

Pillar Passage – 2 Corinthians 6:14-17:1
Jed Brown
Mar. 3. 2022

Welcome to another Pillar Passage. Today I want to talk about how we obey the commands of God. Too often Christians know the commands and then set out to obey the commands but do not take up the energy and the grace, the power that God supplies us to obey the commands. We go out unarmed and unfed. Then we are surprised—or even shocked—when we fail. That ought not to be the case because we set ourselves up for failure.

Here is an example. We're looking at 2 Corinthians chapter 6 beginning in verse 14. Here, first, is the command. A command many of us know. *Do now be unequally yoked with unbelievers.* In other words, don't marry an unbeliever. If you're a Christian, don't marry a non-Christian. If you're going into a business partnership—a deep partnership with someone—you need to think twice about entering into partnership with an unbeliever. There's questions to ask here. There's wisdom to be applied, but this is the default starting point for Christians.

What I want to notes here, is that Paul intends for us not just to hear this and then go do it, because there are other powers at play in this moment. You're thinking about getting married and 'man, this guy, he's a good-looking guy, and he's sweet. I know he's not a Christian, but he's sweet and he'll be a good provider for me.' There are things that we are attracted to. There's emotions involved and desires involved. Those emotions and desires are not wrong, but they must be met with something more powerful in that moment in order to follow, in obedience, God's commands.

So God, through Paul here, gives us two things. Number one, in the first section that follows, he gives us truth. Then in the next section, he gives us promises. Truth and promises. God always means for us to obey Him by the power of the truth and His promises.

Let me show you here what this looks like. *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.* Here is truth we are to fix our minds on in that moment. In reality—though you could talk yourself into it, but underneath all your talking yourself into it what partnership; what koinonia; *what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?* Do those two things go together? Of course not! What fellowship has light with darkness? Do those two ...? No. No.—the devil. Ah, none. *What accord, what treaty has Christ made with Belial?* Ah, none. *What portion, what reward in the future will a believer share with an unbeliever?* Ah, zero. *What agreement, what does the temple of God have in common with temples devoted to demons?* Nothing.

First off, there is just a very simple logical truth that Paul gives here that is meant to sober us up and say, 'Oh, oh yah, right. Okay. Okay, got it.'

Then he gives another truth here; *For we are the temple of the living God.* This is a profound truth here. We **are**—right now ... this is a truth about us so in this truth; embedded in this truth is something about our own personal identity. We too often forget who we are; forget who God says we are. We are—this very moment you're thinking about this yoking with another

unbeliever, in this case—we **are** the temple of the living God. We need to think about that. That is true right now.

So, what partnership does the temple of God have with idols, and you are that temple. But then, because that is true, there are promises that are associated with this. Promises that were made in the Old Testament, in Leviticus (here, this is a reference to Leviticus, this is reference to Exodus 29, and again I believe this is a reference to Leviticus) so, the promises that God made in the Old Testament to His people were fulfilled in them, commanded to them, are being fulfilled even more particularly and more fully in us; in the church. A profound truth. The promises are fulfilled and will continue to be fulfilled, say, five minutes from now; five hours from now; five years from now. When you are—when you right now as you look into the future and you fear and you say, ‘What will happen to me if I say no to this guy?’ Will I, five years from now be left an old spinster, and unmarried, and unwanted, and unloved, and unbeautiful.

These fears go through our minds, and we’re meant to fight those fears with the promises of God. *I will make my dwelling place among them*; among you, My child, because you are the temple of God. I will walk with you; I will *walk among them* even more particularly than I walked with the people of God in the Old Testament. I will be your God, and you shall be My people.

There’s a language here of marriage, betrothal, of union—even undertones of sexual union here. God will be with His people. Embedded in all this is **blessing**. God is always wrapping His relationship with His people in *blessing*.

We’re meant to bank on this promise: that God will dwell among us. He will be close. Where did God prove this? That He would do this? By sending His Son—the Emmanuel, God with us. The Old Testament people of God could only look forward to this. We are on the other side of this. We’ve seen it. We’ve seen the proof. We have the proof.

Therefore—again the command; same command—*go out from their midst*. Separate yourselves from the things for which you already have nothing to do with. In this sense, when you obey the command, you are only doing what you already are. You are living out your pre-existing identity when you obey the command. When you separate from them, you are only doing what you have already have been set and made into.

Paul will say in Ephesians 2, that you are already seated in the heavenly places. That is already you. Out of that identity, live out of that truth, but also out of promises that as we live in this identity, God will meet us with blessing far beyond what the promise of being yoked with unbelievers promises. Therefore, *touch no unclean thing, then—then I will welcome you*. I will welcome you with blessing far beyond what they promise you. *I will be a father to you*. I will be better than any husband; any wife.

Get married to a Christian. There is nothing here about being against marriage all together. But walk by faith in the promise that *I will be*—five minutes from now; five hours from now; five days from now; five years from now; five-hundred eons from now—*I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty*. I’m able to do it, Paul says.

Since we have these promises, and you are beloved. You are this beloved child of God, *let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of **body** and of **spirit** bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*

This is God Almighty. The fear in a Christian is very strange. It is an all-encompassing, awe-filled reverence of God, and yet it is also a happy privilege, that we are the privileged children of this **AWE**some God. We can come to Him and ask, 'Daddy will You fulfill Your promises? Will You be a father to me? For I am Your son, I am Your daughter. Please provide. Please bless.'

And you know what?

He will.

Thus we walk by faith and we walk faith in the truth and in His promises and thereby we fulfill His commands