

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Paradoxical Truth

(Jerry Fite)

**W**e all know “less is more,” don’t we? Really? To equate two words that take the mind in two opposite directions is contradictory. How could “less” ever be “more”? The statement might be emphasizing the truth that less complicated things are often appreciated more. “Less is more” is paradoxical. It appears self-contradictory, but when investigated, the statement is understood as well founded, and true. Paradoxical statements are intriguing to the mind, causing one to ask, “how could this be true?”.

Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, reveals seven paradoxical statements in 2 Corinthians 6:8-10. On the surface, they are contradictory; but their claims reveal truth relating to the life of Paul, and the lives of the apostles of Jesus Christ. Some of these paradoxical truths are: They are “deceivers,” but “true:” are “unknown,” but “known;” are “dying,” but “behold, we live.” It is not hard to see how these imposed contradictory statements are true. Paul, and his associates are regarded as “deceivers” by those who do not want to accept the truth of the Gospel. Some men regard them as “deceivers,” but God considers his servants to be

“true.” By worldly standards, they are “unknown”, but are “known” to the one who matters: the Lord (*cf. 2 Timothy 2:19*). Paul and his companions are continually facing the punishment of death, but by the providential deliverance of God, “behold, they live.”

Paul continues his paradoxical truths with, “...*as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*” (2 Corinthians 6:10). How can Paul be “*always rejoicing,*” when he reveals his inward “...*great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart*” for his unsaved Jewish brethren in the flesh (Romans 9:2-3)? We look to Paul’s surpassing love for the cause of Christ for our answer. He is lead in triumph in the Lord, even when people reject the Gospel. Paul sees himself as “*a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life...*” (2 Corinthians 2:15-16). Yes, he hurts over his lost brethren, but such sorrow does not squelch his greater satisfaction in being a “fragrance of Christ” in preaching the Gospel to all.

Regardless of grief from painful persecution, the sorrow

from the separation of death, or the sadness from confiscation of personal property, the inseparable love of God in Christ and the certain hope of heaven cause one to rejoice in the Lord always (Romans 8:18, 37-39; Heb.10:34). Sorrowful, yes, because these things hurt us as human beings; but always rejoicing in the Lord.

Paul also speaks of “*being poor, yet making many rich*” (2 Corinthians 6:10). This paradox is true because spreading the Gospel requires desire in the heart, not money. Paul is not speaking of earthly wealth, for the beggarly poor are engrossed with surviving another day at the hands of the rich, not busy in trying to make others rich. One can be destitute of earthly riches, and make others rich in faith through the Gospel (*cf. James 2:5*).

The final intriguing paradox is “...*as having nothing yet possessing all things*” (2 Corinthians 6:10). God is the Creator of all, but has not left created things out of His reach for providential use (Matthew 6:31-33). As Paul earlier wrote, “...*all things belong to you, and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God*” (1 Cor. 3:22-23). Belonging to God, you possess all things!