

II CORINTHIANS 1:12-24

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...
 - The book of II Corinthians is the least doctrinal of all Paul's epistles...
 - It contains more of his personal testimony and experiences than any other epistle...
 - 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!

MEN OF YOUR WORD... (3 THINGS)

- **1ST - THE PURPOSE FOR PAUL'S LETTERS... VS. 12-14 (3 THINGS)**
 - 1st - Paul states with confidence - his letters were written with a pure motive...
 - He didn't write in anger/frustration - trying to force the church to do the right thing...
 - Often when we see people making poor life choices - bad decisions...
 - We want to help - we want to pull them back onto the 'narrow path'...
 - But you cannot force someone to change - make them do the right thing...
 - That is the way the world works - but it does not bring about lasting change...
 - Dads you understand this - if you have a child that steals someone's toy...
 - You can MAKE them take it back - MAKE them say they are sorry...
 - But can you MAKE them not want the toy - no - you cannot change their heart!
 - People may do what you say while you are there - but it won't last...
 - Rules - laws - can never really change someone...
 - Rules are a fence that tries to keep people safe from temptations/sin...
 - They seem to be a good idea - and most people (*and churches*) take this approach...
 - Here is the danger - they can only control your actions - not change your heart...
 - * **Colossians 2:21-23** - "Rules are mere human teaching about things that are gone as soon as we use them. These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, humility, and severe bodily discipline. But they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person's evil thoughts & desires."
 - In the end people might think their rules make them strong in the Lord...
 - When in reality their rules make them 'weak' - taking their eyes off of Jesus...

- They trust in their rules - rather than looking to and depending on the Lord!
- Paul had written in simplicity and grace...
 - He had been firm - he had spoken the truth bluntly - but always in love...
 - **Ephesians 4:15** - "We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ..."
 - The only way to exact lasting change was to restore their relationship with Jesus...
 - When you got married - you likely changed a lot of your life 'habits'...
 - Not because there was a rule - but for the love of your wife you wanted to!
 - Rules don't make the difference - it is the relationship that changes the heart...
 - It is God that changes our hearts so we no longer want go the wrong way!
 - If you see someone struggling with their walk - don't give them rules...
 - Instead tell them the truth - IN LOVE - don't let them go on in their sin...
 - Give them Jesus - point them back to the one who can change their heart!
- o 2nd - Paul had no hidden agenda - there was no reading between the lines of his letters...
 - What he wrote to the church - is exactly what he meant - no ulterior motive...
 - People often use 'reverse psychology' on people - trick them in to doing something...
 - You may try and convince your kids that they don't want to eat their vegetables...
 - Trying to trick them into in fact wanting to eat what is good for them...
 - The problem is kids/people are quick to pick up on our little ploy...
 - It does not take long for them to realize what we are doing - and call us on it...
 - And it still does nothing to change the heart - it just a clever trick...
 - Better to be honest - transparent - mean what you say / say what you mean!
- o 3rd - Paul was confident one day they would understand...
 - Some of the church still did not realize why Paul had been so hard on them...
 - But ultimately one day Paul knew he would be vindicated...
 - When the saints stood redeemed before God - because they had repented!
 - When we correct people - in Love showing them their sins...
 - We will not make a lot of friends at first - people don't like to be confronted...
 - When you spank/punish a child - they are never grateful at that moment...
 - 'Thanks dad for grounding me' - 'I really appreciate the fact you beat my bottom'...
 - But later in life - they realize it was done for their own good - to teach them!
 - Our confidence is that one-day people will thank us - be grateful...
 - Because rather than letting them get away with sin - and end up in hell...
 - We loved them enough to confront them - so they could repent - and go to heaven!
- 2ND - A CHANGE IN PLANS... VS. 15-20 (3 THINGS)
 - o 1st - Paul had planned to come and visit the church a 3rd time...
 - His first trip was in **Acts 18** - when he stayed in Corinth for a year and a half...
 - His second trip came during his 3 year stay in Ephesus - **II Corinthians 2:1**
 - At the end of his first letter to the church he told them he would come a 3rd time...
 - **I Corinthians 16:5** - "Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia."
 - He wanted to visit them twice - on his way to Macedonia - then on the way back
 - But his plans changed - he instead went straight to Philippi - bypassing Corinth...

- Some in the church were calling Paul a liar - because he did not keep his word...
- Paul admitted people in the world are like that - their yes and no mean nothing...
- You cannot trust a word that comes out of their mouth...
- People who do not know Jesus - do not tend to value their word...
- They will tell you what you want to hear - or even flat out lie to your face...
- We know Jesus - we need to be men of our Word - let our Yes be Yes / No be No!
- **Matthew 5:37** - "Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one."
- o 2nd - Paul had not lied to the church - he just did not know...
 - Paul had made his plans - but he remained open to being led by the Lord...
 - Paul could not tell the future - he could not guarantee the events of tomorrow...
 - He gave them his 'plans' based on what he knew - but he was flexible...
 - If we try and rely on the words/promises of men - we will be disappointed...
 - Not that all people are liars - or do not mean well - they just do not know...
 - The reality is we don't know what the future holds - we need to be flexible...
 - We can tell people our 'plans' - but always add - 'Lord willing'!
 - * **James 4:13-15** - "How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone. What you ought to say is, 'If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.'"
- o 3rd - All the promises of God are 'Yes' and 'Amen'...
 - Paul trusted in God Word - God's 'Yes' is certain / His 'no' is a guarantee!
 - When God says something - you can count on it without question...
 - Amen is a Hebrew term that mean - so be it - meaning it will take place...
 - If you want to know for certain what to do - what the future holds - go to God...
 - **Numbers 23:19** - "God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?"
 - God cannot lie - and He never changes His mind - God says it / that settles it!
 - If God promises to take care of all your needs (*as you seek Him first*) - He will!
 - If God promises you salvation through faith in Jesus - heaven in your destination!
- 3RD - **WORKING TOGETHER IN CHRIST... vs. 21-24 (3 THINGS)**
 - o God anointed Paul for the work of the ministry there in Corinth...
 - Paul was chosen by Jesus to be the Apostle to the Gentiles - **I Timothy 1:11**
 - God had called him to preach the Gospel in Greece - **Acts 16:9**
 - God had called Paul to establish a church in the city of Corinth - **Acts 18:9-10**
 - Therefore Paul was confident of his calling - and gave him boldness with the church...
 - When we are unsure of what God has called us to do - we become timid/shy...
 - If you are not sure if God is calling to teach a Bible study - you have no confidence...
 - In contrast when we are convinced of God's calling on our life - we become bold...
 - Not because of our abilities or talents - but because we know God is with us...
 - How do you know what your calling is...
 - Not sure of your calling - want to find out what purpose God has given to you...

- Step out and try – try to teach / try to evangelize / try to help...
- If it does not work – if there is no fruit – then try something else!
- If you try and teach and everyone falls asleep - that may not be your calling...
- But keep in mind it takes time to grow in any calling - you're not perfect in a day...
- When God has called us – we will not be the only one to notice...
- o God has sealed the saints - giving the Holy Spirit as a guarantee...
 - The saint in Corinth were sealed - signed - and soon to be delivered...
 - Paul had absolute confidence the saints in Corinth were saved...
 - **Ephesians 1:13-14** - "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."
 - If you want to get married - you give for future wife an engagement ring...
 - It is the guarantee - the promise to her that you will for sure marry her...
 - Jesus bought and paid for us with the cross - **I Corinthians 6:20**
 - And He has gave us His Holy Spirit - as a 'down payment'...
 - It's His guarantee He will be back for us to finish the work of us as His church!
 - Until that time - until we are in heaven - He 'seals' us with His Spirit...
 - It is the same 'seal' God uses to bind satan for 1000 years - **Revelation 20:3**
 - We are sealed - safe & sound - till the day we arrive in heaven as God's people!
- o With God as Paul's witness...
 - The reason Paul did not come was to spare the church another severe rebuke...
 - He knew they needed to be corrected - but a letter was the better way...
 - Then once he arrived it would not be in correction - but as a reunion!
 - If you are always correcting - people become weary - they dread seeing you...
 - It shuts them down so they are not even willing to listen to what you say...
 - There must be a balance between correction and encouragement...
 - Not that Paul was there to tell them how to live their lives...
 - He could not live the believer's lives for them - but he could help them out...
 - We are not God's policemen - we are not here to make anyone do anything...
 - We should never tell someone they have to go to church / read their Bible...
 - We should not tell someone they cannot drink - or gamble at cock fights...
 - The more you tell them - the more likely they are to do it!
 - Don't tell them - instead help them - encourage them in Jesus!