

2 Corinthians 1:12-2:11

Chapter 1

Verses 12-14:

--(12) **For** ties Paul's thinking back to the last section and the context of his sufferings and their comfort as well as their prayers for him. Paul wants them to know that he had not acted shamefully toward them. He had no intention of disappointing their love or interest or intercession on his behalf.

--In fact, he declares that he had acted simply and with a good conscience before God and them. This was always something that Paul aspired to.

Acts 24:16: This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

Romans 9:1: I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit.

--Simplicity and godly sincerity will lead to a clean conscience which is a gift from God and a strong guiding principle for Christian life. Paul was always very careful to care for his own conscience as well as those of his brothers and sisters in Christ.

--Keep your conscience clear by speaking the truth in love! *I can't drive this weekend. . . I will drive you. . . Ugh.*

--The opposite would be to act in **fleshly wisdom**—which is to be guided by self-interests and personal convenience. The basic and general way an unsaved person sees things.

--We need God's grace to live so and should seek to live like this **more abundantly** toward the family of God.

--(13) Paul even makes it clear that the things that he wrote in his previous letters didn't have any "secret" or "hidden" messages. He meant exactly what he said.

--(14) Why would Paul live like this? Because they would be mutually accountable to one another **in the day of the Lord Jesus**—the Bema Seat.

--We will be each other's **glory and joy (1 Thess. 2:19-20)** or each other's **grief (Heb. 13:17)** on that day.

Verses 15-17:

--Paul's failure to come to them at first as he had said at the end of his first letter seems to be the source of this conflict. Apparently he was being charged with being untrustworthy in life and message.

--Paul is asking if they really believed that his words and life toward them were hypocritical. Was he acting **lightly**—*elaphria*—the Greek word is used only here in the NT with the idea of being shallow or fickle. Was Paul just a flake?

--Or was he just living **according to the flesh**? That being with worldly self-interest as his guiding principle.

--Or as a person saying **Yes** or **No** as it is convenient—neither being sure at any moment? Did they know him to be a double-minded and double-tongued person?

Verses 18-19:

--There is some debate as to how Paul is actually tying this section in. I believe Paul is simply stating that he could not be in the true service of this all-faithful and sincere God without being faithful and sincere himself.

--Paul can even say that Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy were also faithful examples. We know they were both Paul's companions in Corinth from **Acts 18:5**.

--Their message and life were not inconsistent. *We see this in a good and godly Christian parent, friend, or minister.*

Verses 20-22:

--So the faithful and consistent message and life of Christ was evident in them and the Corinthians themselves. They were all established in Christ and anointed by God.

--The faithfulness of God's promises in Christ Jesus should be seen in and through us. When we lean on the promises of God they change more than our circumstances—they change us!

2 Peter 1:3-4: As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

--These promises are not fickle or light or flakey because ***all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.***

--The promises of God are for every stage of life, every person, every day, every age. They are truly evergreens because the life of Christ in them!

*MacDuff (In Christo): *"His promises are suited for every age, every diversity of circumstances, every variety of temperament, every changing experience: strength in weakness, light in darkness, comfort in sorrow, support in temptation, peace in unrest, hope and pardon in despair. And when 'the supreme hour' overtakes, these become brightest, truest, best of all."**

--Paul then goes on to describe two works of the Holy Spirit in us:

--**Sealed us:** To be sealed was to have the image of the seal stamped on what was sealed. This reflected ownership.

--So God literally seals **us**—not just the promises. So it was with Jesus Christ and so with us and the Spirit of Christ in us.

John 6:27: Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.

--**Given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee:** The **guarantee**—*arrabon*—in the Greek was also called the *earnest*, and was a downpayment or pledge.

--A downpayment or pledge was to be a part of the whole. In this way God has already given us the best part of our salvation—God Himself! *What was your life before this gift?!*

Verses 23-24:

--Here now, Paul begins to explain the reasoning behind not coming to Corinth right away. He wanted to stay in Ephesus as there was an open door, but he was driven out, and instead of rushing to them he wanted to give them time to digest **1 Corinthians** and correct the abuses before coming to them in corrective apostolic authority.

1 Corinthians 4:21: *What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?*

--Again, Paul makes an oath in reflection of his clear conscience before God and them.

--He also makes it clear that he had no intention of lording over them. He was not the “king” of their individual faith but he and those he served with were ***fellow workers for your joy***.

Beware the person who seeks to “lord over” aspects of your faith not given to them but reserved for Jesus Christ alone.

--It was just that he was an apostle by the will of God and if they forced him to choose between them and the True King he would always choose Jesus Christ!

--They were to live and stand by faith *in Christ* and *Christ alone*. That is how the just still live.

Chapter 2

Verses 1-4:

--Here, Paul continues to explain his change of plans and his heart toward them.

--**(1-2)** First, he wants them to know that he had no intention of coming to hurt or make them sorrowful. In fact, his joy was wrapped up in their joy!

--**(3)** Second, he had mentioned his heart toward them and always wanted the issues dealt with before he arrived. He didn’t want there to be corrective issues when they came together.

1 Corinthians 16:24: *My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

--**(4)** Third, everything he wrote was difficult for him. He wrote ***with many tears***—which should really be—***through many tears***. Everything Paul had said, written, and done was out of love for God and love for them. *So too with all good parental and pastoral discipline*

Verses 5-11:

--Here, Paul graciously refers back to the situation that caused the most grief in his last letter. That of the man in sexual sin with his step-mother who Paul commanded to be put under church discipline.

--**(5)** First, notice that Paul graciously speaks of this man, not using his name or redetailing all of his failings.

--Paul also makes it clear that he didn't not take the man's sin personally but the church collectively had been grieved and now he cautions them not to allow the discipline to turn into a personal response—**not to be too severe**.

--(6) Paul makes it clear that the **punishment** already given by **the majority** or **the many** was sufficient.

--The Greek word for **punishment**—*epitimia*—is a unique word and used only here in the NT. It has the idea of properly esteeming one's citizenship—or the punishment that comes from not doing so.

--This fits the context of church discipline perfectly and ruins any interpretation that would make this section about some other situation. All Christians are to live in the family of God with proper respect to our heavenly citizenship.

--(7-8) Paul, no doubt knowing the situation from Timothy and Titus, now is concerned that this man who has repented is forgiven and comforted. He encourages the Corinthians to **reaffirm your love to him**.

--There will always be those who sin and go out for a time—by choice or force—but when they repent and come back they are to be received and reaffirmed or *confirmed*; not just tolerated or unappreciated.

--This is the great balance of the Word of God. First we saw ungodly toleration and now Paul warns of ungodly coldness.

--Of course, this balance is hard to find at times. There are those that want their sin to be excused and are not truly repentant. There is also spiritual pride and sensitivity that reads insecure hardness and lack of love in any action.

--(9) Even though this balance is hard to find, it is a test of true obedience to Christ! Church discipline—in removal and readmittance—is a mark of an obedient Church.

--Paul saw church discipline as a clear command of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 18:17: And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him to be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

--This type of Christian action is not popular but it is Biblical. And Christian obedience is always **in all things** and not just the things we like the best. *Partial obedience is not obedience as we see in the case of King Saul with Samuel.*

--(10) Here Paul wants to assure them that he is acting with them in forgiving and receiving the man as he had acted with them in putting the man out of fellowship.

1 Corinthians 5:3-5: For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

--(11) Notice as well that Paul is very cognizant of two other presences in this situation from the first to now. First, ***the presence of Christ*** before which he put the man out and was now forgiving him. But second we have the presence of ***Satan*** who was waiting for the man to be delivered to him and now was trying to keep the man.

--Paul says we not should allow Satan to get in an advantageous position in our lives through his known ***devices***—which is a word that is most often translated *mind* and once *thought*. It is only translated here as ***devices***.

--This is not the same word used for the ***wiles*** of the Devil in **Eph. 6:11**. What Paul is speaking of here to the Corinthians are primarily mental lies!

--First, Satan will tempt us into sin. Then he will convince us that there is no forgiveness to be found and therefore no use in leaving. Don't believe the liar, thief, and murderer!

--It is important to remember that Satan thinks about you. God has a plan for your life. We have heard that. But Satan also has a plan for your life. We hear less about that. If we remembered it—maybe we would see through a few more lies and be draw by a few less temptations.

--There is an evil heart and intention behind many of the thoughts and temptations this world is drowning in.

--We should keep this in mind for ourselves and for others. At least, that is what Paul wants the Corinthians to do.