

# “The Comfort of Repentance”

## 2 Corinthians Chapter 7

2Cr 7:1

Verse 1 is a conclusion of thought from chapter 6

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

- Paul speaking as a father to his children, giving advice that is in their best interest.
  - Cleans yourself from defilement
    - Of flesh - ACTIONS
    - Of spirit - ATTITUDES
  - Be Holy - DISTINCTLY SEPARATE
    - perfect = means fulfillment or completeness
    - perfecting = means moving towards fulfillment or completeness
    - “The secret of holiness (separation) is love. It isn’t a matter of what we are separated from but who we are separated to.”* (Focht)
    - If it isn’t love - it becomes obligation. You will look at separation as what I can or cannot do or what can you get away with.
    - If it is love - it becomes celebrated. Separation becomes sensible, logical, even desired.
  - Fear God - Having the proper perspective. A divine Holy God and sinful man. A relationship that has been bridged and nurtured from God’s side more than our own.

2Cr 7:2

### 1) The Brethren Bring Comfort vs 2-7

Make room for us *in your hearts*;

- 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 *“Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, **our heart is opened wide**. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—**open wide to us also.**”*
- Paul has been lovingly discipling this church in Corinth for approximately 4-5 years, either by his presence, sending a co-laborer, or by letter. Yet these Corinthian Christians, being carnal, divisive and self centered has criticized Paul and his ministry time and again.
- He tells them that his heart is open to them. Their problem with Paul isn’t that Paul has done wrong but that their heart isn’t open to him.

*we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one.*

2Cr 7:3

*I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together.*

- Paul is writing these things to them not to condemn them but to share his high regard for them and the high hope for their relationship.
- So the intent is to build up and encourage not to give them a corrective “spanking”

2Cr 7:4

*Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.*

2Cr 7:5

*For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within.*

- Paul is overjoyed and it is about the news he has received from Titus about the Corinthians turning to the Lordship of Christ.
- Paul has been bold in correcting the Corinthians. He is also bold in boasting of their repentance and corrected Christian living.
- When he arrived in Macedonia Paul was troubled. He was very concerned for the Corinthians. He has sent Timothy to Corinth. But he never made it and got bogged down in Macedonia. He sent Titus directly to Corinth and expected him back in Ephesus but didn’t return. So Paul went to find them and to visit Corinth himself.
- He states *“I am overflowing with joy in all our afflictions”*
  - What were his afflictions?
    - **No Rest** - constantly going, there is always something next that has to be done.

- **Conflicts Without** - enemies of the gospel; carnal Christians
- **Fears Within** - stresses; concerns; dangers that came with ministry
- The great apostle Paul had conflicts and fears yet these did not hold him back or slow him down. He trusted his God in afflictions. It very well could be an aspect of the Christians journey that God keeps growing us by putting us in situations in occasions where we need to trust Him deeper and deeper.

- How can he have "overflowing joy" in them?

2Cr 7:6

**But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus;**

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 "God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."
- God Comforts the downcast - the depressed.
- For Paul he was comforted by a fellow worker in Christ. TITUS
- There may be a Titus near you right now to comfort you. You may be a Titus for someone who is downcast near you right now.
- How?

2Cr 7:7

**and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more.**

- What comfort it was for his co-laborer to rejoin him.
- But not only that. But when he joined him Titus reported that the Corinthians desired for Paul to visit and that they cared for him. This was a great comfort.
- What a comfort we can provide people. To want to be with them. Many people feel a great loneliness. They may feel a sense of being on the outside looking in. To these people an embrace, a visit, a phone call, a lunch invite is like a life line to them.

## **2) Fruit of Godly Sorrow** vs 8-16

Paul explains their repentance is in part due to a severe letter to them.

See explanation of the "Severe Letter" in the introduction of 2 Corinthians Chapter 1 Notes.

2Cr 7:8

**For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—**

2Cr 7:9

**I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. .**

- "I do not regret it; though I did regret it" - Paul wrote a severe letter to the Corinthians because they truly needed a severe correction. Here it seems that Paul is a little fickle about writing it.
- Paul at the time possible has second thoughts about the letter. Or at the least the Devil was trying to condemn him in his thoughts concerning it.
- But after hearing about the fruit of the correction, he no longer regretted it.
- He goes on to talk about sorrow. He is not rejoicing that they were made sorrowful but He rejoices that sorrow brought them to repentance.
- It is pointed out that they were made sorrowful in a godly manner. Not in a selfish, manipulative manner. In a godly manner (true to God's Word) there is no loss. When manipulated or with hidden agendas they will be loss of relationship and a sorrow that does not produce fruit.
- Every parent understands this as they discipline their child. The parent must watch their own child cry at their scolding or discipline. There isn't any rejoicing in that. But the goal of changed behavior, once realized produces joy for the parent.
  - "This is going to hurt me more than it will hurt you." - While every parent has probably said that and no one ever believes it, yet there is a sorrow a parent experiences in disciplining their child.
- It is very very important to see that sorrow and repentance are two very different things. Some people believe that if they are sorry they have repented. Paul here says that sorrow leads to repentance. But if a man stops short, he could feel sorry but never repent.

- Repentance in man is the flash in the corner of God's eye that causes Him to take notice
  - Psalm 7:12-16 **King David** "If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts. Behold, he travails with wickedness, And he conceives mischief and brings forth falsehood. He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, And has fallen into the hole which he made. His mischief will return upon his own head, And his violence will descend upon his own pate. (head)"
  - Ezekiel 18:32 **The Prophets** "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."
  - Matthew 3:2 **John the Baptist** "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
  - Matthew 4:17 **Jesus'** first words preached "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
  - Acts 2:38 "**Peter** said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
  - Acts 17:30 **Paul** preached "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent"
  - Revelation 16:8-9 **John the Revelator** "The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory."
- Repentance is sometimes thought of as necessary before salvation. That we must repent first and then come to God. In truth, Repentance is the word that defines the very act of coming to God. It is the very ground on which salvation rests.
- **Spurgeon** "People seem to jump into faith very quickly nowadays. I do not disapprove of that happy leap; but still, I hope my old friend repentance is not dead. I am desperately in love with repentance; it seems to be to be the twin-sister to faith."

2Cr 7:10

For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

- We see now there are two types of Sorrow
  - Both feel bad
  - Both can be from a revelation of our sin
- **GODLY SORROW** - It produces an action that is life giving  
It has no regret. (no one regrets the day of their second birth)  
Another sense is that it is a conviction of a matter is sin and the need of seeking forgiveness or strength from the Lord. It drives a person to the Lord.
- **WORLDLY SORROW** - It produces nothing but the bad feeling itself. No life. But death itself.  
Another sense of worldly sorry is condemnation. Condemnation causes a person to separate themselves from the Lord. A sense that they have such displeasure that redemption is not possible without first a self cleansing or a self atonement.
- **Spurgeon** preached a sermon titled "Confessions of 7 Sinners"
 

- PHARAOH	"I have sinned!" Exodus 9:27	The Hardened Sinner
- BALAAM	"I have sinned!" Numbers 22:34	The Double Minded Man
- SAUL	"I have sinned!" 1 Samuel 15:24	The Insincere Man
- ACHAN	"I have sinned!" Joshua 7:20	The Doubtful Penitent
- JUDAS	"I have sinned!" Matthew 27:4	Repentance of Despair
- JOB	"I have sinned!" Job 7:20	Repentance of the Saint
- The Prodigal	"I have sinned!" Luke 15:18	The Blessed Confession

5 out of 7 of these were not true repentance. They had sorrow. They said the words but only Job and the Prodigal repented to have a relationship with the Lord.  
Genuine repentance brings about change.

2Cr 7:11

For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

- Paul knows the change in them.
  - Earnestness to Repent - diligence
  - Vindication of yourselves - concern to clear their conscience
  - Indignation - irritation sin has become

- Fear - Awe of righteousness that a consciences of possible is heightened.
- Longing - Desire for Fellowship with others righteous
- Zeal - Fire for doing right
- Avenging of Wrong - Standing up for the oppressed

- Truly these are different people now.

2Cr 7:12 So although I wrote to you, *it was not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God.*

- 1 Corinthians 3 there was a man who was sinning so offensive that Paul judged him that he should be put out of the church. The Corinthian Church was proud of the fact that they were tolerant of the sin and were not doing anything about it.
- Paul is here saying that he did it not necessarily for the man. Not necessarily for the offended. He did it for the sake of the Church. If Leaders will not deal with sin in their midst it is a cancer that will destroy the effectiveness and purpose of the Church.
  - Paul cared for the Church. He seemed harsh but it was a great show of love.

2Cr 7:13 For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

- True repentance is comforting to our loved ones.

2Cr 7:14 For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be *the truth*.

- Paul had previously told Titus (boasted to Titus) of the potential concerning the Corinthian. It may have been a hopeful boasting. But after genuine repentance these things previously spoken were found true and realized in the Corinthian Christian.

2Cr 7:15 His affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling.

2Cr 7:16 I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you.

- The Corinthians blessed Titus. In turn it blesses Paul.

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