

SM 2 14 2016

WOODLANDS BIBLE CHURCH

Title of Series: "In Defense of the Truth"
\\ II Corinthians

Theme: "Plans Change Love Doesn't" #3

Passage: II Corinthians 1: 15-2:11

- Last Week: "Proud Confidence" #2
 - The Testimony of His Conscience v12
 - The confidence of spiritual maturity producing full understanding in God's people v13,14

Introduction:

The Apostle Paul had been criticized regarding where his loyalties and affections lie. The opposition of some in the church of Corinth would use any means necessary to counter Paul's confidence. False accusations were easily made by treacherous; unfaithful conduct! Their reasoning for deceitful rhetoric was shameful at best hurtful at worst.

Their argument against Paul's described concern and love for the church followed a path. **(1)** Paul said he would come in a certain way and at a certain time, and he has not done so. **(2)** Paul cannot be counted on to keep his word. **(3)** If Paul's written word cannot be counted on, then all of his epistles are subject to question. **(4)** Paul's letters should not be viewed as

having apostolic authority. **(5)** Therefore, Paul's letters can be rejected!

Paul did reference his plans to come to them, **I Corinthians 16:5** Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. ⁶ And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. **v7**.....if the Lord permit. Ref. **2:15**.

His change of plans were being used to fault his being led by the Spirit of God, or simply allowing his flesh satisfaction. Was he in the will of God or wasn't he? He said in verse **v17**, that he was *vacillating*, (lightness). He wasn't speaking out of both sides of his mouth.

His explanation for not coming as he had hoped was in full view of the highest witness; *but I called God as witness over my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. v23, 24; 2: 1-3*. The heart of Paul's words show a "special love" for the church, the people of God! All true love is special and must be embraced as such!

The instruction, admonition and encouragement outlined in the passage of Scripture, gives great comfort and a complete acknowledgment of Jesus' love for His Saints mirrored through the life of the Apostle Paul.

Truthfulness and an unambiguous love for each other is to be promoted. The fruition of such behavior is compassion and generosity, moving forward in our

relationships with an intrinsic value, defined by the love Jesus Christ which we know to be perfect.

Plans often change but love doesn't! Paul cites four reasons why he chose to write a letter rather than making "another painful visit" ^{ESV} 2 Corinthians 2:1 For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you.

I. HIS DESIRE WAS MUTUAL JOY 2:1-3

A. As he said in **1:23**, he had not come in person as originally intended, in order to spare the Corinthians more grief, as he had written in his previous letter (**v3**).

B. In spite of their attitude, Paul saw the Corinthians as a source of joy, people who could make him "glad" as well as sorrowful.

1. "Glad" **v2** is from a word meaning to make happy or joyful). Ref. used in **Luke 15:23, 24**, NASB, "bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate."

2. Note **v3**, NASB, "This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy would be *the joy* of you all."

C. His joy would be joy *shared* by the Corinthians; **v3**, ... "my joy will also be yours." When Christians are living in obedience to God's word, *mutual joy* is the result, in spite of circumstances. Ref. Paul in Philippi!

II. HIS HOPE WAS THEIR REALIZATION OF HIS LOVE 2:4

A. The Corinthians were the source of "much affliction and anguish of heart" for Paul; his purpose in writing the "painful letter" was not to grieve them but to express his love for them.

B. "So abundantly" is from a word meaning "beyond measure, to a greater degree."

1. The Corinthians claimed more of Paul's time, energy, and emotion than any of the other churches he helped establish just as a *sick or wayward child* requires extra time and patience from a parent. Ref. **2 Corinthians 12:15** And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

2. "Sometimes confrontation is the clearest proof of love." (David Garland).

Proverbs 3:11-12, My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights."

Revelation 3:19, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.” Ref. **Hebrews 12:8-11**.

III. HIS INTENTION WAS TO DETERMINE THEIR OBEDIENCE 2: 5-9

A. In his previous letter, Paul had urged the Corinthians to forgive the person in question (**v9**); their actions in his absence would demonstrate whether or not they would do as he asked.

B. The pain (sorrow, grief) this man had caused was not to Paul alone, but to the entire church, **v5**. ^{ESV 2} Corinthians 2:5 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. – the church.

C. Sin in a church affects the entire congregation and must be dealt with. Likewise, forgiveness of the repentant offender must also be dealt with if the congregation is to be restored to joy.

D. It seems the congregation, or at least the *majority* of the congregation had punished the offender sufficiently, **v6**. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, *esv*.

E. Now it was time to forgive and comfort him, so that he would not be overwhelmed by the gravity of his sin. **v7**. They were to:

1. Forgive him. Here, the word is *charizomai*, “to grant freely as a favor.”

a. It’s how God has forgiven us! **Ephesians 4:32**, “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”

b. It is evidence of salvation—**Matthew 6:14-15**, “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Ref. parable of the unforgiving servant (**Matthew 18:23-35**).

2. Comfort him (*parakaleô*). Not cold, formal forgiveness but warm, brotherly reassurance of our love, as in **v8**.

F. The reason many churches lack joy is their unwillingness to forgive and reaffirm those who have done wrong, even grievous wrong. John MacArthur: There is “no place in the church for man-made limits on God’s forgiveness.”

Luke 17:3-4, “Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and

seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

IV. HIS CONCERN WAS THE DESIGN OF SATAN V10-11

A. Paul had gone beyond personal concern in his forgiveness; he had forgiven for the sake of the Corinthians, and in the presence of Christ, who commands us to forgive!

B. He did not want Satan to gain a foothold in the church. ESV, "so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs." (schemes).

Ref. **1 Peter 5:8**, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

Ephesians 5:25 tells us that Jesus loved the church and gave himself for her for a specific purpose: "that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish,"

Ephesians 5:26-27. In light of this, Satan will do all in his power to sabotage the church! The only way we can have "joy inexpressible and full of glory" (**1 Peter 1:8**).

is to obey God's word, especially in regard to forgiving others as God has forgiven us. Then the pain will be gone!

Conclusion:

Truthfulness and an expression of genuine love revealed a heart sensitive in caring for God's people. Eclipsing his own personal pain, giving a sensitive touch to the work of God in the lives of people.

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin or your selfishness. But in that casket--safe, dark, motionless, airless--it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable...The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers...of love is Hell. C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1960, p.169.

Plans change but love doesn't!

