

2 Corinthians

1. Introduction

- a. Sent by Paul
 - An apostle (representative) of Christ Jesus by the will of God
 - and Timothy ("brother" Paul does not claim any superiority over Timothy.)
- b. To the church of God in Corinth and Achaia (Southern Greece)
 - to the customary Jewish greeting of peace, Paul adds "grace," the undeserved kindness/favor of God.

2. Paul praises God for working through human trials.

- a. The God of all comfort, Father of compassion who comforts us in all our troubles.
- b. Why? Beside the fact that we often need it, He also comforts us so that we can in turn comfort others with the comfort we have rec'd from God.
- c. Just as we suffer for the sake of Christ, so also through Him we are comforted.
- d. Regarding Paul and his coworkers, their distress was for the salvation and comfort of the Corinthians. Their comfort came from seeing the Corinthians comforted, patiently enduring and sharing in the same sufferings that Paul and Co. were enduring.
 - They had endured a tough time in Asia (the province), even despairing of life (Act 19?)
 - They had to rely on God, who was their deliverance.

3. Paul explains his failure to make a planned visit (See 1 Cor 16:5-9).

- a. He didn't make plans lightly. He wants his yes to mean yes, and his no, no.
- b. He held off to spare them another painful visit 2:1-4). Apparently, he had made an earlier visit to correct some abuses that was fairly painful for all concerned.

4. Paul exhorts the church to restore the offending member (2:5-11)

- a. He had repented and they had not restored their relationship with him.
- b. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority was sufficient (See 1 Cor 5). If this refers to the same person, they were told to expel him from their fellowship. Look up Matt 18:15-35. What are the steps we should take if someone has wronged us? Now look up Lk 17:1-10. How should we react toward someone who has hurt us and then repented? Now look up Gal 6:1-5: what should be our attitude toward those who are caught up in wrong behavior? Finally, look up Heb 13:17. How should we cooperate with those in church leadership? Implied in this verse is that we have a choice.

5. The ministry 2:12-4:18. In this passage Paul states several things that we should all remember about ministry/service:

- a. To a lost world Christians are the savor of life to those being saved and of death to those who reject the message. It is a amazing ministry and He makes us equal to the task. 2:14-17
- b. The fruit of the gospel is a changed life. That is a letter from Christ and is seen by all. If you want to evaluate a ministry, look at the fruit. 3:1-3
- c. In ministry, our competence comes from God. We do not have to be "perfect" just obedient and available. God does the rest. 3:4-6
- d. The ministry is glorious in that it changes people by the power of the Holy Spirit 3:7-18
- e. Because this supernatural ministry changes people eternally, is dependent on God who makes us competent and equal to whatever He calls us to do, changes people from their lost condition to one that reflects Christ in their lives, we depend on Him. 4:1-18

- We handle His word with integrity.
- We set out the truth and trust God to use it.
- We allow Him to work through us (vessels of clay).
- We rely on Him and know that He has things handled.

5. We are citizens of another kingdom. 5:1-6:2

- a. What is the difference between a tent and a house?
- b. What is the earthly tent that we live in?
- c. What is waiting for us in heaven and how is it described?
- d. What about the process of death intimidates us?
- e. To be absent from our "tent" is to be present where? (see also Phil 1:23-24, 3:20)
- f. Where must we appear at the end of our lives (see also 1 Cor 3:10-14)?
 - Is this a judgment for salvation?
 - Who is being judged and to what end?
- g. What is our motivation for sharing the gospel message?
 - 5:11-13
 - 5:14-15
- h. How does this change our perspective (5:16-6:2)
 - How did the apostles once view Jesus? (Mtt 8:24-27, 9:2-8, Lk 24:19-24)
 - How did the people view Him? (Jn 10:33)
 - How should this change our priorities?
 - * What should be important regarding our view of ourselves?
 - * What should be important regarding our view of others?

For next week: Read 6:3-7:1 thoroughly and answer the following:

1. In 3-13, what was important to Paul and why?
2. From 3-13, in what situations did Paul and his fellow workers seek to glorify God?
 - a. In what ways do stress and hardship reveal who a person truly is?
 - b. In what way does relative peace and fruitful labor reveal the same thing?
 - c. In what way does perseverance in and through all circumstances reveal it?
3. From 6:11-13, what charge is Paul seeming to be defending his ministry against?
4. 6:14-7:1 is often used to warn believers against being unequally yoked with unbelievers. This principle certainly does apply to romantic relationships and business partnerships but that is not the main thrust of this passage. Consider the context and write down what you think God, speaking through Paul is getting at?