Open your hearts

2 Corinthians 6:11-13

1. Intro
   1. Sometimes things change
      1. This week I said...’my phone is ringing off the wall’
      2. My phone hasn’t been on the wall in almost 20 years...but the term remained in my vocabulary.
   2. We must recognize the changes of our world and embrace gospel ministry
   3. Open your hearts to ministry. Allow your ministry to be expanded
2. Text
   1. Recap verses 4-10
      1. 3 sets of 9 things:
         1. Endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger
         2. By Purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, the power of God, weapons of righteousness
         3. Honor and dishonor, slander and praise, imposters yet true, unknown yet well known, dying yet alive, punished but not killed, sorrowful yet rejoicing, poor but making many rich, have nothing yet possessing everything.
   2. Verse 11
      1. The Apostles have spoke freely and in Grace/Truth
      2. A declaration concerning the openness of the heart: our heart is wide open
   3. Verse 12
      1. The Christian leadership in the early church was teaching that the heart should not be restricted
      2. Restrictions come when we have affections that limit our scope.
   4. Verse 13
      1. The point…open your heart to ALL God has, and don’t get tunnel vision
      2. Widen your hearts to see the world as God sees the world
      3. Love what God loves, and see as God sees.
3. Points
   1. A Restricted Heart
      1. A restricted heart is one that is unwilling to:
         1. Pray for a larger vision
         2. Let go of the things that are dear (you don’t have control anyway)
         3. Look for ways to fulfill our calling that may be different from the past
         4. Let go of the things that pollute the mind and distract from ministry.
      2. A restricted heart may be so focused on one thing, that it doesn’t have perspective for the larger ministry.
      3. Misplaced affections will lead you to:
         1. Love things that interfere with your relationship with God
         2. Ministry hearts are restricted by misplaced affections.
   2. A Broader Heart
      1. Ministry must be broad in scope and deep in value
      2. Doing things that matter, not just meeting immediate physical need, but meeting the deeper more eternal needs.
      3. A desire to serve Jesus means:
         1. We serve as we are called
         2. We serve as we are equipped
         3. We serve as we are gifted
         4. And GOD BROADENS OUR PERSPECTIVE in HIS time.
      4. If you desire for MORE ministry:
         1. Begin preparing
         2. Begin Studying
         3. Become equipped
      5. The Prayer of Jabez: 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 Jabez was more honorable than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him in pain.”[a] 10 Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm[b] so that it might not bring me pain!” And God granted what he asked.
   3. An Open Heart
      1. Is your heart open?
         1. Is your heart open to the movement of the Holy Spirit?
         2. Is your heart open to God giving you direction?
         3. Is your heart open to radical change and the power of Christ?
         4. Is your heart open to ministry?
      2. How do you test yourself?
         1. Paul had given the Corinthian church a great challenge
         2. He had explained the difficulty of ministry, and the favor of God
         3. He had given them the needed information, but didn’t stop there…
         4. He expected action
      3. There is great value in a heart that welcomes the change placed before you by God:
         1. Sometimes change comes when we are not wanting it
         2. Sometimes change comes after a long wait
         3. Sometimes change occurs rapidly
         4. Other times there seems to be little movement
      4. Make no mistake
         1. God is at work changing your heart and your ministry
         2. God is also at work calling you to keep doing the thing he has already shown you to do.
4. Close
   1. A new heart…a soft heart
   2. Let God change your heart!

Ezekiel 11:19 wAnd I will give them one heart, and xa new spirit I will put within them. yI will remove the heart of stone from their flesh zand give them a heart of flesh,

Ezekiel 36:26 And I will give you ia new heart, and ia new spirit I will put within you. iAnd I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.