

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 20TH–21ST, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

### RELATIONSHIPS (2 CORINTHIANS 2:1–4) "TO SPARE YOU" (2 CORINTHIANS 1:23)

After thinking it over, Paul was very cautious about his next visit to Corinth because he didn't want to escalate tension, but instead to give everyone time to cool down.

- **We may need to correct people, but timing and tone are important. Also, our conversations are to be gracious (Colossians 4:6).**

### WE MUST ALSO SET BOUNDARIES FOR OURSELVES

V. 2 indicates Paul needed some space from the Corinthians for a time because he was feeling drained and lacked joy.

- **There are people we need to draw lines with or they will deplete our effectiveness and joy. We must also make sure we're not just being selfish or avoiding conflict.**

### TACT AND INTENTIONALITY HELP US ALL

We are to properly address wrongs, show grace, and set healthy boundaries for ourselves because we love and want to serve the people we are in relationship with.

- **If we are to pour out, we must intentionally get filled up through prayer, the Word, and fruitful rest (Sabbath).**

### THWARTING SATAN (2 CORINTHIANS 2:5–11) ADDRESSING A MAN WHO HAD SINNED

We don't know many details, but Paul addressed a case of church discipline in Corinth where a man had sinned and it affected "all of" the church.

- When a Christian lives in sin, the church is to address them in hopes they will repent and be restored to the body (Matthew 18).

### FORTUNATELY THE MAN REPENTED

Paul alludes to the man's repentance and the correct way most of the church handled the offense, but some were apparently not letting it go or allowing the man to be restored.

- **Refusal to "forgive and comfort" may lead others to "excessive grief." It will also hinder our relationship with God (Matthew 6).**

### "REAFFIRM YOUR LOVE"

Paul "urges[s]" the Corinthians to forgive. **We must learn to forgive and restore because Jesus has done this for us**, and by not showing mercy we're taking God for granted.

- We're also to forgive because we should understand that the love of God and people cannot be divorced!

### TIME AND WISDOM (V. 10)

The first verb, *forgive*, implies the process of choosing to move on from a sin or mistake. The second verb, *forgive*, implies the complete letting go of that past offense.

- **God knows we may need time to heal and forgive, but there also has to come a time when we let it go and move on.**

### GRACE AND MERCY THWART THE DEVIL

Forgiveness is a "test [of] character." When we **love, forgive, and restore with wisdom and proper boundaries**, we honor God and protect ourselves and the church from evil.

- **Satan is a liar, accuser, and divider. We must walk out relationships in a way that doesn't let him slip in and destroy.**

### LIFE & DEATH (2 CORINTHIANS 2:12–17)

#### FILLING THE READER IN

Paul tells them he was compelled to go to Troas instead of Corinth. In spite of his success in Troas, Paul was troubled because Titus was unable to meet him there.

- His real concern wasn't for Titus, because Titus was right with God. The Corinthians, on the other hand, needed help.

### "BUT, THANKS BE TO GOD..."

Paul was disappointed in not seeing Titus and in the conduct of the Corinthians, but even in life's frustrations, Paul acknowledged that **God is good and life is a blessing**.

- Life has disappointments and we sometimes disappoint. **We must allow God to help us in this life as we anticipate the next one.**

### ROMAN TRIUMPHAL PROCESSIONS

Paul used Roman imagery when he said God "leads us in Christ's triumphal procession."

- After Roman battles, prisoners of war were marched through the streets to be executed as fragrant perfumes filled the air. To the victor, the aroma was sweet. To the defeated, it smelled of death.

### WHAT WAS HIS POINT?

Like the aroma after the capture of one's enemies, those who bring the message of Christ spread the knowledge of Him wherever they go.

- The response to the "aroma" varies. **To some, it is a restrictive reminder of impending judgment (death), but to others, it is a call to salvation from judgment (life).**

### "WHO IS ADEQUATE FOR THESE THINGS?"

Paul asks a great question, "Who is adequate" to spread the "aroma" of Jesus to others?

- The answer is twofold: First, **none of us are adequate. This is why we need and rely on Jesus.** Secondly, **the key to being used by God is sincerity and the desire to grow His Kingdom and not our own.**

### ONE THING IS CERTAIN, IT CANNOT BE IGNORED

Many feel very strongly for or against God and His principles, and others have become apathetic to any pursuit of a Creator. **Though we may think we can ignore eternity, the fact is we will all eventually face it (Hebrews 9:27).**

- **This fact should inspire us to dig deeper into life's big questions.**

### THE HARD PARTS OF RELATIONSHIPS

- We cannot turn a blind eye to sin or offenses, but we must also **use wisdom to make sure we address issues with grace, with a proper tone, and at the right time.**
- We must also **set healthy boundaries.** This is so we can adequately have space to get filled up in order to pour out.
- **Accountability, conflict, and godly discipline** are not always fun, but they're necessary if we are to properly love others.
- When one sins or commits an offense, we are to "forgive and comfort" and restore that person back into the church community.

### FORGIVENESS MAY BE A PROCESS

- **We must work at forgiveness and restoration because Christ has done this for us.** And though it is ok to take some time to work through the hurt, **we must reach a point where we let it go** (1 Corinthians 13).
- Walking out godly relationships thwarts Satan because his mission is to divide and destroy.

### RECURRING THEMES

- We seem to keep circling back to some common themes. First, we again touch on the topic of eternity and the brevity of life.
- **How do we respond to the "aroma" of God?** Do we fear judgment or do we rejoice in the freedom of God? Are we apathetic? **Do we think we can avoid the conversation?**
- Secondly, Paul asks "Who is adequate?" and we are reminded again of **how dependent we must be on Jesus, God's Word, and obedience to His principles.**
- Are we reliant on and obedient to Him? Do we trust Him? Are we building that relationship?