

II Corinthians Lesson 2

II Cor. Chapter 2

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Memory verses for this week: *I Peter 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

Introduction: Last week in the first chapter of II Corinthians, Paul spoke of how he praised God for his deliverance in all his trials, and exhorted the church to believe that he had truly intended to come unto them, but God had not allowed him to yet visit. The apostle seeks to add tenderness after the severity of the previous epistle, particularly in regard to the one he had urged to be disciplined. Paul was a man who spoke with yea and nay as God commanded, and had never purposefully misled them in his promises. He closed stating that all of the promises of God were truly YEA promises, and we need to be about putting forth the Gospel which is truly a great YEA promise that is wholly of God.

I. Paul Determined Not to Come in Heaviness

II Cor 2:1 But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. ²For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?

Paul begins by explaining more fully why he had not made a second visit to them there in the church of Corinth. His first desire was to come to them immediately. But after thinking on it, Paul decided that he would visit them at a time when he did not have to come “in heaviness” and make them sorry by his use of sternness. In the previous epistle, many of his comments had been sharp and had no doubt brought sorry to some of the members. I don’t think there is a pastor or evangelist who has a humble loving heart like God would have him to have, that wants to bring harshness to the congregation. But a pastor is commanded to preach the “whole counsel of the bible”, and this sometimes can be construed as being strict.

Sometimes, when a church has had many problems like this one had there in Corinth, God specifically directs the pastor to bring a message that might correct the errors found in the church. When a pastor is being led by the Spirit, his message is truly a directive from the Heavenly Father, and we need to realize that and never be upset with the man of God for doing his job. We need more men in the pulpit today that worry about what God thinks rather than what man thinks. Far too many seek to please man, and God’s whole message many times is not preached. Paul was not this way. He declared the whole counsel of God.

Acts 20: 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone

preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. ²⁶Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. ²⁷For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. ²⁸Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. ²⁹For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. ³¹Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

³And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. ⁴For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

Paul knew that if he came and expected them to make him glad, it would never happen if he came to make them feel sorry and grievous. Basically, Paul delayed his coming that the church might get their act together and not have to face Paul with so many problems when he arrived. If he had brought sorrow to them, Paul asks who in turn would lift his spirits. No doubt he desired to be an encouragement to the church. Paul wanted to come in love, and expressed how much they meant to him when he wrote about the much affliction and anguish of heart that he had felt towards them.

We see the heart of a true Apostle in these verses. Paul was a man who was not afraid to pour out his heart before God with tears. Paul had much love for his fellow Christians, and showed this affection in the way that he wrote to them. His desire was not to chasten, but rather to show his love towards them.

Psalms 126: ⁵They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. ⁶He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him

II. Appeal for the Repentant Offender

⁵But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. ⁶Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. ⁷So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. ⁸Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.

If you remember from our earlier study in I Corinthians, there was a situation in the church where a man was living openly in sin and nothing had been done about it. Paul also could have been addressing those who were in opposition to him. Either way, we wisely does not call the person by name. Earlier, Paul had admonished the church

to bring church discipline against the one in open sin due to the seriousness of the offence and the lack of repentance on the man's part. He now is writing to be sure that they realize that they were not to be too harsh on the man, and fail to forgive him if he realized his position and approached the church seeking forgiveness. Just like being born into our earthly family, the child of God who finds Christ as Savior is born into the family of God. If your son decided one day that he was no longer part of your family, it would not truly remove him from the family. The same is true in God's family. Once we are born into the family of God, we will always be a member of the family. But if we reject God's ways, we may lose our life and die an early death, but our soul will still be saved.

1 Cor 5:4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 5:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: ¹⁰Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. ¹¹But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. ¹²For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? ¹³But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Paul was grieved by the situation, and it had been a sorrow and hindrance to the whole church. But now that the offender had repented and was sorry for his sin, they should acknowledge this and accept him back. God stands ready to have his child return to him (as in the case of the prodigal son), and you and I should have this same spirit of love and forgiveness to those who may have done wrong. I'm afraid that many Christians can easily point out wrong in others, but have a hard time forgetting those wrongs and getting on with the important things of the Lord.

We should love and cherish every member, and be willing to care for them and listen to their problems and trials. The bars are full of people who go to look for someone to listen to their problems. You and I should be far more willing to listen to someone's problem than a bartender who could truly care less. Many are afraid to confide in Christians for fear of reprisal. We should not be people who have a list of do's and don'ts that everyone has to live up to. We need to put for the standard of Jesus Christ, and let that be the measure. And then help and encourage those that fall along the way, realizing, that but for the grace of God, it would be us that had fallen.

Here we find Paul urging the church to forgive the one who had sinned and to encourage him in his Christian walk. Where he had asked the church to publicly

censure the man, now Paul is urging them to manifest their love towards the one who was grieved and seeking forgiveness over their error.

James 5:6 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

James 5:19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Matthew 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

God warns us that unless we forgive others, He will not forgive us. The apostle asks the church to confirm their love towards the offending brother and restore him to fellowship at this time. When Paul instructed the church to take action against the man, his intention was to see the man correct the situation and be restored to full fellowship.

9For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Paul promises to forgive anyone of offenses made towards him if they would forgive the transgressor. Paul wanted everyone to be obedient in all things. He wanted to be sure they had forgave the man who had been censured by the church now that he had sought forgiveness. Paul is speaking with apostolic authority and clearly encourages the church to forgive as they had been forgiven for their own sins.

Paul said he would do it as if in the living presence of Jesus. When we follow scriptures carefully concerning church discipline and correction, we don't give Satan the upper hand. Paul point was that they should forgive the wayward brother lest Satan take advantage of the situation.

Satan can wreck havoc on a church that does not follow the teachings that God has laid down. And you and I can become spiritually bankrupt if we let Satan tempt us away from the truths of God's Word. Paul said we are not ignorant of Satan's devices. What are some of his devices? One is potential bitterness can happen to the one accused and even that one who will not forgive.

Another one is how Satan can tempt Christians through the lust of the flesh. If he can get us to fall for fleshly passions, we can lose our testimony and ruin our families and truly our whole life.

Another is to start questioning God's Word. Just like he did with Eve in the Garden of Eden, when he said "Hath God said....." Satan wants us to question and doubt God's goodness and blessings towards us. God did say that if they ate of the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil, in that day they would die. Satan questions God and declares that they would not die. But once Adam and Eve did eat of that tree, they died a spiritual death that day which meant separation from God. The only way this can be restored is through salvation in Jesus Christ.

The third device Satan uses is to make us feel hopeless in our situation. If we have fell away from full fellowship with the Lord, the backslider will think that he or she has no hope of coming back to God. That is a lie. God stands ready to welcome back any sinner who has drifted from God.

Another device Satan uses is to get Christians to be extremes on one side or other of tolerance. Some become so cold that you couldn't melt them down with a Texas heat wave. Others are so tolerant that nothing bothers them, and anything goes. Both of these extremes are wrong. The Christian should love the things that God loves (the truth, the Word of God, the fellowship of other Christians) and should hate those things that God hates. (Sin of any nature.) But while abhorring sin, we should love the sinner and do all in our power to reach the lost for Christ. And when a brother or sister falls, we should be there first to welcome them back when they get right with the Lord. As a matter of fact, we should be involved in their lives to bring them back.

Galatians 6:1-4 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. 4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

¹²Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, ¹³I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

In verses 12 and 13, Paul is remembering his visit to Troas after leaving Ephesus. Troas was the port city on the Aegean Sea not too distant from Ephesus. As in every place that he went, Paul came there to preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When Paul had an opportunity to share the gospel, he was quick to take advantage of it. There seemed to be excellent opportunities there, but he was unable to take advantage of all of them due to his sadness in not having heard from Titus.

Perhaps Titus had intended to come and report to Paul concerning the church there in Corinth. But when we are concerned for a family member or another Christian, we can not be as effective due to this weighing on our mind. If at all possible, we should turn every care and burden over to the Lord. Jesus is not only willing, but will bear our burdens when we get in the harness and become a committed Christian.

Matthew 11:28-29 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and*

lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

III. The First Characteristic of the True Gospel Ministry

¹⁴Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

While not stated, it appears Paul did find Titus in Macedonia. He is thankful to God about this, and praises the Lord. It is God that gives us the great triumphs. Paul and his companions had come to know the savour or sweetness that comes with the knowledge of God and the power God gives when we walk according to the spirit. Those that reject the Gospel find a savor of death unto death. But to us, the Gospel brings life and hope beyond the grave.

J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary* had this to say about verse 14.

In this dramatic picture, Paul is saying that preaching the gospel is like leading a triumphal entry. The background is a Roman triumphal entry. One of the great Roman generals would go out to the frontier—to Europe where my ancestors were at that time, or down into Africa—where he would have victory after victory, for Rome was victorious in most campaigns. The conqueror would then return to Rome, and there would be a big, triumphal entry into the city. It is said that sometimes the triumphal entry would begin in the morning and go on far into the night. The Roman conqueror would be bringing in animals and other booty which he had captured. In the front of the procession would be the people who were going to be released. They had been captured but would be freed and would become Roman citizens. In the back of the procession would be the captive people who were to be executed.

In these triumphal entries there was always the burning of incense. They would be burning the incense to their gods to whom they gave credit for the victory. All the way through the procession would be clouds of smoke from the incense, sometimes even obscuring the procession as it passed by. With this as a background, Paul is saying, “Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.” This is wonderful, friend. You can’t lose when you are in Christ. You cannot lose! Paul says that God *always* causeth us to triumph. Wait a minute, Paul. Always? In every place? We know you had wonderful success in Ephesus, but you didn’t do so well in Athens. Do you feel that you triumphed in both places? “Yes,” Paul says, “He always causes us to triumph in Christ!”

¹⁵For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: ¹⁶To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

Paul says that we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To us that are saved, Christ is a sweet fragrance. The hearing of the

Gospel is the fragrance of abundant life that leads to eternal life. Through the lives of God's true witnesses, He makes us know the sweet savour of knowledge. We have mentioned many times how that the beginning of knowledge is the fear of the Lord. Without acknowledging God, we will never be truly wise. In our own eyes we may think we are wise, but we are only fooling ourselves.

The fool has said there is no God. We mentioned earlier that those that reject the Gospel find it to be a savour of death unto death. But we that know God's Word and accept Christ as Savior know it is the savour of life unto life. That question in verse 16 should make us ponder... Who is sufficient for these things? I believe the answer is that none of us in ourselves are sufficient. Who could think himself adequate for this responsibility. But through God, we can do all things the bible says.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

17For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

Paul ends this section by noting that "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God." This corrupt has the sense of crass commercial gain, particularly in regards to less than honest means. Paul's preaching was of honest and of God. All of his motives were pure and from God himself.

Paul shows that many false teachers corrupt the Word of God, but he was not of that group. May God help all of us to never be involved in any kind of teaching that would take away from the awesome power of God. The bible is important to God, and He wants us to declare its truths. Those who speak the Word of God in sincerity, in Christ, are those who are sufficient to meet God's requirements.

Psa 138:2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.

