

## 2Corinthians – Week 5

### I. Review – 2Cor. 2:1-11

- A. Paul had a very discouraging visit and decided to change his plans to visit them again.
- B. But because of his love for them, he was determined to come to them again, but this time, expecting mutual gladness!
  - i. He was he going to accomplish that by writing a letter to them.
- C. Paul commended the Corinthians for exercising discipline on a wayward brother.
  - i. However, he reminds them that the goal of discipline is restoration:
    - 1. 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 forgive him and reaffirm their love for him.
  - ii. The last thing Satan wants is for a church to promote forgiveness and restoration of souls.

### II. Continuation

- A. Now Paul describes his alternate travels...
  - i. Instead of going back to Corinth, he headed to Troas...
- B. 2Cor. 2:12-13 (ESV), *“When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord,<sup>13</sup> my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.”*
  - i. Troas was a thriving seaport city, built by Alexander the Great around 311 BC.
  - ii. This city was so prominent that Julius Caesar considered making it the capital of the Roman Empire.
  - iii. Paul readily observed that God had opened a door there for the gospel:
    - 1. There were people there that were receptive to the gospel.
    - 2. This implies that a church was planted there in Troas.
  - iv. Even though Paul was having success in this city, his concerns for the Corinthians were weighing heavily on him!
    - 1. He wanted to know how the Corinthians reacted to his letter described in 2:1-4.
    - 2. Apparently, the plan was for Titus to bring the letter to the Corinthians while Paul traveled to Troas.
    - 3. Then, for Titus to meet Paul in Troas at a certain time.
    - 4. Titus’ delay perhaps seemed to Paul as a signal that his beloved Corinthians had responded negatively to his letter.
    - 5. Therefore, Paul left a thriving evangelistic opportunity out of his deep love and concern for the Corinthians.
      - a. This action showed how much he cared for the Corinthians!
      - b. Imagine how the Corinthians felt after reading what is called 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians?
        - i. They must have felt very ashamed that their behavior and assumptions has caused great anxiety in Paul’s life to the point of his leaving a great evangelistic opportunity in order to learn of their spiritual welfare!

6. Here, Paul shows his two major ministries as an apostle of Christ:
    - a. The preaching of the gospel (cf. 1Cor. 1:17).
    - b. The caring for the local churches (cf. 2Cor. 11:28).
  7. To which should he give first priority?
    - a. Should he stay in Troas or should he devote himself to a church in spiritual need?
    - b. Apparently, his first responsibility was to the church at Corinth!
    - c. This teaches us a valuable lesson:
      - i. The job of a spiritual leader is laced with godly anxiety!
      - ii. He must be deeply concerned about the spiritual affairs of his flock!
  8. It seems that Paul had a secondary plan that if he did not find Titus in Troas, he would find him in Macedonia!
  9. But despite the concerns and what seems to be glum at times, Paul thanks God for always leading him and his co-workers in the faith into victory...
- C. 2Cor. 2:14 (ESV), *“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.”*
- i. Was Paul thanking God because he finally met Titus?
    1. It is true that in chapter 7, Titus is mentioned as bringing good news!
    2. But if he was thanking God for finally seeing Titus, then why didn't Paul mention meeting Titus in verse 14? And why didn't he mention Titus until chapter 7?
    3. Although his meeting Titus did turn his anxiety to joy, it should be noted that Paul did not speak of his personal rendezvous with Titus as being the cause of his joy here, but that he, along with his companions, were thankful to God who:
      - a. Delivered them from peril (cf. 2Cor. 1:3-9)!
      - b. Opened doors for the preaching of the gospel like He did in Corinth and even in Troas!
      - c. And there are many other dynamic, powerful and gracious works that Paul and his companions had witnessed God do during his apostolic ministry!
  - ii. Here, Paul gives an illustration of victory in war during those days:
    1. The general would lead his troops in a procession in front of the whole city!
      - a. God, being the General, would lead His troops (servants)
      - b. And He ALWAYS (not sometimes) leads them in victory – no matter how glum the circumstances appear to be!
    2. The sweet aroma or fragrance is the gospel: the love and sacrifice of Christ for a world of lost souls!
      - a. Paul explains this in Ephesians...
        - i. Eph. 5:2 (ESV), *“And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*

**D. 2Cor. 2:15-17 (ESV), “For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, <sup>16</sup> to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? <sup>17</sup> For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.”**

- i. To God, he and his companions (and every faithful believer) are a pleasant aroma.**
  - 1. The aroma is connected to the OT sacrifices which are acceptable to God (Exo. 29:18; Lev. 1:9; Num. 15:3).**
  - 2. Paul saw himself and his companions as extensions of Christ’s aroma unto God!**
    - a. To those who receive the gospel, it is a sweet smell!**
    - b. To those who reject the gospel, it is a stench!**
- ii. Paul asks another rhetorical question: Who is sufficient for these things?**
  - 1. In other words, who is adequate or worthy to be the aroma of Christ to God?**
  - 2. He answers that question in 2Cor. 3:5, when he says, none of us are sufficient in ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God!**
  - 3. It is God in us – His sufficiency in us – that make us sufficient!**
- iii. Paul takes a subtle jab at the false teachers who were bending the ears of his gospel children...**
  - 1. Paul didn’t take a salary from them – he preached the gospel free of charge to them (cf. 1Cor. 9:18; 2Cor. 11:7)**
  - 2. Yet, these false teachers were peddling (KJV, corrupting) the word of God and getting money for doing so!**
    - a. In those days (and even today), dishonest businessmen would, for example, dilute their wines with water and selling them.**
    - b. These false teachers would mix truth and falsehood in their teaching and pass it off as the word of God and receive money for it.**
  - 3. Paul and his companions did not conduct themselves like peddlers on the street, but as men sent by God.**
    - a. They acted in sincerity – they were transparent – no ulterior motives!**