

The Book of 2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Session 17: Paul's Genuine Care for the Corinthians

Now I have told you long ago that in the book of 2 Corinthians, we have eight categories of the sufferings of Christ. As you look at the remedies for each of these categories, have you picked-up on a pattern? In 2 Corinthians 1:12-24, the remedy for the sufferings of Christ are a list of things which are "true." In 2 Corinthians 2:1-17, the remedy consists of a list of things which are "honest." So, what is the pattern of the doctrine in 2 Corinthians?

It is found in Philippians.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are **true**, whatsoever things *are* **honest**, whatsoever things *are* **just**, whatsoever things *are* **pure**, whatsoever things *are* **lovely**, whatsoever things *are* of **good report**; if *there be* any **virtue**, and if *there be* any **praise**, think on these things.

When we count them up, there are eight, and they match the doctrine in 2 Corinthians, in the order they are given here. So, when you read this verse, it should bring up everything you learned back in 2 Corinthians, and that is why we needed to do 2 Corinthians before we did Philippians. See it?

And look at the next verse:

Philippians 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

This tells me that the things written in 2 Corinthians are necessary in order for the peace of God to become a reality for us when we are coming under attacks which are designed to produce feelings of inadequacy, failure, dejection, despondency, etc.

We are looking at the second category of the sufferings of Christ. Here is the breakdown:

2 Corinthians 2:1-4 – Paul’s “honest” reason for not coming unto them, which reason is based upon his genuine love for the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 2:5-11 – The “honest” care Paul has for all of them, proving his genuine love and care for the Corinthians.

Now, we want to break this section down into its parts. The first part is contained in verse 5, where Paul is expressing the genuine care he has for those who have “caused grief” in the church.

2 Corinthians 2:5 But **if any have caused grief**, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

Although Paul has someone specific in mind, he does not tell us who it is or what they have done. Some speculate that this is a reference to the man who was living in incest, referred to back in 1 Corinthians 5:1. Others say this is referring to an unnamed combatant who had publicly taken on Paul at the apostle’s last visit to Corinth, which prompted the severe and tearful letter mentioned in 2 Corinthians 2:3-4.

The “grief” to which Paul refers to is the stress of disunity and chaos on the whole church.

2 Corinthians 2:5 But if any have caused grief, **he hath not grieved me, but in part:** that I may not overcharge you all.

The commentators have three or four different ways to interpret “in part.” I see the “in part” as Paul saying that he was only grieved temporarily, which is one of the reasons I do not think this is talking about the man who committed incest (for Paul would have always been grieved by that). But rather, this is a man who criticized Paul and argued against his apostleship for the purpose of turning the church away from Paul. Paul is saying that this action grieved him temporarily, but he dealt with it in a godly manner so that he would not “overcharge them.”

2 Corinthians 2:5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: **that I may not overcharge you all.**

Paul's writing about this issue had caused others in the church to be "grieved" over it and he knew if he could forgive this person, then he would not be stirring up others to continue the offense against this man. Which is exactly why Paul, in the following verses, is going to ask them to forgive this man, just as Paul had done.

Paul understands that the majority of the church which returned to follow him would take up the offense against Paul and be angry or upset with this man. This is a common thing even today. We should not allow an offense against someone else to put us in a situation which Satan could use against us. That is not to say that we do not recognize what is going on, but when we are offended or "grieved" (as Paul says here), we must deal with the offense in a godly manner which has several things in view: 1) helping the one who was offended (Paul); 2) the restoration of the offender; and 3) the proper response by others who are indirectly affected by the conflict.

Let's talk about these for a minute so that we can make a practical application of what we are learning. If we were living back then, how would we have helped Paul; the one who was directly offended? Think about it.

- We could help by encouraging Paul and affirming our support of him and his ministry.
- We could help by not allowing Paul to hold a grudge, but counseling him in applying the doctrine that God's grace is sufficient to deal with any offense (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- We could help by reminding Paul that these are the sufferings of Christ and when they happen to us, they are meant to build our inner man, conforming us to the image of Christ.
- We could help by encouraging Paul to forgive this man for two reasons:
 - 1) so that no root of bitterness springs up within him,
 - 2) so the power of God's grace can be put on display.

Forgiveness is meant not only to save the offended from being a prisoner to resentment, anger and animosity, which would eventually destroy him if left unattended to; but is also meant to confirm our love toward the other person (the offender). We will see the proof of this when we get to verse 8.

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