



SECOND CORINTHIANS

The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People



Part 35—“Pure Devotion to Christ”— 4 August 2024

Introduction: Applying Highly Occasional Passages

As we have noted throughout our study of 2 Corinthians, the situation that Paul is addressing is very unique. It involves lots of personal history, multiple lines of communication, and particular concerns that the apostle has for the Corinthians. Applying Paul’s words can therefore prove to be a challenge for us in the modern day. In seeking to apply texts like this, we need to be careful that we do not confuse the *meaning* of the text with how we can *apply* it in our lives.

“*Meaning* is what the author intended to communicate when he wrote the text...We use the term *application* to refer to the response of the reader to the meaning of the text.” —Duvall & Hays, *Journey Into God’s Word*

Some helpful thoughts developed from Duval & Hayes on how we can draw application from the meaning of a passage:

- (1) Observe how the principles of the text address the original situation.
- (2) Discover a parallel situation in a contemporary context.

Main Point: Pure devotion to Christ _____ us from the deceitful lies of the enemy and compels us towards _____ service for God’s glory and the good of others.

2 Corinthians II:I-II

Initial Considerations

- This begins the section of the letter often referred to as Paul’s “_____” discourse (II:I-II:10).
- Paul is going to “_____,” but not in the manner of the false teachers.
- Paul’s boasting in his weakness is intended to _____ the false teachers for what they actually are.

“The difference between Paul and the rivals is that Paul admits that what he does is foolish; they do not. Paul undercuts the rivals’ boasting further by using irony. He does not boast only about his glorious accomplishments, as they had, but recounts a string of humiliating experiences and boldly contends that he is a better servant of Christ because of them (II:23).” —David Garland

Exposition

- I. Paul asks them, ironically, to _____ with a bit of foolishness. (v.1)

“bear with”—ἀνεχῶ (*anechō*)—to regard with tolerance, endure, put up with.

- ⇒ In one sense, he is setting them up for a charge that he intends to make against them (II:4). The language here becomes an imperative, “Do bear with me!”
- ⇒ He specifically asks them to bear with a bit of “foolishness” (*aphrosynē*—a lack of prudence or good sense) as he “boasts” of his accomplishments and experiences in order to critique the false teachers in Corinth.

2. Paul explains his _____ for them and exhorts them towards a pure _____ to Christ. (v. 2-6)

⇒ Paul feels a “divine jealousy” (lit. “jealous for you with he jealousy of God”) for them because he was the one the Lord used to bring them to faith.

Imagery: _____ & _____

- (1) Paul as “_____” (2) The Corinthians as “_____” (3) Christ as “_____”

“Betrothals in the ancient world were binding: there were no casual engagements, and a sexual fling by a betrothed woman would be viewed as nothing less than adultery. Paul, acting as father, has betrothed the Corinthian church to Christ. As an honorable father, he desires to present his daughter as a pure virgin to her perspective husband when he comes for her...” —D.A. Carson

Scriptural Warning: The _____ of _____

“cunning”

“led astray”—φθειρῶ (*phtheirō*)—to cause deterioration of the inner life, ruin, corrupt.

- * Satan, concealing his true identity, deceived Eve by sowing doubt in her mind (she began to doubt God’s _____) and then denying the truth of God’s Word (she began to doubt His _____).

“sincere”

“pure”

- * The Corinthians had been characterized by these things in their early relationship to Christ. This was now under threat.

The Situation in Corinth: They _____ the foolishness of false teaching!

(1) They receive those who proclaim a different _____ and different _____.

It is possible that these men deemphasized the suffering and humiliation of Christ. Regarding the "spirit," Paul could mean that they introduced a spirit of *legalism* rather than *grace* or that they taught that the purpose of the Holy Spirit was to produce powerful works and visions in the life of the believer.

(2) They accept a different _____.

The gospel these men proclaimed was likely something akin to the heresy of the Judaizers (Gal. 1:6-9) which ultimately denied the sufficiency of the work of Christ on the cross.

⇒ Paul contrasted himself with these "super-_____." He is "*unskilled in speaking*" compared to their oratory skills. But, he is not so in "*knowledge*."

Paul had taught them _____ and according to the _____!

"The Jesus Paul preached is Jesus Christ crucified (1 Cor. 1:23) and Jesus Christ as Lord (2 Cor. 4:5). Jesus as Lord requires humble submission and makes absolute moral demands. Any gospel that has no moral core, fosters boasting, and soft-pedals sacrifice is no gospel."
—David Garland

Key Points: It is a good thing when we share God's _____ for the faith of those that we care about.

We should practice _____, acknowledging our own susceptibility to being deceived.

3. Paul then recounted his own _____ among the Corinthians as a demonstration of pure devotion to Christ. (7-11)

⇒ Paul had lived in humility while he was among them rather than _____ payments from them for his teaching.

⇒ This was in sharp contrast to the false teachers who expected such payments. Because of this, the Corinthians were being led by them to question Paul's status and the quality of his service among them.

"The inevitable conclusion is that if the Corinthians fail to grasp Paul's purpose and follow the artificial pagan criteria of what makes a teacher great, they are simultaneously deprecating their own salvation and rejecting the love of an apostle who was willing to lower himself in order to elevate them."—D.A. Carson

"I robbed other churches"

"the brothers from Macedonia supplied my need"

⇒ Paul had not only preached the _____ gift of God's grace, he had embodied it by refusing to accept financial support from the Corinthians even if it was something he was rightly due.

"It may have been part of his plan to preach the gospel free of charge (1 Cor. 9:15-18), to proclaim, both by his message and his actions, the wonderful grace of God. People have a hard time grasping the freeness of grace: perhaps a little modeling would help."
—D.A. Carson

"as the truth of Christ is in me"

⇒ In this way, Paul _____ in the pattern that Christ Himself had established during His earthly ministry (Phil. 2:4-8).

Key Points: God's grace to us means that we are delivered from the eternal judgment that we _____.

Living as His servants we should therefore at times be willing to _____ what we are rightly due.

Concluding Thoughts

- Pure devotion to Christ necessarily involves spending _____ with Him.
- Pure devotion to Christ results from knowing the union of His _____ and His _____.



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Main Point: Pure devotion to Christ guards us from the deceitful lies of the enemy and compels us towards sacrificial service for God’s glory and the good of others.

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- ⇒ Paul feels a “divine jealousy” (lit. “jealous for you with he jealousy of God”) for them because he was the one the Lord used to bring them to faith.

Imagery: Engagement & Unfaithfulness

- (1) Paul as “Father” (2) The Corinthians as “Wife” (3) Christ as “Groom”

“Betrothals in the ancient world were binding: there were no casual engagements, and a sexual fling by a betrothed woman would be viewed as nothing less than adultery. Paul, acting as father, has betrothed the Corinthian church to Christ. As an honorable father, he desires to present his daughter as a pure virgin to her perspective husband when he comes for her...” —D.A. Carson

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“*pure*”

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We should practice discernment, acknowledging our own susceptibility to being deceived.

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Living as His servants, we should therefore at times be willing to forgo what we are rightly due.

Concluding Thoughts

- Pure devotion to Christ necessarily involves spending time with Him.
- Pure devotion to Christ results from knowing the union of His authority and His goodness.