

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 14TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

Paul planted the church in Corinth but in his absence, sin was ignored. His first letter addressed those issues but was not received well. Timothy reported to Paul that there were "false apostles" influencing the congregation. Paul then makes a short visit to Corinth, where the agitators attempt to discredit Paul.

- He returns to Ephesus, writes a severe letter of stinging rebuke, and then sends Titus to deliver it. Titus reported that most of the church had repented and accepted Paul's authority. Paul is relieved but writes this letter to plead with the unrepentant minority.
- In the first seven chapters, Paul will reveal his heart and pure motives for ministry. In chapters 8 and 9, he will share the importance of generous giving, and in the last chapters, he will defend his God-given call to share the gospel while sending a final warning before he returns.

AFFLICTION (2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-11)

ALL THE SAINTS

Paul sends this letter to the church at Corinth but knows many other Believers will read it. His message will be stern, but grace and peace are always his desire for his brothers and sisters.

- **This letter is for us too. God will convict us as we read to show us His grace and bring us peace.**

GOD OF COMFORT

Paul is about to speak of afflictions, but first, he recognizes that God provides comfort to those who endure affliction and that comfort can be shared.

- **As we live through grief, trouble, and difficult circumstances, the peace we receive from God is a testimony to others as they face similar trials.**

PURPOSE OF SUFFERING

Practically all of Paul's sufferings were due to his association with Christ. Paul endured and reported that God would provide strength as they shared similar afflictions and comfort.

- **Comfort comes for the faithful. Comfort also comes for the ones who have failed and repented. Do we empathize with each other?**

UNAWARE

The "false apostles" had accused Paul of being a weak, false teacher because he had so many bad things happen to him. Paul owns his struggles. He shares that the affliction was overwhelming.

- **Why do we try to hide our struggles from one another? We may have more in common than we show on the outside. What are we missing?**

DESPAIRED OF LIFE ITSELF

The great man of God, Paul, admitted that there was an affliction beyond his physical strength to endure and felt that his life might end.

- **Do we remember when we faced a trial like that? Are we judging Paul right now? Are we judging others facing similar trials? Admit it: We are not immune to this kind of despair.**

TRUST

Paul said they would not and could not trust in themselves, but they trusted God to deliver them. God delivered them, and Paul said God would do it again as they prayed for each other.

- **God wants us to trust Him in our times of struggle. He wants us to trust Him together. We can't do that if we are unaware. It's time to ask for help.**

INTEGRITY (2 CORINTHIANS 1:12-14)

GOOD CONSCIENCE

One of the accusations the "false apostles" made against Paul was that he hadn't returned to Corinth and didn't care about them. Paul begins to share his heart and motives concerning the church.

- **There will be times when our motives will be called into question. We must continue to serve, even when we are falsely accused.**

GODLY SINCERITY AND PURITY

Paul continued to follow Christ and do the work God had called him to do. He was confident of it. The church might not understand but God was the one delivering grace to Paul and the church.

- **God's plans are not always our plans. When we find ourselves in disagreement with God, it's time to return to His word for understanding.**

UNDERSTANDING

Paul had taken the time to communicate with the church through very clear letters. Some (most) had understood and saw the reason to repent. Some had not. Paul knew that they could rejoice as they followed Christ and that he would rejoice knowing they would be together in Heaven.

- **When our motive is following Jesus together, we will rejoice together.**

PLANS (2 CORINTHIANS 1:15-22)

AGENDA

After stating his pure motives, Paul shares his original plan to visit them on his way to Macedonia and stop by again on his way back to pick up an offering for the church in Judea. The Corinthians were upset that this plan didn't happen and wondered if he was making empty promises.

- **Plans are essential, but we understand that God may have other plans.**

TWO MINDS

Paul directly addresses the accusation. He was not the kind of guy who said "yes" when he knew it was a "no." His plan was thoughtful and looked good on paper. He never meant to confuse or deceive.

- **Our word should be our reputation. We should think before we commit and follow through with our commitments.**

CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

Paul said his standard was Jesus Christ because He fulfilled every promise God has ever made. Paul knew the character of God would be seen in his actions.

- **When we make promises, it is more than our reputation on the line. Right or wrong, people will see Christ. Are we thinking about Him or ourselves?**

TRUSTWORTHY

- We want people to believe us.
- **We want people we can trust.**
- **God is Truth and the only perfect example of trustworthiness. As God's people, we should be honest with Him and each other. That honesty will begin when we start to tell ourselves the truth.**

WEAKNESS

- We are not as strong as we want to be.
- **Others are not as strong as we think they are.**
- **When we realize that weakness is our common ground, we will find strength in Christ together!**

COMMUNITY

- We will have overwhelming struggles.
- **We can trust Christ.**
- **As we continue to grow in our need for Christ, we will better understand our need for each other. God has a plan as we suffer, to comfort, serve, and grow as we live together. Are we reaching out? Are we letting others in?**