exodus 29:46) It was the LORD who set them apart from Egypt, yet the people, with hardened hearts, went and cast a golden calf, thinking it was the god who had brought them out of Egypt! (See Exodus 32:1-6)

It was not only the Israelites of that time who were hard-hearted; the same is true today. People presume they have free will, yet apart from Jesus Christ, they have no freedom from sin, as the Scripture says: "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want."(Romans 7:18-19) The only true choice we have is whether or not to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is through faith in Him that we are justified and reconciled to God (see Romans 3:28, 5:1). As for the example of not touching unclean things, it is found in this passage: "You shall not eat anything which dies of itself. You may give it to the alien who is in your town, so that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner, for you are a holy people to the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk."(Deuteronomy 14:21) In fact, the latter command is repeated three times because God wanted the Israelites to be separated from the inhabitants of Canaan; it is therefore clear that the Canaanites of that time had such customs, and God did not want the Israelites to adopt them.

In the New Testament, Christians have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them (see 1 Corinthians 6:19) and know that "...all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."(Romans 8:14). As for being set apart from them, this refers to the fact that "...we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live."(Romans 8:12-13) At the judgment before the Great White Throne, the One seated there is the Lord Jesus (see John 5:22), and after the judgment, He consistently declares, "...It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He

who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."(Revelation 21:6-7) In other words, God will adopt us as His sons, as this Scripture says: "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren."(Romans 8:29) We are only adopted since Jesus Christ is the only begotten from the Father (cf. John 1:14). This is what the Almighty Lord has said; He does not lie, so this is also what He does.

3. Encouraging believers to walk the path of sanctification and to live and die with them

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh (G4561) and spirit (G4151), perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Make room for us in your hearts; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one. I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together. Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction. For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within. But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more."(2 Corinthians 7:1-7)

We see that, just as Ezekiel prophesied (cf. Ezekiel 36:26-27), we have the indwelling Holy Spirit as a pledge, as this passage states: "who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge (G728)."(2 Corinthians 1:22) When taking out a mortgage to buy a house, we often have to make a down payment, and then gradually pay off the remaining balance plus interest; the down payment is equivalent to a pledge. Here, we are clearly told to "...cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."(2 Corinthians 7:1)—which means to walk the path of sanctification.

Paul hoped that the church in Corinth would "Make room for us in your hearts; ..."(2 Corinthians 7:2). He then explains that his attitude is rooted in his willingness to live and die with them, so "Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction."(2 Corinthians 7:4)

When he says, "For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within."(2 Corinthians 7:5), he is not referring to the passage that says, "I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia."(2 Corinthians 2:13) Rather, he was referring to another occasion mentioned here: "But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus."(2 Corinthians 7:6) This was because Titus brought the message of the Corinthian church's repentance, which will be discussed in the following section. Indeed, "and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more."(2 Corinthians 7:7) This is yet another example of rejoicing through the Lord always.

4. Rejoicing over the message of repentance from the Corinthian Church brought by Titus

"For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it— for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while— I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God. For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be the truth. His affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you."(2 Corinthians 7:8-16)

Paul's earlier letter was necessary and led to the repentance of the church in Corinth. He said, "So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God."(2 Corinthians 7:12) From the very beginning, he made his attitude clear, saying that they "...sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter."(2 Corinthians 7:10-11)

Titus was Paul's fellow worker and his spiritual son (see 2 Corinthians 8:23; Titus 1:4). Although the Bible does not explicitly state when Titus went to Corinth, he was sent by Paul, for the Scripture says, "I urged Titus to go, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit and walk in the same steps?"(2 Corinthians 12:18) Therefore, he says, "For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all."(2 Corinthians 7:13) And furthermore, "His affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling."(2 Corinthians 7:15)

He also makes it very clear: "For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be the truth."(2 Corinthians 7:14) We know that before Titus's visit, as the Scripture says, "For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, ..."(1 Corinthians 4:17) His

task at that time was simply to "...remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church."(1 Corinthians 4:17) He did indeed go, for the Scripture also says, "Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am. So let no one despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren."(1 Corinthians 16:10-11) Clearly, a reminder alone was not enough, which is why Titus's visit took place. The message Titus brought clearly indicated that the church in Corinth had truly repented; otherwise, Paul would not have said, "I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you."(2 Corinthians 7:16) So Paul was now truly at ease.