

II CORINTHIANS 2:1-17

INTRODUCTION...

- **OVERVIEW ...**
 - Paul had 2 main purposes in writing his epistle to the church...
 - 1st - To express his joy at how they had obeyed the first epistle to them...
 - I Corinthians was written as a rebuke to a carnal church - get right with God!
 - II Corinthians was an encouragement and comfort to a church that had repented...
 - 2nd - In defense against the false teachers flooding into Corinth...
 - Warning about certain doctrinal errors / instruction for Christians
 - To defend his apostleship against legalistic teachers who sought to bring bondage...
- **I CORINTHIANS 1:1-11 - GREETING TO THE CHURCH...**
 - An Apostle of Jesus - Paul established his authority over the church...
 - 1st - Greetings to the saints - in spite of all their problems - they were God's people!
 - 2nd - Comfort - Paul wanted to comfort the church - now that they had repented...
 - 3rd - Deliverance - God allows us to go through trials so we learn to trust in Him!
- **I CORINTHIANS 1:12-24 - MEN OF YOUR WORD...**
 - 1st - The purpose of Paul's letters - not to give rules / but to impart grace / point to Jesus
 - 2nd - A change in plans - why Paul did not come when he said he would...
 - He made plans - but ultimately he was flexible to the Lord - **James 4:13-15**
 - Only Jesus knows for sure - in Him all God's promises are yes and amen...
 - 3rd - Working together in Christ - Paul just wanted to encourage the church in their walk!

ALWAYS TRIUMPHANT...

- **THE SORROWFUL LETTER... VS. 1-4**
 - Paul was determined not to come to Corinth again to correct them...
 - He had written two letters - **I Corinthians** - a letter of correction to the church...
 - And his 2nd 'Severe' letter - an even sterner rebuke of the church...
 - He had even taken a 2nd trip to Corinth - and it had been a HARD visit...
 - Paul was unwilling to give up on the church - even if they refused to repent...
 - **Hebrews 3:13** - "Exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 - When we know someone who is caught up in sin - we need to warn them!
 - Sin is devastating - if we refuse to repent of our sin - it will harden our hearts...
 - That doesn't mean God does not keep fighting for us - but there will come a point...
 - If we continually choose sin - hardening our heart towards God...
 - God will give us what we want - He will give us over to our sin - **Genesis 6:1**
 - Paul looked at the church as his children - he did not want to be hard on them...
 - Paul's joy was tied into the joy of the church...
 - If Paul made the church sad by correcting them - he would also be sad...
 - If the church was walking with the Lord - then Paul would be full of joy!
 - **III John 1:4** - "I have no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth."

- No father likes to punish his children - it is the hardest part of being a dad...
 - I was a very 'mischievous' boy - I was always getting into some kind of trouble...
 - Which meant getting spanked by my father was almost a daily event...
 - He would always tell me - 'this hurts me more than it hurts you'...
 - I never believed him - till I got older and then began to understand...
 - My dad hated punishing me - it tore him up to see me hurting...
 - But He loved me too much to let me get away with doing bad things!
- Paul wrote the 'Severe letter' in many tears...
 - He did not want to hurt the church - he wanted to show them his love...
 - Not willing to let them continue going the wrong way - so he corrected them!
 - * **Hebrews 12:5-8** - "You have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD... For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives...'"
 - God loves us too much to let us get away with our sin - so He punishes us...
 - Not because He is angry - or mad at us - but because of His great love for us!
 - God desires to teach us - His kids - how to live a pure and holy life
 - Like any child - we have a hard time believing it is for 'our own good'...
 - But when we are 'punished' by the Lord - it proves we are His kids!
 - If a stranger's child sins - you do not punish them - not your kid...
 - But if your son does something wrong - because you love him - you correct him!
- **REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION... VS. 5-11**
 - o There had been a problem of sin in the church - **I Corinthians 5:1-8**...
 - It was commonly known - a man from the church was living in sexual immorality...
 - The sin was so serious - even non-believers would be ashamed to talk about it...
 - A man was living in with his father's wife - wording suggest it was his stepmother...
 - The church - rather than confront this man and his sin - ignored it...
 - Paul had told the church to remove the man - for the sake of the church...
 - Don't you know that a little leaven - leavens the whole lump - **Galatians 5:9**...
 - The church thought they were being 'loving' by not confronting the sin...
 - But in reality they were allowing sin into the church - endangering them all...
 - When sin goes unchecked it encourages others to sin...
 - Stand outside and look up - see how long it takes for others to look up too...
 - The power of example is amazing - people tend to follow - good or bad...
 - It only takes a 'little' mud to make a glass of water dirty...
 - A little sin can quickly spread out and infect a whole family or church!
 - The man was to be turned over to satan - so he might be saved...
 - We learned as a child not to touch a flame because when we did we got burned...
 - It is the consequences of our actions that teach us...
 - By facing the consequences of our sin we learn not to sin!
 - Better to face consequences now - and learn not to sin...
 - Than to live in sin - never have anyone correct us - then end up in hell...
 - o Now let the man back into the church...
 - Apparently the church had followed Paul's advice - and kicked the man out of church...

- It had the desired affect - the man had broken - and repented from his sin...
- He now wanted to return to fellowship within the church...
- But there were some who did not want him back...
 - There was a sense of - 'he is a sinner' - and therefore not welcome back...
 - Ironic because the church was just as guilty as this man - just with different sin...
 - Perhaps they felt less guilty if they focused on the mistakes of someone else...
 - People like to remind us of our mistakes - point out our flaws...
 - More often than not to hide their own mistakes and shortcomings!
 - But God doesn't hold onto our past - He removes/forgets our sin - **Psalms 103:12**
 - It doesn't matter how many times we make a mistake - if we are willing to repent...
 - God is ALWAYS willing to take us back - ready to receive us with open arms!
- Being kicked out of the church was punishment enough...
 - There is a difference between conviction and condemnation...
 - The man had been convicted of his sin - and he had repented...
 - But without help - he could become condemned - overcome by sorrow...
 - Sin separates us from God - the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin to restore us...
 - When we repent and turn to the Lord - there is forgiveness and restoration!
 - Condemnation is when we dwell on our mistake - we know we messed up...
 - Instead of looking to Jesus - we focus on ourselves - and sink into despair
 - Conviction draws us closer to God - condemnation pulls us away from Him!
 - Do not let him become discouraged...
 - If the church did not take this man back into fellowship - he might not recover...
 - Imagine if you made a mistake - and everyone at church knew about it...
 - You are already hurting - broken over your sin - ashamed of what you did...
 - And when you show up - everyone stays away / whispers behind your back...
 - Would you go a second time - or would you feel abandoned / discouraged...
 - Forgive / Comfort / Love...
 - Paul gives the church 3 things the church was to do for this broken man...
 - Forgive him - God already had - who are we to hold onto his mistakes...
 - Comfort him - he is already beaten up - start to mend the wounds...
 - Love him - he needs to see the Love of God practically through the Church...
 - Instead of staying away and whispering - walk over and give them a hug!
 - Show them they are welcomed back into the family of God!
 - We are not ignorant of satan's devices...
 - Satan would love to keep a sinner from being restored by the Grace of God...
 - If he can keep someone condemned - beating themselves up - he will...
 - Don't let satan rob the church of a child of God Jesus died to save!
 - If you know someone who has messed up - but wants to get right with God...
 - Reach out to them - represent Jesus - forgive / comfort / love!
- **FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST... vs. 12-17**
 - Waiting for Titus... vs. 11-13
 - After Paul left Ephesus - on his way up to Macedonia he stopped in Troas...
 - He preached the Gospel there - and God opened a door - **Revelation 3:8**

- Apparently there were many who were responding to the Gospel message...
- It would have been reasonable then to assume Paul would have stayed there...
- But Paul had no rest in his spirit...
 - Paul had sent Titus from Ephesus to Corinth to deliver the 'Severe Letter'...
 - He was supposed to then meet up with Titus in Troas to hear how it was received...
 - Troas is the port city in Turkey opposite from Greece/Corinth/Macedonia...
 - It was in Troas Paul received the vision that led him to Greece - Acts 16
 - But Titus was delayed - leaving Paul anxious - worried for the church in Corinth...
 - Paul went ahead to Macedonia - where he finally met Titus - II Corinthians 7:5
 - There at last he heard news - the church in Corinth had repented!
- o Thanks be to God who ALWAYS leads us in triumph of Christ... vs. 14-16
 - Paul bursting out in praise reflecting on all God had done...
 - The man who had been caught up in sin - had repented and come back to God...
 - The Lord had opened a door to preach the Gospel in Troas...
 - Most of all - God opened the heart of the church in Corinth - they had repented!
 - The Triumph of Christ...
 - When a conquering nation returned - there was always a triumphant parade...
 - Those who had been conquered were led in as trophies of war...
 - Heralds would go before announcing the wonderful feats of the King...
 - Flowers were thrown at their feet - the sweet fragrance of victory...
 - Jesus triumphed over sin / death / and satan through the work of the cross...
 - Colossians 2:15 - "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."
 - Part of His spoils of war was us - and He takes us along with Him in His procession...
 - Announcing as we go to the whole world the defeat of sin - the hope of salvation!
 - The fragrance of His Victory going before us into every place...
 - We are the fragrance of Christ...
 - To those who are being saved - we are the fragrance of life...
 - To those who are perishing - we are the fragrance of death...
 - We smell – whether we know it or not – we have an odor (*not that we need a bath*)
 - It is the fragrance of Jesus – to those who are saved – it is a wonderful smell...
 - Every notice when you walk into a room with believers in Jesus...
 - Even if you have never met them before - it feels like a family reunion...
 - There is immediate sweet fellowship through our common faith in Jesus!
 - They see the cross of Jesus in your life - and the hope of new life / forgiveness!
 - To those who are not saved – it is the stench of death – repulsive / offensive...
 - In contrast when you enter a room full of people who do not know Jesus...
 - They give you a look like as though you smell like a rotting dead animal - you stink!
 - They also see the cross of Jesus - but see only death - because they do not believe!
- o We are not frauds...
 - There are many who preach just to make money - take advantage of people...
 - Paul spoke in sincerity - knowing that God was watching him...
 - His motive was pure - he only purpose was to preach Jesus so many could be saved!
 - But there were many who questioned Paul - false teachers...

- Men who did not want to build up the church - but rather bring it into bondage!
- Paul picks up in chapter 3 with his defense of these frauds / charlatans...