

2Corinthians – Week 26

I. Review: 2Cor. 7:1-4

A. Paul urges the Corinthians to disassociate themselves from all that defiles the body and spirit so that they may grow in holiness!

i. Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians was based on the promises of God (vv. 17-18)

1. *"I will welcome you..."*

2. *"I will be a father to you..."*

3. *"you shall be sons and daughters to me"*

B. Paul, again, urges the Corinthians to make room in their hearts for him and his companions and tells them that...

i. He did not wrong (sin against) anyone of them.

ii. He did not corrupt anyone there, that is, he did not cause anyone to sin.

iii. He did not take advantage of anyone there, that is, he did not use anyone for personal profit.

C. Paul lets them know that he says these things not to condemn them, but because he loves them very much!

D. Paul was overflowing with joy over the Corinthians because of Titus' report concerning them...

II. Continuation

A. 2Cor. 7:5 (ESV), *"For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within."*

i. After defending his ministry, Paul resumes the account where he left off in 2Cor. 2:12-13...

1. *"When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord,¹³ 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."*

a. Titus was sent to Corinth with Paul's painful letter to them.

b. But when Paul did not meet Titus at the appointed time, he was worried and decided to go to Macedonia to see if he would find Titus there en route to Troas.

ii. Although it is possible that the affliction, fighting and fear may be related to persecutions that stem from preaching the gospel, it is most likely that Paul was referring to his concerns about Titus and the Corinthians:

1. Fighting without = outward appearance of a person downcast and worried.

2. Fear within = inner emotions of a person downcast and worried.

iii. Paul's concerns may have stemmed from the following:

1. Was Titus harmed during his travels?

2. Is Titus delayed because things got worse with the Corinthians after reading Paul's painful letter?

3. Did Paul's opponents further impact the church at Corinth?

iv. Even though Paul confessed being plagued by deep concerns for them, the God of comfort came through...

- B. 2Cor. 7:6 (ESV), “*But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,*”**
- i. Here, Paul returns to his opening words of this letter...**
 1. 2Cor. 1:3-4 (ESV), “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*”
 - ii. Paul alludes to the prophet Isaiah and the promise that God comforts His suffering children...**
 1. Isa. 49:13 (ESV), “*Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.*”
 - iii. God comforted Paul, not by some kind of magical means...**
 1. God comforts us through people.
 - a. This principle can be seen through the truth of Proverbs 27:17...
 - i. “*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.*”
 - b. The next time you feel down (perhaps loss of health, mourning, etc.), recognize that when God’s child reaches out to you, that is the hand of God extending comfort to you!
 2. God comforted him...
 - a. By the arrival of Titus after some delay
 - b. By Titus' positive report regarding the Corinthians
 - i. Can you picture the joyful meeting between Paul and Titus?
 - ii. Paul’s questions tumbling out one on top of the other as Titus tries to answer each question as quickly as possible?
 - iii. After all, Proverbs 25:25 says...
 1. “*Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.*”
- C. 2Cor. 7:7 (ESV), “*and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.*”**
- i. Paul was not the only one who experienced the comfort of God: Titus also experienced the comfort of God by his stay at Corinth!**
 - ii. And what Titus told Paul is exactly what he needed to hear:**
 1. They yearned to see him!
 2. And not only did they long to see him, they had godly sorrow for the way they behaved during Paul’s painful visit.
 3. And to top it off, they had zeal for Paul, that is, they were ready to comply to his wishes!
 - iii. This denotes that Paul’s opponents were in a losing battle!**
 1. The Corinthians were not allowing these vocal critics sway them regarding their gospel father!

D. 2Cor. 7:8-9 (ESV), “For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while.⁹ As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.”

- i. As in all letters of spiritual discipline, the words may hurt, but they are designed to spiritually benefit the reader/hearer!**
 - 1. Paul’ purpose for writing the painful letter was not to grieve them but to help them repent for their ungodly behavior.**
 - 2. “I do not regret it—though I did regret it” – is this a contradiction? No!**
 - a. Paul did nothing wrong – the letter had to be written to promote repentance!**
 - b. What Paul is saying here is he felt bad for sending it because it was painful but necessary!**
 - c. To illustrate:**
 - i. A surgeon knows that he must cut deep into the flesh to rid a limb that is dangerously infected!**
 - ii. Those he does not rejoice in the pain it will cause the patient, especially if he knows the patient, he knows the outcome will be life-saving!**
 - iii. Paul’s goal, even though it didn’t feel good for him to send the letter, was for a better outcome! And it worked!**
 - d. An unrepentant person suffers loss, especially his soul; but one who truly repents does not get “offended” at the rebuke, but changes because of it, thus suffering no loss!**