

2 Corinthians 6:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

Analysis

As unknown, and yet well known (ὥς ἀγνοούμενοι καὶ ἐπιγινωσκόμενοι, hōs agnooumenoi kai epiginoskomenoi)—Agnoeō means to be ignored, unrecognized, or regarded as insignificant. Epiginōskō (well known, fully known) indicates thorough recognition. Paul lacked celebrity status in the world's eyes but was fully known by God and true believers. True significance comes from divine rather than human recognition (1 Cor 8:3; Gal 4:9).

As dying, and, behold, we live (ὥς ἀποθνῄσκοντες καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶμεν, hōs apothnēskontes kai idou zōmen)—The present participle apothnēskontes ('dying') describes Paul's constant brush with death (2 Cor 4:10-11; 11:23; 1 Cor 15:31: 'I die daily'). The interjection idou ('behold!') creates dramatic surprise—yet we live! This paradox reflects both physical preservation despite mortal danger and deeper spiritual truth: Christians die with Christ yet live in resurrection power (Rom 6:8; Gal 2:20; Col 3:3).

As chastened, and not killed (ὥς παιδεύόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι, hōs paideuomenoi kai mē thanatoumenoi)—Paideuō means to discipline, correct, or train (see Heb 12:5-11 on God's discipline). Paul interprets his sufferings not as random misfortune or divine abandonment but as fatherly discipline. Yet this discipline doesn't destroy (thanatoō, 'put to death')—God's chastening preserves rather than kills (Ps 118:18).

This triad (unknown/known, dying/living, chastened/not killed) expresses the

hiddenness, fragility, and suffering of apostolic ministry, which paradoxically validates rather than invalidates Paul's calling. The world sees only the outward weakness; faith perceives the inward resurrection power.

Historical Context

Paul's sufferings catalog in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 demonstrates how frequently he faced mortal danger: shipwrecks, robbers, assassination plots, beatings, imprisonment. Yet God repeatedly preserved him (Acts 14:19-20; 16:25-26; 27:43-44). Paul interprets this pattern through the lens of divine discipline and sovereign purpose rather than randomness or luck.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does knowing you are 'well known' by God, even if 'unknown' by the world, sustain you in obscure or unappreciated service?
2. In what ways are you experiencing the 'dying' of Christ in your daily life, and what 'life' is being manifested through that dying?
3. How can you learn to interpret hardships as God's loving discipline rather than evidence of His absence or displeasure?

Interlinear Text

ὥς	ἀγνοούμενοι	καὶ	ἐπιγινωσκόμενοι	ὥς	ἀποθνήσκοντες		
As	unknown	and	yet well known	As	dying		
G5613	G50	G2532	G1921	G5613	G599		
καὶ	ἰδού,	ζῶμεν	ὥς	παιδευόμενοι	καὶ	μὴ	θανατούμενοι
and	behold	we live	As	chastened	and	not	killed
G2532	G2400	G2198	G5613	G3811	G2532	G3361	G2289

Additional Cross-References

Romans 8:36 (Parallel theme): As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

1 Corinthians 4:9 (Parallel theme): For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

2 Corinthians 11:6 (Parallel theme): But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.