

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 2ND, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

## REVERENCE (2 CORINTHIANS 7:1-3)

### "SO THEN..."

In 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Paul wrote about a conditional promise from God to "welcome [us]" and be "a Father to [us]," if we "cleanse ourselves from every impurity of the flesh and spirit."

- **If we separate ourselves from worldly thinking and acting, we are promised a closer relationship with God.**

## HOLINESS AND THE "FEAR OF GOD"

God wants us to live in holiness—to separate ourselves from the ways of the world. But **when one loses the "fear of God" they no longer strive to live in contrast to the world because they don't think their actions have eternal consequences.**

- **Who do we depend on? Do we live in holiness and reverence of God?**

### "MAKE ROOM FOR US IN YOUR HEARTS."

Paul loved these people (2 Corinthians 6:11-13) and wanted them to open their hearts so they could see the truth. But they gave their hearts to the world and false teachers and there was little to no room to see and receive truth.

- **We need to intentionally make room for Jesus.** We will believe lies and miss the truth if our lives are crowded with garbage.

## COMFORT (2 CORINTHIANS 7:4-7)

### TROUBLED AND DISCOURAGED

Paul's life in ministry was difficult. Nearly everywhere Paul went, he faced opposition. He experienced "conflicts on the outside" (conflict with enemies of the gospel and worldly-minded Christians) and "fears within" (stress and anxiety of ministry).

- **Following Jesus isn't easy. We need God's comfort in the hard times.**

### "BUT GOD, WHO COMFORTS THE DOWNCAST..."

In 2 Corinthians 1:3, Paul declared that God is the God of all comfort. Here, Paul experienced God's comfort through the coming of Titus (community). He acknowledged that God had intervened to care for him.

- **Where do we look for encouragement and comfort? God will provide everything we need, including community.**

## COMFORTED BY THEIR RESPONSE

Paul had feared that the Corinthians resented him because of his sharp rebukes, but Titus told Paul about their "deep longing...sorrow, and...zeal" for him. This caused Paul to "[re]joice" even more."

- **Speaking truth in love is difficult** (truth can be painful), **but it is worth it because it can lead to true repentance.**

## REPENTANCE (2 CORINTHIANS 7:8-12)

### MIXED FEELINGS

Paul's letter (sharp rebukes) delivered by Titus had caused grief in the church and Paul had mixed feelings about this. He did not regret it, but if he did have any regrets, it was "only for a while."

- Discipline isn't fun, but it is a necessary part of sanctification (Hebrews 12). **How do we respond to God's discipline?**

### "YOUR GRIEF LED TO REPENTANCE..."

One can be sorry for their sin without repenting from their sin. Grief describes a feeling, but **repentance means turning away from sin and taking steps toward God.**

- Godly grief produces repentance (Peter), while worldly grief produces death (Judas). **One's response to the grief will show whether it is godly or worldly.**

## THE FRUIT OF TRUE REPENTANCE

Godly grief produces, and repentance shows: diligence (to stay turned around), a desire to clear yourselves (bringing sin to God), indignation (anger at sin), and fear (fear of God and fear of sin and our own weakness).

- "In every way you showed yourselves to be pure in this matter." **It wasn't about words or feelings, but actions.**
- Godly grief produces, and repentance shows: deep longing (longing for more of God), zeal (passion for God and against the sin), and justice (no longer trying to protect oneself, but a desire to see the sin avenged).
- "In every way you showed yourselves to be pure in this matter." **It wasn't about words or feelings, but actions.**

## REFRESHED (2 CORINTHIANS 7:13-16)

### TITUS' SPIRIT WAS REFRESHED

Titus was Paul's trusted servant and he also suffered for the gospel. Titus was probably tired and discouraged, too. His spirit was refreshed by the Corinthians' reaction.

- We must not grow weary in doing good (2 Thessalonians 3:13). **Do we believe that God can "refresh" our spirit? How can our obedience be a "refreshment" to others?**

## TITUS' AFFECTION TOWARD THE CORINTHIANS

Paul assures them that Titus loves them more than ever now. Titus may have seen a lot of ugliness when they received the letter. He also saw a lot of beauty when they repented and their lives were transformed.

- We need to walk with people in all stages of life. **When we hesitate to love people, consider how God loves us** (Romans 5:8).

## PAUL HAD COMPLETE CONFIDENCE

Paul ends with an encouraging statement of his "complete confidence" in them. His confidence came because they received God's Word, obeyed, repented from their sins, and were living lives connected to God.

- **Could Paul say that he has complete confidence in us? What do we need to repent from?**

## ARE WE IN POSITION TO HEAR FROM GOD?

- Do we have a strong reverence for God? If not, we will live a self-centered, worldly life. If we revere God, we will strive for holiness (separation from the world).
- **Are our lives too crowded with garbage?** We need to make room for God. He will not occupy the same space as other gods.
- When God speaks, how will we respond?

## GOD'S TRUTH

- When someone lovingly shares truth with us, how will we respond? We will experience worldly grief or godly grief.
- **Will we lovingly share truth with people in our lives? It's difficult, but worth it!**
- When God makes it clear to us, we need to lovingly share truth with others. Their response is out of our control.

## TRUE REPENTANCE

- It's not about feelings or words. True repentance will produce the action of turning away from sin and turning toward God.
- **We need to remain diligent to stay on the path toward God and hatred toward sin.**
- When we truly repent, we will have a healthy fear of God, a longing for more of Him and less of the world.

## OBEDIENCE

- Could Paul say that he has complete confidence in us?
- The journey of repentance will involve a desire to pray, read, and obey God's Word.
- When we are obedient, it not only brings us closer to God, but it also is a refreshment to others. If we isolate from community, this will be impossible.

## AN INVENTORY

- Do we have a healthy fear of God, or do we have more of a desire for the world?
- Are our hearts too crowded with garbage? What specifically do we need to throw out?
- Do we live in authentic community? Who do we need to share God's truth with? Will we humble ourselves to receive truth?
- What do we need to repent from?