

Title: AUTHENTIC MINISTRY, 2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-13
(Chatham, NJ; 06/21/15, AM) [Pc – Topical]

Theme: Paul defends his ministry against those who might find fault with him by listing characteristics of what he considers authentic work.

Purpose: To define the work of our church and our personal witness with the same characteristics of authenticity.

Introduction:

1. As mentioned before Paul is defending his ministry against detractors.
2. In verse three he claims that he wants no faults to be found in what he does.
3. Let's use a couple of other words: legitimacy, authenticity.
4. Some studies suggest that a younger generation of people seek authenticity in churches: people who truly live their lives for Christ.
5. I don't like a lot of the studies and surveys that claim to tell us what groups want and then suggest we ought to conform to that so we can win them back.
6. Without simply pandering to their interests, we are still obligated to be genuine, authentic.
7. Paul describes for us what authenticity looks like.

I. David versus Saul: the groundwork

A. Saul, the first king

1. Disobeyed God on numerous occasions
2. God began to see he was unfit to serve as the leader of God's people
3. The consummation of that judgment came when he thought sacrificing animals was a substitute for obedience
4. When confronted, Saul wanted Samuel to worship with him, but this was nothing more than a photo-op to prop up his image: symbolism over substance
5. Saul becomes a jealous, paranoid man concerned only with his image and with clinging to his power

B. David, his replacement

1. Samuel must have it revealed to him that David has the true heart for God
2. Though David sins, his heart stays true to God, 2 Samuel 16:5-14
3. Peter calls him a man after God's heart
4. All succeeding kings are judged against David: he was the real thing

II. Jesus versus the Scribes and Pharisees

A. Scribes and Pharisees: spiritual descendents of Saul

1. Make heavy burdens for others, but won't bear the same burdens, Mt. 23:4
2. They do things to be seen by others, Mt. 23:5 (also Mt. 6 – Pray in the marketplace, trumpet their alms-giving, make a show of fasting)
3. Only the appearance of righteousness, Mt. 23:27-28

B. Jesus

1. Brought good news to the poor, Luke 4
2. Taught and ate with those who really needed him, Mt. 9:12-13
3. Made himself approachable, Mt. 11:28-30; humble of heart
4. A truly sinless man who could understand weakness, Heb. 4:15.
5. He was the true bearer of God's steadfast love and mercy.

III. Paul versus Critics

A. His critics

1. Criticized Paul's appearance and speaking ability, 2 Cor. 10:18
2. Image seemed important to them
3. They compare themselves to others, 10:12
4. But it is God's judgment that counts, doesn't it?
5. Paul shoots back in 11:13

B. Marks of Authenticity as Paul Sees Them, 2 Corinthians 6

1. What Paul endured verifies his commitment, 4-5
2. Moral characteristics, 6-7
3. Endures criticisms based on worldly standards, 8-10

Conclusions: What our lives look like as representatives of the Gospel

1. Don't hide behind self-righteousness or a thin veneer of a few righteous deeds.
2. Don't compare ourselves to others.
3. Endure hardships and disappointments, 6:4-5
4. Live our faith away from church, not only when here, 6:6-7
5. Recognize that the world will perceive us according to their standards, 6:8-10.
6. Be open with one another and others, 11-12.
7. Give your time to others even if you don't have other resources: Paul says living as though poor, but making many rich. We do this by giving people our time.
8. Strive for authenticity; join us as we seek to please God and serve Him.