

2 CORINTHIANS – “The Ministry” Introduction and background

It's infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake (2Cor 12:10)

2nd Corinthians is a description of the **trials, tests and tribulations** that await for any man wanting to enter the ministry for the Lord as a Pastor, preacher, evangelist and teacher.

God will put you through such trying circumstances such that you will be able to speak personally of his **comfort and deliverance** not from your head, but from your heart
- from experience and not just out of a book.

You will know, that you know, that you know, that you know ...
the comfort and consolation that only comes from the Lord.

This comes from throwing yourself 100% in utter dependence on God the Father in crippling circumstances.

WHY? THAT GOD MAY GET ALL THE GLORY NO MATTER WHAT THE OUTCOME!!!

Forty five (45) words that Paul uses in 2nd Corinthians are "**anguish, perplexity, devour, smite, bondage, weak, despair, forsaken, faint, persecuted, sorry, grieved, down, perish, burden, cast down, groaning, poor, chastened, hunger, beaten, perils, pain, infirmity, stoned, reproaches, offended, weariness, mourning, trembling, fear, poverty, affliction, despair, necessities, imprisonments, distressed, destruction, tumults, killed, tribulation, dying, suffering, terrified, death.**"

Welcome to the Christian ministry! And furthermore, you will thank and praise the Lord from the bottom of your heart that he has seen fit to destroy any form of self support or confidence you may have in yourself, in order for him to get all the glory.

As Paul states "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. **Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (King James Bible).

Indeed, "...that **the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.**" 2 Corinthians 4:7 (KJB)

WONDERFUL SCRIPTURE VERSES TO PRAY FROM THE HEART

With the following scripture verses and quotes, God shows us how to pray.

He knows what we need before we even ask.

But most people just keep bashing on God's door for health and wealth and anything they need, as though God is ignorant of their needs.

What he wants to hear is our praise and thanks for all our situations and his solutions, in his time, when and where he sees fit. But whatever the situations, God's grace will be sufficient.

*And we know that **all things work together for good to them that love God,** to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28*

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Ephesians 5:20

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Philippians 4:6

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for **this is the will of God** in Christ Jesus concerning you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7

QUOTES from other Christians

"If anyone could tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and perfection, he must tell you to make it a rule to yourself to **thank and praise God for everything that happens to you.** For it is certain that whatever seeming **calamity happens to you,** if you **thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing.**" – William Law, clergyman, 18th century

"I thank God for my handicaps, for through them I have found myself, my work and my God." – Hellen Keller. (Blind from a medical mishap when very young, but able to write hundreds of hymns for the Lord)

"Blessed is he that submits to the will of God; he can never be unhappy. Men may deal with him as they will ... he is without care; he knows that '**all things work together for good to them that love God,** to them who are the called according to his purpose." – Martin Luther Christian minister 19th Century

And will people be thankful? Probably not!

As Paul says *And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.* (2 Cor 12:15)

BACKGROUND to 2nd Corinthians

In 1st Corinthians, Paul says he is coming direct to Corinth via Macedonia (1Cor 16:5).

But God changes his plans so he travels through Troas to save others.

He writes 2nd Corinthians about one year after writing 1st Corinthians.

Have you ever felt disappointed and hurt, and jumped to the wrong conclusions, because a friend said they would visit you ... and they didn't turn up? Until you found out the reasons for their not coming, your mind was flooded with false accusations against that person?

Of course, the end result was that this non-visit was being used by God to **once again** expose your lack of trust toward God and **once again** being reminded that you haven't believed Proverbs 3:5-7.

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

⁶ In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

⁷ Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

This sums up Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth.

With fear and trembling, his first letter had shocked them into action, with the man committing incest (having sex with his father's wife) being quickly and severely dealt with. They were now looking forward to a visit from Paul as having followed his instructions. But God had other plans.

Because he didn't visit them right away, certain people and the Jews at Corinth had false accusations against Paul. They were charging him with the following: 1. Guilty of lightness and levity 2. Insincerity 3. Hypocrisy (saying one thing and doing another) 4. Cowardice at not showing up 5. Lying 6. No letters from Jerusalem commanding him 7. Dishonesty 8. Sneaky 9. Self interest 10. Insanity by calling him a fool

Now Paul couldn't care less whether he defended himself or not, but as the saying goes "To push back against lies, slander and scorn is often our duty, not because of injury to us, but other Christians of lesser faith, may be discouraged and affected." Paul follows the scripture which says "Smite the scorner and the simple will beware." (Proverbs 19:25)

Paul's apostleship, in their eyes, is under question, but as he points out in the first verse, his apostleship is by the will of God. His commission comes directly from the Lord, so in this second letter, he outlines his responsibility to God and others in this regard. Paul writes without fear and favour to the Corinthian church, refuting their lies and false accusations against him. His duty is to the Lord first and foremost and then to other Christians.

HIS SELF-DEFENCE RELIES ON TWO THINGS

First, his badges of honour, his battle scars proving his experience in serving the Lord, by reminding them of his infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions and distresses.

Second, his visions and revelations from the Lord.

It is against this backdrop, we commence our study of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians at Corinth. Different churches required different encouragement and correction.

The Philippians needed **joy**.

The Colossians needed to rely on **Jesus Christ himself** and not secret knowledge.

The Thessalonians needed **hope**.

The Romans were given **justification by faith** alone without works.

The Corinthians need a description of **the difficulties of the ministry**

PAUL'S TWO PRESSING ISSUES

- 1. The restoring of the 'incest' man who has repented, has suffered enough and needs to be brought back into the congregation (chap 2, 7)**
- 2. The collection of money for the saints at Jerusalem (chaps 8-9)**

OTHER MAIN TOPICS ARE

- 1. Paul's many sufferings that he and his fellow workers had (1, 4, 6, 7, 11)**
- 2. Paul's labours and successes in preaching the gospel in various places (chap 2)**
- 3. Paul compares the liberty in Christ to the bondage of Moses (chap 3)**
- 4. Paul's true home is in heaven. On earth he has a ministry of reconciliation (chap 5)**
- 5. Paul warns them of mixing with unbelievers (chap 6)**
- 6. A very strong defence against false accusations and lies (chap 10-12)**

BRIEF CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Chap 1 Paul's authority established, but not for dominating. **As he has been comforted by the Lord, he is able to comfort others.**

Chap 2 Paul's authority & correction come from love, help and joy for them. **Paul's service out of love and joy for their benefit**

Chap 3 The liberty that comes from being in Christ and having his indwelling Spirit (the Holy Ghost). **Are you saved or still under Moses? Liberty in Christ.**

Chap 4 Our behaviour is open to examination by the world. We are not crafty or deceitful.

The body perishes (a light affliction) but we look for a far more exceeding glory. **Don't be deceitful and crafty.**

Chap 5 The Christians true home is with Christ in heaven.

Ministry of reconciling others to Christ.

Chap 6 Prove yourselves as true ministers of God. Be not unequally yoked.

Ch 7 We must have **Godly, not worldly sorrow.** We must live holy lives in the fear of God.

Ch 8 Cheerful giving

Ch 9 Cheerful giving

Ch 10 Paul strongly re-asserts his authority.

Ch 11 Watch out for false and deceitful workers. Paul's labours and sufferings

Ch 12 Paul's visions and revelations

Ch 13 Examine yourselves – Are you just fooling yourself. Are you just a pretend Christian?

BASICALLY - THERE ARE THREE MAIN DIVISIONS

Chapters 1-7: **Personal and encouraging advice** along with an 'apology' for their sakes

Chapters 8-9: **The absolute importance of giving to other Christians**

Chapters 10-13: **A commanding and robust self-defence** against his critics