

## 2 Corinthians 7:2-16

### Verse 1:

--What promises? The promise of God's dwelling among us, walking among us, being our God, and us being His people. The promise of God as Father and I as His son or daughter.

--As sons and daughters of God we should tolerate no *filthiness*—which speaks of any action that defiles—of the *flesh* or the *spirit*.

--We think often of the filthy or wicked works of the flesh but not often of the spirit. These go together as Jesus made it clear that all sinful actions begin with an evil heart (**Mark 7:20-23**).

--Sins of *Action* and sins of *Attitude* are illustrated in the characters of the prodigal son and the elder brother. Both are symptoms of inner impurity.

\*You have the promise of God's help. Don't believe the lies of the culture that say He will not!\*

\*Also, don't believe the devils lies about the bland nature of a cleansed life: boring, no excitement, you will live full of regrets, etc.\*

**\*Proverbs 23:17: Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day.\***

--How is this type of holiness to be perfected, or come to maturity? ***In the fear of God***. One must continue in the very presence of God like the disciples did. *Do I order and organize my life in His presence?*

--Paul knows that if they the Corinthians had not been caught up in some type of worldly evil, there would be no relational distance between them and God or with him.

### Verses 2-4:

--**(2)** Here Paul brings his discussion back to where he left off in **11-13**. He wants to impress upon them that he had no ulterior motive—only love for them.

--**(3)** Paul had no intention of condemning them or trying to make them feel bad. He wanted to live and die with them!

--**(4)** He would continue to love them despite their slowness to respond. \*It is common that there is a fear or reluctance for those that have been corrected to return to fellowship—especially with those that have corrected them—though that person may very well love them best! Every pastor knows this sad reality—the desire to embrace those that fear him.\*

### Verses 5-7:

--**(5)** Now we have reached the end of Paul's interlude on ministry that began in **2:12**. He has come all the back to the discussion about why he didn't follow through on his plans from **1 Corinthians 16** and what happened with Titus.

--Paul confesses that while he was ministering in Macedonia he was juggling problems inwardly and outwardly. \*Daily life never slows down when trials hit us!\*

--(6-7) Even so, Paul saw God's hand in Titus' arrival and message. Paul sees the comforting of downcast and lowly people as the characteristic work of God.

--Titus' personal safety was encouraging to Paul, but what brought him the most joy was the response of the Corinthians to his first epistle. Remember, the very validity and life of the church was on the line (2:9). Their response was going to prove whether they would be an obedient or disobedient church in relation to the commands and truth of God.

--That is also the main reason Paul was blessed with their personal acceptance of, and concern for him—*for me*. Paul wasn't insecure, and he wasn't needy for their love. He knew their response to him was a reflection of their response to the Spirit of God and the truth of God.

#### Verses 8-9:

--(8) It didn't make Paul happy just to see people sorrowful. He was only happy that their sorrow was something that God used to bring them back to the right path.

--On a side note, this tells us that the inspiration of Scripture through the Holy Spirit was greater than mere sentiment. Paul wrote what he knew God wanted him to write even though it was difficult for him personally.

--(9) Paul's joy was in their repentance—not their sorrow. There is a godly sorrow that does not harm—*that you might suffer loss from us in nothing*—godly sorrow didn't harm them.

\*Repentance is a blessing (at least to all who see their sin as sinful)!\*

#### Verse 10:

--Why is repentance something to be rejoiced in? Because it leads to *salvation, not to be regretted*. The salvation mentioned here is salvation from the effects and consequences of sin, since Paul is addressing those already saved.

--Repentance is still clearly for believers. Jesus calls five of the seven churches in the book of Revelation to repentance (2:5, 16, 21; 3:3, 19).

\*Revelation 3:19: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*\*

--It is *not to be regretted* because you will never regret true repentance—it is something you won't ever repent of.

--Now, notice, that sorrow is not the same thing as repentance. There is godly sorrow which leads to true repentance and there is such thing as ungodly sorrow that leads to death.

--The world *feels* sorrow but it doesn't know what to do with it. If there is no God, no sin, and no ultimate judgment or accountability—then what does one do with their conscience, their guilt, their shame, their fear, their sin? They have no Savior to turn to in repentance!

--All that worldly sorrow brings is death. \*Think of what happened with Judas—CDC statistics say more than 49,000 people in the US died by suicide in 2022 (and that doesn't even include surrender to substances like drugs/alcohol or Violent suicidal attacks, etc.)\*

--Our society is producing people who have nothing to live for at an alarming rate! Satan wants people to be hopeless in their sorrow because he knows it will lead to death.

## Verse 11:

--What does godly repentance look like? Paul describes it here! This is important for us to see because there is a lot of pseudo-repentance out there.

1) **Diligence:** The Greek word has the idea of *haste* or *feelings that lead to haste*. We might say eagerness or earnestness.

--This is the opposite of diligent repentance is indifference or neglect. False repentance will look at sins as “little” while a diligent repentance will see them in their true character.

--This is the person that gets “caught” and doesn’t confess. The reality is they don’t want to change—they are forced to—therefore there is no diligence in their repentance. No haste to do the right thing before God and men. \*Think Lot and his wife\*

2) **Clearing:** Word is often translated *defense* but has the idea of apology. It is the desire to be “in the clear” in regard to our repentance. \*Zacchaeus repaying those he wronged.\*

--The opposite is those who defend their reputation. They want to organize and protect how they look in their repentance. They need PR teams and collaboration with press releases and they begin to attack and slander anyone that would speak the truth about their sin publicly.

--They want to defend or be in the clear with their reputation not their repentance. If someone is still trying to “contextualize” their sin, they are not repentant.

3) **Indignation:** This Greek word describes a pain of which the cause is in oneself. \*The tax collector beating his breast and saying: *God be merciful to me a sinner!* (Luke 18:13).\*

--The opposite of this work of repentance is those that want their sin Excused Vs. Forgiven. Really, they are not as bad as it seems, and their sin wasn’t as bad as it seemed. If we only understood the situation. . .

--Sadly, they end up with indignation toward others—particularly those that hold them accountable—and not their sin.

\*Watson (Soul Food): “*All true sorrow for sin must be imparted to us from God, for He alone knows just how we should feel toward evil. There is something so wretched, so inconceivably awful, in sin, that it destroys our very capacity for any correct feeling toward it; and the Holy Spirit must impart to us, from the pure sensibilities of God, that holy grief, that fierce principle of sorrow for sin, which is the spring and safeguard of true godliness.*”\*

4) **Fear:** This is fear of God and righteous consequences. \*Think of Jonah and Ninevah!\*

--The opposite of this hiding sin. Fearing man and temporary consequences more than God and His eternal judgments. \*Achan: ***My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me know what you have done; do not hide it from me*** (Joshua 7:19).\*

--The refusal to repent is a more determined form of sinning than the man who simply sins and confesses. It refuses the reality of God and sin and man and life.

**\*Proverbs 28:13: He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.\***

5) **Desire:** The word has the idea of *longing*. In this context it is longing for the right thing. In repentance we long to return to right relationship with God. We long for Him and His love and His presence! \*Think of Peter in **John 21**\*

--The opposite of this is self-preservation through isolation. You desire only your own protection and comfort and lifestyle. You stay away from church because of “the hypocrites” or because you just are “not ready” or a thousand other reasons. The focus is people and not God.  
--The truth is that there is no true repentance. No desire for God.

6) **Zeal:** The Greek has the idea of an active and fervent mind. Repentance becomes your main concern. \*David with Bathsheba\*

--The opposite of this is being concerned with everything other than your repentance. We want relief from seeing our sin—Want it over Vs. Thoroughly dealt with.

--Are you zealous to make sure that your repentance is genuine and sincere?

\*Tozer (The Size of the Soul): *“Do a thorough job of repenting. Do not hurry to get it over with. Hasty repentance means shallow spiritual experience and lack of certainty in the whole life. Let godly sorrow do her healing work. Until we allow the consciousness of sin to wound us, we will never develop a fear of evil. It is our wretched habit of tolerating sin that keeps us in our half-dead condition.”\**

7) **Vindication:** Is the desire to see justice done. Here the person agrees with God against themselves. \*Thomas Cranmer (who drew up the Book of Common Prayer which is still used by the Anglican church) was imprisoned by Catholic Queen Mary. While imprisoned, in a weak state and under threat of death, he wrote a recantation of Protestantism. Under conviction, he later repented of doing so and was then sentenced to be burned at the stake. At his death, after refusing to convert to Catholic doctrine, he said this about his hand which had written contrary to his heart and to the truth: *“And forasmuch as my hand shall first be punished: for if I may come to the fire, it shall be first burned.”* Being put the stake he stretched out his hand and thrust it into the flames saying: *“This hand hath offended!”\**

--The opposite of this is feeling we have been done an injustice by God’s calling us to repent.

\*God Himself, spoke to Cain after his sin and what was Cain’s response?: **And Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear!”\***

\*Hallesby (The Christian Life): *“Nay, the decision involved in repentance is this: Will the sinner be still and listen to all that Jesus has to say about his inner as well as his outward sins, or will he seek to evade the truth? If he wills to evade the truth, he cannot be helped no matter how much he seeks God.”\**

--The level of these various feelings and movements in us will vary depending on the individual and the specific work of the Holy Spirit in each soul. \*No diligence, what of clearing? No indignation, what of fear? No desire, what of zeal or vindication?\*

-- We must not try to hurry people beyond the work of the Spirit in godly sorrow and repentance. God doesn't rush from repentance to "grace" because a repentant heart is a work of God's grace! What are we told of Esau?

**\*Hebrews 12:17: *For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.\****

--One thing we should all fear more than the blessing of repentance is to find ourselves in the place of Esau, who ***found no place for repentance!***

--That said, the difference true repentance makes should be seen and known. Repentance *for sin* is worth nothing without repentance *from sin*.

**\*Isaiah 55:7: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.\****

#### **Verse 12:**

--Paul's care for them was expressed through concerns seen through the eyes of God. He didn't write the epistle just for the offender in sexual sin or for the victims sinned against.

--Paul wasn't on anybody's side. Paul was on God's side and wanted to express the care for them that existed ***in the sight of God***.

--Is this how we see and care for our family and friends and the Body of Christ? \*So often in meeting with people they want to know you are on their "side."\*

#### **Verses 13-16:**

--Paul boasted in the Corinthians and their life in Christ. He knew they were God's people. He told Titus to expect the best. Would we have expressed the same confidence in a church or another brother in Christ with so many issues?

--Paul had confidence in God's work in the Corinthians and rejoiced in their repentance and their recovery. \*There was no Jonah-attitude in Paul!\*