

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 1ST-2ND, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

PROGRESS (2 CORINTHIANS 7:2-7)

CARING ABOUT REPUTATION

After imploring the Corinthians to purify their flesh and spirit, "bringing holiness...in the fear of God," he then asks them to "make room for us in your hearts."

- Paul deeply loved them and feared that some were still believing lies that he had "corrupted" or "taken advantage" of people.

THE AIM WASN'T TO CONDEMN

Like Jesus, Paul wasn't trying to condemn. They were "in [his] heart" and he had "great pride" in them. This is why he was "very frank."

- Though we should use tact, **we often care too much about offending that we soften or neglect painful truths. This is selfish and does no good in the long run.**

"CONFLICTS ON THE OUTSIDE, FEARS WITHIN"

While Paul was in Macedonia (north) visiting other churches and going through opposition from others and internal fears, he sent Titus to Corinth to collect money for Christians experiencing a famine and to deliver a letter.

- In all the tension, **"God, Who comforts the downcast,"** helped Paul endure.

THERE SEEMS TO BE A TURNAROUND!

Though Paul was going through hard times, Titus gave an encouraging report that the Corinthians still cared for him. This encouraged him and he "overflow[ed] with joy."

- **Through multiple communications, visits, stress, and work,** Paul sees **change in many of the people he loves.**

PROGRESS TAKES EFFORT

We're saved by Jesus' work, not ours. But we are then called to **put effort into our faith** (Philippians 2:12) **because we're "created in Christ Jesus for good works"** (Ephesians 2:10) **that help us and others.**

- **To see change in ourselves and others we must be honest, patient, persistent, and prayerful.**

HEALTHY GRIEF (2 CORINTHIANS 7:8-13A)

"I DON'T REGRET IT"

Paul knew that his first letter to the Corinthians hurt a lot of feelings. He felt like a parent who hated having to discipline his kids, but also **thankful the grief led to repentance.**

- Discipline is never fun, but **if we truly care for others, we will be willing to exercise tough love that honors God** (Revelation 3:19).

TWO KINDS OF GRIEF

V. 10 says, **"godly grief** produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret." **If we will humble ourselves when the truth hurts and exposes our weaknesses and faults, we will be saved and live a life without regret.**

- God often uses grief as a mechanism to get our attention. Do we correctly respond?
- V. 10 also says, **"worldly grief** produces death." When the truth exposes our faults, but **we grieve because we feel restricted because we have actually fallen in love with our sin, we refuse repentance and continue down a road that leads to destruction.**

"THE ONE WHO DID WRONG"

In 1 Corinthians, Paul addresses an incestual relationship within the church. Paul wanted the church to know his letter wasn't about just an isolated event but about the overall health of their faith.

- **If our faith isn't healthy, there is no limit to the depths we can sink.**

WANTING TO HAVE OUR HEARTS ALIGNED

We will all experience grief and pain. We need to make sure we respond with humbly asking God, **"What am I to learn during this time?"**

- When we humbly look to God and ask Him to align our hearts and give us understanding, we will grow and flourish.

CONFIDENCE (2 CORINTHIANS 7:13B-16)

"HIS SPIRIT WAS REFRESHED BY YOU"

Paul was overjoyed that Titus had a good interaction with the Corinthians because he had vouched for the character and potential of the church in Corinth.

- Vouching for others can be risky. **Before we recommend someone, we must be confident of their character.**

OBEDIENCE THAT RESONATES

The eventual humility and obedience to God from the Corinthians impacted Titus so much that he fell in love with them as Paul had.

- **Godly love does miraculous things. When we obediently love and serve others it starts a cascading reaction that touches people we may not encounter until eternity.**

OBEDIENCE ALSO YIELDS CONFIDENCE

Paul "rejoice[s]" because he now has "complete confidence" in the salvation of the majority of the church in Corinth because they were submitting to God's Word.

- **True confidence in salvation comes through knowing and obeying the commands and principles of God.**

IF WE ARE TO MAKE PROGRESS

- If we are to build bridges with others and see lives changed, **we must biblically love, be vulnerable, and speak hard truths without condemnation.**
- Whether with others or ourselves, progress always takes **effort, communication, honesty, patience, and persistence.**

THE TRUTH FOSTERS GRIEF

- When we hear truth, it will either produce **"godly grief"** because we've wronged God and others, driving us to repentance, or we will experience **"worldly grief"** because we have fallen in love with our sin and feel restricted by the truth. This will lead us further down a path of destruction.

OBEDIENCE HAS MONUMENTAL POWER

- When we live in **obedience** to God's commands and principles, **we reap the benefits (Fruit, Gifts, promises) of a relationship with the Creator.**
- Our faithfulness will lead to others being faithful. This results in **a cascading effect that touches countless lives overtime.**

WHAT AM I TO LEARN DURING THIS TIME?

- In order to live a fulfilling, deep, and meaningful life, **we must humble ourselves and seek to align our hearts and minds to God.**
- Being in alignment with God doesn't isolate us from hardships or grief, but **if we're wise, we will ask God in our confusing times, "What am I to learn from this experience?"**