



— SECOND — CORINTHIANS



The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People

Part 27—“God’s Comfort Through His People”— 26 May 2024

Introduction

Paul and his co-workers do not lose heart even as they minister in difficult circumstances, knowing that they will stand one day before Christ to receive their eternal reward. This changes their perspective on both themselves and others. As those who have been reconciled to God, they call upon others to walk in that reconciliation and therefore not be yoked together with unbelievers in their idolatry. Paul has been encouraged by the Corinthians and he now reflects on how God has comforted him by His work through them and through his co-worker, Titus.

Main Point: God’s comfort often comes to His people through our _____ with one another as we _____ to His work in our lives.

The Situation in Corinth

- Based on a negative report from Timothy, Paul himself made a “_____” visit to Corinth.

“This turned into a distressing confrontation...[and] it is quite clear that animus against Paul was still very strong and focused on one or two leaders whom the Corinthians either tacitly supported or refused to condemn...From Paul’s perspective at the time, the “painful visit” (2 Cor. 2:1) was a complete fiasco. At least one of the opponents had attacked him in deeply insulting ways (2 Cor. 2:5-8, 10; 7:12); worse, the work of the gospel was in serious jeopardy.” —Carson & Moo, *An Intro to the New Testament*

- The church had also at this time been infiltrated by false _____ who opposed Paul.

“About the same time...the church had been invaded by some self-designated Christian leaders. Probably they called themselves apostles (2 Cor. 11:13-15) and carried letters of recommendation with them (2 Cor. 3:1-3)...they were probably apostles in the general sense that they were agents of others who had commissioned them. Possibly they were in some way Judaizers, that is, those who were trying to bring the church more into line with Jewish piety and practice (2 Cor. 11:16)...despite any Jewish background they enjoyed (2 Cor. 11:21-22), they were deeply integrated into Greco-Roman life.” —Carson & Moo, *An Intro to the New Testament*

- Following the “painful” visit, Paul felt compelled to write them a “_____” letter and send it by way of Titus.

“Written ‘out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears’ (2 Cor. 2:4), this letter assured the Corinthians of Paul’s love for them but also laid down the standards he expected in the churches in his charge and sought to determine if they would meet those standards(2:9)... Delivered by Titus (who may have been a more forceful person than Timothy), this letter demanded the punishment of the ringleader who had maligned and opposed Paul so maliciously (2:3-9; 7:8-12).” —Carson & Moo, *An Intro to the New Testament*

Paul in Macedonia

- Though he had intended to meet _____ in Troas, he headed on to Macedonia.

“Paul left Troas and headed for Macedonia (2:13); apparently, he had established a contingency plan to meet Titus there, should the meeting at Troas not take place. In Macedonia Paul pursued both his pastoral ministry (Acts 20:1-2) and his organization of the collection for the Jerusalem believers (2 Cor. 8:1-4; 9:2). These churches were themselves facing ‘a very severe trial’ and ‘extreme poverty’ (8:2), owing not least to active persecution; but worse still, from Paul’s perspective, was that Titus had not yet shown up, so he had no idea how his ‘severe’ letter had been received in Corinth.” —Carson & Moo, *An Intro to the New Testament*

- The arrival of Titus with news from Corinth was a great _____ to Paul’s heart.

“Titus soon arrived, and Paul’s distress rapidly changed to near euphoria (2 Cor. 7:6-7). Immediately after sending the severe letter, he had suffered second thoughts, fearing that he might hurt the Corinthians unduly; but with Titus’ encouraging report, Paul’s fear was displaced by joy...Indeed, Paul’s entire response in 1-9, breathes an atmosphere of bruised relations that have recently eased.” —Carson & Moo

2 Corinthians 7:2-7:16

Exposition

- Paul’s exhortation to them was made on the basis of their mutual _____.

“Make room in your hearts for us!”

“you are in our hearts to die...and to live together”

⇒ They should not entertain criticisms of him or implications about his motives, particularly in relation to the _____ of for the believers in Jerusalem.

- “_____” is a central idea in this passage.

“comfort”—παράκαλέω (parakaleō)— lit. to ‘exhort alongside’...the act of emboldening another in belief or course of action, encouragement, exhortation; lifting of another’s spirits, to comfort, to console.

⇒ *Paul was comforted by God even in the midst of their afflictions (7:4-5)*

⇒ *The arrival of Titus with news from Corinth was the means by which they were comforted (7:6-7)*

⇒ *Titus was himself comforted by the response of the Corinthians to his visit (7:13)*

Key Point: At times, the simple _____ of our brothers and sisters in Christ is a means by which God can encourage us.

3. The Corinthians had _____ rightly to his 'severe' letter.

2 Cor. 7:10-11—¹⁰For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. ¹¹For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

⇒ Paul had spoken the _____ to them in _____ and the Lord had been gracious to convict them of sin. They had repented and were bearing fruit in keeping with that repentance.

Key Point: God often uses a _____ and _____ presentation of the truth by someone that we know loves us in order to get our attention and show us the seriousness of a situation.

4. Titus' testimony of all that God had done in Corinth _____ Paul of the Corinthians affections for him.

2 Cor. 7:13b-16—And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. ¹⁴For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true. ¹⁵And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.

Key Point: The Corinthians' _____ was indicative of their receptivity to the word of the Lord and correction.

Concluding Thoughts

• We often find it easier to be the 'hands and feet' of Jesus than to be His ' _____ ' and to speak His _____.

Luke 21:15a—for I will give you a mouth and wisdom...

2 Tim. 4:2—preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching

Eph. 4:11-15—¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ

• Our _____ for our brothers and sisters and our willingness to open our _____ to them guards us from being devoured by Satan in our sin.

1 Pet. 1:22-23—²² Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

1 Pet. 4:8-10—⁸ Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace



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Main Point: God’s comfort often comes to His people through our interactions with one another as we testify to His work in our lives.

The Situation in Corinth

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“This turned into a distressing confrontation...[and] it is quite clear that animus against Paul was still very strong and focused on one or two leaders whom the Corinthians either tacitly supported or refused to condemn...From Paul’s perspective at the time, the “painful visit” (2 Cor. 2:1) was a complete fiasco. At least one of the opponents had attacked him in deeply insulting ways (2 Cor. 2:5-8, 10; 7:12); worse, the work of the gospel was in serious jeopardy.” —Carson & Moo, *An Intro to the New Testament*

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⇒ They should not entertain criticisms of him or implications about his motives, particularly in relation to the collection of for the believers in Jerusalem.

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Concluding Thoughts

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