

2Corinthians – Week 4

I. Quiz and Review (2Cor. 1:12ff)

A. Paul explain his change of plans

- i. He wasn't being a vacillator (fickle and deceptive) – saying “yes” and “no” at the same time.
- ii. He wanted to spare them from experiencing another painful visit.
- iii. Like anyone who visits loved ones, he wanted his visit to be a joyful experience.

II. Continuation – Paul continues to defend his integrity...

A. 2Cor. 2:1-2 (ESV), “*For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. ² For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained?*”

- i. Since there was no recorded of a painful visit by Paul in Acts, some think that he was referring here to his first visit.
 1. The problem with that is Paul had a successful first visit, establishing the Corinthian church and teaching them for a year and a half (Acts 18).
 2. Also, in both 2Cor. 13:1, Paul tells the Corinthians that he is ready to visit them for the third time!
- ii. Paul had a very discouraging visit.
 1. “*I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you*” is not the language of a fickle man – Paul simply didn't want to make another painful visit to them, thus causing mutual sadness!
 - a. You cannot be made glad by those whom you make sad!
 2. Imagine visiting those whom you taught the gospel only to find yourself discouraged by them?
- iii. But nonetheless, because of his love for them, he was determined to come to them again, but this time, expecting mutual gladness!
 1. So how was he going to accomplish that?
 - a. By writing an affectionate letter to them...

B. 2Cor. 2:3-4 (ESV), “*And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. ⁴ For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.*”

- i. Was this referring to 1Corinthians?
 1. The lack of Paul mentioning his not coming to them in sorrow in 1Corinthians causes doubt that Paul was referring to that epistle.
- ii. Paul seems to be speaking of an unpreserved letter he wrote to them.
 1. This letter was not to grieve them, but to let them know how much he deeply loved them!
 2. The things that caused anguish and tears are revealed throughout this epistle.
 - a. We've already seen one: some accused him of being a vacillator.
 3. It is good to note that Paul used severity and rebuke reluctantly.
 - a. When he did rebuke, he didn't do it domineeringly.

- C. 2Cor. 2:5 (ESV), *“Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you.”*
- i. Who is this offender?
 1. We do not know for sure.
 - a. Some say it could be the man of 1Cor. 5, who was having an affair with his father’s wife.
 - b. Others say it could be a brother who was causing Paul grief during or after his visit.
- D. 2Cor. 2:6-8 (ESV), *“For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough,⁷ so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.⁸ So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.”*
- i. Paul commended the Corinthians for exercising discipline on this offender.
 1. He reminds them that the goal of discipline is restoration:
 - a. He tells them that the discipline this brother is feeling by the majority is sufficient and warns them not to go beyond what is needed.
 2. He also begs them to reaffirm their love for him.
 - a. Why did he “beg them” and not “order them”?
 - i. Because true Christian love (agape) is unforced and spontaneous, otherwise it ceases to be what it professes to be.
 - b. When an offender repents, the church is to accept him back, thus showing the Lord’s forgiveness of that brother.
 - i. *“If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him”*
Luke 17:3 (ESV)
 - c. It is good to keep in mind that true repentance is shown by the deeds that follow.
 - i. *“...that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.”* Acts 26:20 (ESV)
- E. 2Cor. 2:9 (ESV), *“For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything.”*
- i. Paul gives us insight as to why he wrote this unpreserved letter:
 1. To see if they would recognize his apostolic authority, expressed by their obedience.
- F. 2Cor. 2:10-11 (ESV), *“Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ,¹¹ so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”*
- i. Paul shows his unity with his readers by telling them that whoever they forgive, he forgives as well!
 1. He is assuring them that whomever they forgive, he forgives as well.
 - ii. Forgiveness is a powerful tool that crushes Satan’s plan to permanently injure souls!
 1. We are not ignorant of his plans, schemes, thoughts and cunning ways!
 - a. The church as well as individual Christians are always exposed to Satan’s influences and therefore should always be on guard against his schemes.
 - b. Satan will take advantage of a spirit that does not forgive when an offender truly repents.
 2. The last thing Satan wants is for a church to promote forgiveness and restoration of souls.