

2Corinthians – Week 3

I. Review

A. 1Cor. 1:8-11

- i. Paul teaches us four things regarding suffering:
 1. It makes us more sympathetic towards those who are hurting!
 2. It makes us more appreciative of God's comfort!
 3. It causes us to trust in God more!
 4. It gives us greater hope in the future!
- ii. Paul also knew that prayer played an integral part in deliverance
 1. Paul uses the Greek word, "*sunupourgeo*," which means to assist, to work together!
 2. It paints a picture of laborers bowed down under a heavy load, working together to lift it up.
 3. Intercessory prayer can be viewed as a faith-filled, continual prayer where a Christian pleads with God on behalf of another or others who desperately need His intervention.
- iii. Now Paul talks about his change in plans...

II. Continuation

A. Paul's plan was to have a long visit with the Corinthians...

- i. 1Cor. 16:5-7 (ESV), "*I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, ⁶ and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷ For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.*"

B. But then Paul changed his plans (twice) as we will see in a bit

- i. This caused some to slander Paul, saying that he was fickle or deceitful!
- ii. So he begins explain his actions and motives for his conduct towards the Corinthians, especially why he changed his mind regarding his initial plans...

C. 2Cor. 1:12 (ESV), "*For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you.*"

i. Paul's first witness: The Conscience!

1. He first claimed that his actions did not arise from the fleshly motives but motives that resulted from God's grace at work in his life.
2. He viewed all of life from the perspective of God's grace, seeking not to advance self but the cause of Christ.
 - a. Simplicity here means singleness.
 - i. Aiming at the glory of God!
 - b. Godly sincerity means without deceit.
 - i. No ulterior motives!
3. Such had been his motivation toward all people and especially toward the Corinthians.
 - a. Paul was practicing what he preached:
 - i. Do everything to the glory of God and give no offense to the Jews or the Greeks or the church of God. (1Cor. 10:31-32).
4. Even in his letters, Paul did not use sophisticated word, but communicated his thoughts in a clear manner...

- D. 2Cor. 1:13-14 (ESV), *“For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand—¹⁴ just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.”*
- i. From Paul’s statement here, there seem to have been some who were saying that Paul really intended to say something different than what he wrote or that he was deliberately obscure.
 - ii. Paul did write some things that were hard to understand (2Peter 3:15-16) but he did not write one thing and mean another.
 - iii. Paul’s Hope:
 1. For the Corinthians not to form a different opinion of him than what they had when he first taught them the gospel and spent 1½ with them.
 2. Paul’s hope was for the Corinthians to realize that he and Timothy were working together for their good!
 3. The end goal is for them to boast in Paul and his co-laborers (like Timothy) and vice versa when the Lord comes!
 - iv. Now he explains the second change of plans...
- E. 2Cor. 1:15-23 (ESV), *“Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace.¹⁶ I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea.”*
- i. Paul first wanted to visit them after passing Macedonia (1Cor. 16:5) but then changed his mind and wanted to visit them twice: before and after his trip to Macedonia!
 - ii. We can see why some in Corinth had concluded that since Paul had not followed through with his plans they could not count on his word and doubted his love for them.
 - iii. This was the basis of why some felt he was fickle and perhaps, lacked integrity.
 - iv. That’s why he says the following...
- F. 2Cor. 1:17 (ESV), *“Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say ‘Yes, yes’ and ‘No, no’ at the same time?”*
- i. Rhetorical questions: the answer to both questions is “No!”
 - ii. Paul brings to mind what Jesus said in Matthew...
 1. *“Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”* (Matthew 5:37 ESV)
 - iii. Paul’s point was that a change in plans does not mean a change in character
 - iv. He compares his faithfulness to God’s faithfulness...
- G. 2Cor. 1:18-22 (ESV), *“As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No.¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes.²⁰ For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us,²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”*
- i. Just as God is faithful, and all His promises are “Yes,” so it is with Paul and his co-workers (i.e., Silvanus - or Silas - and Timothy – cf. Acts 18:5-8) – they did not speak from both sides of their mouths!
 - ii. They shared the message of Christ to the Corinthians and as a result:
 1. God established them in Christ (saved)
 2. God anointed them (set apart for His service)
 - a. It was customary to anoint priests, kings and prophets on their entering of office (cf. Exo. 28:41; 1Kings 19:16; 1Sam. 15:1)
 - b. God has anointed them into His service.
 3. God has placed His seal on them (Eph. 1:13 - the Holy Spirit – we belong to God)
 4. God has given them His Holy Spirit in their hearts (as a pledge of our inheritance – Eph. 1:13-14)
 - iii. Now, Paul explains his reasons for the change in plans...

H. 2Cor. 1:23-24 (ESV), “But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. ²⁴ Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.”

i. Paul’s second witness: God

1. Paul calls God to witness to show that his actions and motives to change of plans (the third time) were justified.

a. He decided not to see them (after saying he would twice) because he had their best interest in mind.

2. Having said this, Paul did not want the Corinthians to think he had dominion over their faith!

a. His call is to behave as an apostle among them, not as their “lord!”

b. We are reminded of Peter’s words...

i. 1Peter 5:1-3 (ESV), “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”

c. He wants his visit to be joyful to them!