

University Heights Church  
of Christ  
445 Columbia Ave.,  
Lexington, KY 40508  
(859) 255-6257  
www.uheightschurch.com

**WORSHIP SERVICES**

**Sunday**

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is immediately followed by a short worship period)

**First Friday of Each Month**

Singing: 7:30 PM

**LEADERSHIP**

**Elders**

David Collins

John Thompson

Troy Antle

**Evangelist**

Adam Litmer

**Deacons**

Richard Brundige

Matt Thompson

Adam Litmer

Bill Morelan

Jim Parsons

Pat Seabolt

Adam Daniels

Jamie Powell

**IN NEED OF PRAYERS**

Declan Weatherholt, Karen Spivey,  
Troy Antle, Ralph Fox, Rick Small, Jeff  
Howerton, Rhonda Boyd (and her  
sister, Dorothy), Louis Harrod, Paul  
Atkisson, Brianna Ratliff, Julia-Ann  
Dixon, Ed Allison, Dwight Antle, The  
Bays and Robbins family, Keia Burton,  
Robert Brundige, Valerie and Barry  
Boyd, Janett's mother, Sandy Driver,  
Erlene Young, Larry Sells, Evelyn  
Damron, Jean Gartland, John Blessing,  
William Roberts, Paul Lyda, Pete Soro,  
Jamie Powell's father, Harleigh  
Spartman, Mattie Johnson, Elijah  
Epling, Leland Wells, Linda Moore,  
Sheila Johnson, Virginia Gordon

# University Heights Messenger

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## “We Commend Ourselves In Every Way”

Adam Litmer

In 2 Corinthians 6:3, Paul declared, *We put no obstacle in anyone's way so that no fault may be found with our ministry.* Paul was determined that neither his personal conduct or handling of God's Word (4:2) would ever provide an adversary a legitimate reason to accuse him of wrongdoing. That is a worthy goal and one every child of God ought to pursue.

In the chapter under consideration, Paul specifically has in mind his behavior during difficulties. At the beginning of verse 4, he says, *but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way.* Paul speaks not of commendation in a self-aggrandizing sort of way, but as one approved by the Lord as a result of Paul properly doing the work the Lord had assigned him. In verses 4b-7, Paul shows this commendation came *in* his suffering (specifically suffering because of Christ) and *by* the manner of his endurance throughout. Consider carefully his words.

*By great endurance, **in** afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; **by** purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left. (4b-7)*

Both Paul's opponents and brethren were aware of the hardship he experienced (though he did remind them on occasion, 1:8; 11:21-

28). Whether one administered Paul's beating or witnessed it they both recognized it was a hardship. When the wicked persecute the righteous they delight in seeing them falter while the righteous delight in seeing them persevere. There is no commendation when the righteous wilts under persecution. If they endure in the face of opposition, and despite the increasing anger of the wicked, a message is sent to all who participate in, or observe, what is happening to them. The glory of the gospel shines forth in the life of the saint in how they respond to hardship, opposition, and suffering. They commend themselves, not in an egotistical way, but in that they are choosing to remain true to their Lord even though the choice brings pain.

I am struck by Paul's final statement in verse 7: *with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left*. The words immediately transport the mind of the Bible student to Ephesians 6 and Paul's admonition to put on the whole armor of God (verses 10-17). However, I don't believe that is Paul's point here. In Ephesians 6 we are introduced to only one weapon—*the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God*. (17b) In stating that he held the weapons of righteousness in both hands, I believe Paul is showing us that his life was given over to God at all times. In other words, wherever or whenever Paul was found his focus was set upon righteousness. His commitment was to please God in every moment. Thus, even in the midst of afflictions, hardships, calamities, and beatings one would find Paul responding to it righteously (see Acts 16:16-25 as an example).

In responding to his hardships with the weapons of righteousness equipped in each hand, Paul was following the example of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21-23; 1 Corinthians 11:1). We *must* do the same. Persecution comes in all shapes and sizes. It spans death because of one's faith to being joked about and everything in between. There is a tendency to downplay being the subject of jokes, mocking, and insults as if such things were not *really* forms of persecution. They are not on the level of physical

torture or execution, yet they *are* forms of persecution. God's people of all ages have experienced them and many have fallen because of them. When we determine to equip both hands with the weapons of righteousness (a heart always set on pleasing God), we will be prepared to commend ourselves as faithful servants of God regardless of our circumstance.

The wicked and worldly do not understand such behavior. Paul goes on to say, *We are treated as imposters, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything*. (8b-10) Spiritual reality is very different from what the physical eye can see. To his enemies, Paul was a beaten and battered man with scars likely covering most of his torso. They saw a man constantly under punishment and whose entire existence was sorrowful and filled with pain. He had very little to his name and essentially possessed nothing. They found him pathetic. They were wrong. The subject of their scorn was well known by God. His days, though often accompanied by pain, were filled with rejoicing. He had little coin and few possessions, yet through his gospel made others rich. In truth, he possessed everything for heaven awaited him.

How inexplicable are the ways of the righteous in the eyes of the wicked! They see our faith, particularly in the face of persecution, as a sign of delusion and foolishness. They are wrong. May we always commend ourselves to God in our willingness to remain faithful despite hardship and may we always recall that the spiritual reality is so much greater than what the physical eye can see.



