

## PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 2

### What you will learn:

1. Paul continues his reason for not coming direct from Ephesus (verses 1-4)
2. Their treatment of the man who committed incest (verses 5-11)
3. Paul is thankful at the news that Titus brought from Corinth about his first letter (verses 12-17)

1. Paul continues his reason for not coming direct from Ephesus (verses 1-4)

#### **2:1 But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.**

This was to be Paul's second visit to them. He didn't go. Paul was unwilling to arrive on their doorstep too soon and grieve them. This could have happened if they didn't deal with the case of incest in the proper manner. He had to give them the time to work this out and deal with the man in question. He didn't want to get to Corinth prematurely and before the correct time. He didn't want to get there and rebuke people and throw them out of the church. He was wanting them to fix this up themselves – which they did. He wanted to be a partaker of their joy in the Lord and have cheerful meetings with them rather than disagreements that could have happened.

He didn't want to be a 'wet blanket' as the saying goes by being 'heavy' with them. But Paul was very sad over the sin that happened in the church there. And Paul had a heavy feeling in himself about it all.

Paul is stopped by God in going to them straight away after he sent them the first letter.

He goes North to Troas and then Macedonia where he meets Titus in Macedonia who gives him the good news they had repented.

#### **2:2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?**

Paul says that if he made them sorry and caused them grief, who would make him happy? Answer? Nobody. He wanted to have a cheerful get together with them all, and not to be correcting and rebuking them

#### **2:3 And 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.**

Paul says that his joy would come from them being joyful and vice versa. If they are sorrowful, then he would be sorrowful as well. In fact, Paul's joy are the saints at Corinth.

#### **2:4 For 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.**

Sometimes children misbehave because no-one will correct them. They are wanting discipline. So it is the same with ministers and Pastors. People, when corrected, know that the Pastor cares for them even if they don't like it. Now even with correcting and sternly righting the wrongs that happen in a church with acts of discipline, faithful ministers show their love. However, the discipline needed for correcting offenders is often hurtful and grievous to faithful ministers and is often given with heaviness of heart.

2. Their treatment of the man who committed incest (verses 5-11)

#### **2:5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.**

Paul says that he is only partly grieved and sorrowful. He says they were a puffed up church and had not mourned over this incest case (1Corinthians 5:2). But seeing they had fixed up the problem under his previous instructions in his first letter to them (Titus had told Paul they had), he wouldn't be too hard on them as a whole congregation. The punishment of being put out of the church till the man repented and was humbled, was the clearing action needed.

#### **2:6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.**

The man's punishment was just enough and sufficient which was brought about by the many people of the whole church. They all agreed to do this.

#### **2:7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.**

So Paul says that having put this man out of the church as punishment, the church should forgive him and comfort him. Charity (love from one Christian to another) covers many sins (1Peter 4:8).

Truly sorrowful people shouldn't be left to themselves to wallow in their grief. They shouldn't be left to fall into despair. This can make you unfit for other duties. This is godly sorrow, a sorrow toward God and not sorrow of the world. Godly sorrow is good (2 Corinthians 7:10). You know the sort of sorrow that people have when they have just been found out? They are just sorry they got caught. This is simply worldly sorrow.

**2:8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.**

Paul urges them as a congregation, to all prove their love to this man.

Confirm = con + firm. Con = together. Be firm in your love to this man. Do this together.

**2:9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.**

He wrote his first epistle to them with a severe tone to 1. Avoid the necessity for a painful visit (verse 3) 2. To show his special love for them (verse 4) 3. To test their obedience in disciplining the man in question and know whether they would pass the test. Their faithfulness was proved.

**2:10 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;**

If you have forgiven the man, then I do too for your sakes. Also for the sake of Christ and in his name, and in his presence, because I Paul, and indeed yourselves, are to be examples of kindness and tender mercy to all those who truly repent.

**2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.**

Another reason to forgive is so Satan will not get hold of the mind of the man and drive him to despair, all because you wouldn't forgive him. This is one of the ways that Satan works in separating Christians from other Christians.

3. Paul is thankful at the news that Titus brought from Corinth about his first letter.

**2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,**

Now in addition to my not coming to you straight across the sea from Ephesus, God opened up a door for evangelising when I went North to Troas to preach the gospel. People got saved as a result of this.

**2:13 I 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.**

I thought that Titus would meet me there having come from you at Corinth, but that didn't happen. He was going to tell me all about how you had received my first letter to you. So I continued further North to Macedonia.

**2:14 Now 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.**

Now this is the place, in Macedonia, he met Lydia the seller of purple cloth. You see, he tells the Corinthians, that even though he didn't go and visit them, God used him to get people saved at Troas and indeed at Philippi, the main city of Macedonia.

(He later writes to the Philippian church (churches) in his letter to the Philippians).

So he thanks God that no matter what the circumstances, God will always cause us to triumph by being in Christ. Our triumphs are always in Christ, In ourselves we are weak and don't have joy or victory, but in Christ we do!

Now a savour is a smell or a taste. In this case it is the wonderful 'smell' and 'taste' of leading people to the Lord with the knowledge that he died for all of man's sins – past, present and future. Nothing more to pay or do to make up for our sins to God, but believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as he did it for us. He washes away all our sins (Revelation 1:5) and puts his right standing with God the Father into our spiritual bank account. He exchanges his goodness for our badness. So God the Father accepts me just as if I'd never sinned. Get it? **Justified = just – as - if – I'd** never sinned.

It's like a judge in a court of law. The criminal being tried is found guilty. The punishment is death. But the judge takes off his robes and goes to the gas chamber instead of the criminal. The criminal is set free. Someone has paid the penalty for his crime. So Jesus sets us free such that we don't have to go to hell and suffer the fires of punishment forever more.

**2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:**

**2:16 To 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?**

To the person who gets saved, they have the sweet smell of the Lord Jesus Christ in their life because he has given them eternal life. To the person who will not accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, all they have to look forward to is death, physical death, which becomes a living death in the fires of hell. Oh yes, we all live forever – some in heaven but most in hell. Paul goes on to say, that apart from the grace of God, he would not be able to perform such a duty in his own strength. All our sufficiency comes from God. The work is so great but of ourselves we have no strength at all. He is definitely not capable or sufficient.

**2:17 For 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.**

But we are not like many of the churches and Pastors which twist and change the word of God, the holy scriptures. Here he refers to those in Corinth that have turned their hearts away from Paul by teaching false and incorrect doctrine. These were the Jews that had come into the church and started whispering lies about Paul. He deals with these liars and fraudsters in the next chapter of 2 Corinthians.

Paul has taught the Corinthian church nothing but the truth in sincerity before God. He speaks the truth that is to be found in Christ and Christ alone. As we shall see, these Jews were saying to the church that they should start paying more attention to the law of Moses and all that it commanded people to do.

This happening in the churches today as people who are sympathetic to Moses and his laws and the feasts of Israel, are urging people to start acting out things like the Festival of Booths, the Passover, Pentecost and so on.

Indeed, they are saying that keeping the law of Moses give you good favour in the sight of God. In fact, they are saying that you can lose your salvation if you don't. You know, like the Seventh Day Adventists who say you can't be saved unless you worship on Saturday, which is the Jewish Sabbath. These are people who corrupt the word of God. There are the Roman Catholics that say you can never have eternal security in Christ. Why? Because their Jesus is the little wafer biscuit they eat at the Lord's supper. They say it is the actual, body of Christ. Can you imagine that? Some priest mutters some magic words like 'Abracadabra' and the bread is supposed to be turned into the actual body of Christ. Furthermore, the Pope in Rome says the priest has the power to turn the grape juice into the actual blood of Christ! What blasphemy! What lies!

Anyhow, as Paul says, the law of Moses is holy and glorious. However it is far exceeded and surpassed in glory and holiness with the liberty to be found in Christ alone. This is in chapter 3.

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#### **Questions to discuss:**

- 1. Do you have any questions on chapter 1 or chapter 2?**
- 2. What did you learn in studying 2 Corinthians chapter 2?**