

SYNC: Don't Give Up

(2 Corinthians 4:1-7)

Introduction

A) Several years ago, I read a story about a persistent and tenacious puppy. As the story goes, an evangelist was home for a break from his ministry travels. He owned a boxer breed dog. He was a large dog that patrolled the spacious backyard of the preacher's home.

One morning, he noticed a small dog walking down the alley behind his property. His boxer ran toward the fence barking and growling and the smaller dog retreated. He chuckled as he watched the boxer strut as he returned to their shelter. Next day, same thing. Next day, same thing. One day, the smaller dog came to visit and squeezed under the fence to his yard only to experience the wrath of the boxer. A couple of day later, the same thing. A couple of days later the same thing.

The evangelist soon left on a preaching tour and was away from home for several weeks. Well into his absence, he asked about the little dog. The mans wife reported, "you won't believe what happened! Day after day, the little dog would squeeze under the fence and encounter the bigger boxer breed dogs. Day after day he would engage in an epic battle with the larger animal. Day after day he would battle a little longer, eventually giving the larger animal all he could handle."

She continued, "The little dog would not give up! Now, when the boxer hears him coming, he retreats to his shelter and the little pup prances around our backyard as if he were king!"

The point? Don't give up! When your mission is holy and your cause is right, Don't' give up!

B) Contextualize *Don't Give Up* in the series, SYNC

C) Contextualize 2 Corinthians 4:1-7.

Paul had invested deeply in the Corinthian church. After he turned the ministry over to another, false teachers began to filter in. In order to take over, they proceeded to destroy any influence Paul had with the congregation. Therefore, they fiercely attack him from every angle.

- 1) Apostolic authority
- 2) His ministry (fickle)

2 Corinthians 11:5-6 “Now I consider myself in no way inferior to the “super-apostles.” Though untrained in public speaking, I am certainly not untrained in knowledge. Indeed, we have always made that clear to you in everything.

3) His abilities

2 Corinthians 10:10 For it is said, “His letters are weighty and powerful, but his physical presence is weak, and his public speaking is despicable.”

4) His appearance

5) His speaking ability

D) Paul just kept on going!! But, how could he endure such and assault and never give up? **Through our study of 2 Corinthians 4:1-7, we will discover three timeless principles that fueled Paul in ministry.**

I. God’s Mercy is Undeserved (v. 1-4)

Principle: *Never loose your amazement that God extended mercy to you.*

A) An undeserved sinner (1 Timothy 1:12-14)

“**12** I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, appointing me to the ministry—
13 one who was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an arrogant man. But I received mercy because I acted out of ignorance in unbelief.
14 And the grace of our Lord overflowed, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. **15** This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”— and I am the worst of them” (1 Timothy 1:12-15).

B) A forgiving God (4:1, “we were shown mercy”)

C) A gracious God (4:1, “we have this ministry”)

II. God’s Instruments Are Common (v. 5-7)

Principle: *Always remember that the treasure has the value not the container.*

A) The Treasure (v. 5-6)

B) The Container (v. 7)

The clay pot was used for ordinary tasks and were considered unclean or dishonorable. They were used to remove trash and other unmentionables from the house. They were waste containers.

Clay pots are made of dirt, unattractive, flawed, breakable, replaceable, common – John MacArthur.

III. God's Power is Demonstrated in Our Weakness (v. 7-9)

Principle: *The power of God is demonstrated the most when you are at your weakest. (v. 8)*

A) The Power of the Gospel

(People are converted by God, not human reasoning, skill, genius, etc.)

B) The Wear of Daily Life.

- 1) Pressured
- 2) Perplexed (at our wit's end)
- 3) Persecuted (hunted like an animal)
- 4) Struck down (to strike with a weapon)

C) The Success of Our Weakness.

Conclusion