

2 Corinthians 1:15-2:4 Absence Should Make the Heart Grow Fonder!

In Acts 18 we read where Paul had gone to Corinth A) Like most cities Paul faced opposition there from the Jews - - however there was a bright spot – Crispus the leader of the Synagogue got saved

B) Encouraging sign when the head religious guy in the city – accepts Christ.

C) But this caused an uproar and People were once again out to get Paul.

1) So that night Paul obviously feeling a bit discouraged and afraid – tough time sleeping

That night the Lord appeared to Paul in a vision and told him Acts 18:9-11

"Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."

A) There are Many I am drawing and calling – they just don't know it yet

B) Great word: Our city – Your work – Don't be afraid – Preach share etc

C) Well Paul was encouraged – so much so that he ended up staying 1 1/2 there in Corinth –

1) His 2nd longest pastorate

But after he left Paul got word that the Church in Corinth was having some problems

A) There **was division** pp sidetracked being focused on men – I am of Paul Appollos – Peter

B) They were **suing** one another instead of settling things in the Church

C) The Church was **famous for fornication** and sexual immorality

1) So much so that there was even one man who was sleeping with his mother in law

D) The Church just **tolerated his sin** – even though it was very blatant

E) **Not giving real worth to communion**

1) They would come together for communion and a love feast and some pp were eating all the food – drunk

F) **Abusing the gifts** – not in order

So there were a lot of Problems in the Church at Corinth

A)Paul might have been tempted not to own them – Paul didn't you start that Church –

B)No another Paul – Peter Paul and Mary

So in 1st Corinthians Paul wrote to challenge them sternly about those Problems –

A)At first the Corinthians didn't receive Paul's exhortation very well-they were mad

B)But now there has been some yielding – to what Paul had to say.

C)They have dealt with things – they have taken care of the sin in their midst.

D)But there were still those in the Church who were critical of Paul

One beef the Critics had against Paul was he hadn't come to see them yet.

A)Paul had told them in his planning that it was if the Lord permitted him to come

B)But he in fact told them he wanted to come to see them twice – once on his way to Macedonia and then on his way back after stopping in Troas

C)So it was on his heart to see them twice – to impart to them a double blessing

D)But his plans got changed and his critics interpreted that to mean that Paul really doesn't hear from the Lord he isn't sensitive to the Spirit

1)Says one thing and does Another

You know pp who are critics usually are critics of everything –

A)So they took opportunity to say of Paul he cannot be trusted – he says one thing and does another

B)So how can we trust his message?

Well it is that accusation that Paul is addressing our text today.

A)It is a heartfelt response to the accusation but in the mist of his response – Paul shares some

key truths and insightful lessons.

15 And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit — 16 to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. 17 Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No?

B) That word lightly means fickle – was I fickle –

1) a fickle person is one who is not able to make up his/her mind

C) Dinner – Order already { Creature of habit I always know what I want

D) Paul saying: I wasn't fickle – I wasn't having a hard time making up my mind

1) I wasn't saying one thing and doing another Yes one day and NO the next

Now in Ch.2v12 Paul tells them one reason for the delay. Open door in Troas

A) God was moving and He couldn't leave.

B) 19yrs ago Mission trip that changed my life.

1) Yugo and Hungary – Spy out the land – do some music and see what the Lord would do

C) Subo Church – Square – Howard – drunk kids spoke English – talked – come tomorrow

1) Personal concert – Howard played – I preached

They all accepted Christ

D) Our plan was to move on to Hungary – my heart was wrenched – Asked Pastor Brian –

1) Go – 12 turned to 30 / 2wks later 30 -100

Pt.#1 Sometimes there is a need for Flexibility

A) We don't see the big picture

B) Sometimes things change – mid stream and there isn't an easy answer as to why

C) Instead of asking why is this happening? – Ask Lord what are you trying to teach me, is there something you are wanting to do with me or in me.

Paul had a burden on his heart to go to Corinth a burden he felt like was from the Lord

A) The TIMING was what the issue

B) God was moving in Troas – He couldn't leave

C) But that didn't make Paul fickle – that didn't mean that he can't make up his mind – or that his word couldn't be trusted.

18 But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No

Paul says Judge the message that we brought to you.

A) We didn't go back and forth saying one thing one day and another thing another day –

B) Judge us by our message the truth that we preached – we preached Christ

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us — by me, Silvanus, and Timothy — was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. 20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

C) Our God is a God who keeps his promises and so we his messengers need to keep our promises

1) Yes / Yes and our No / No!

Great news: Wonderful truth Key Pt #2 All the Promises of God are Yes and Amen in Christ –

A) In the OC Promises had a condition attached to them.

Aa) Over and over again – we are told that if we do this and that – then God will do this.

B) But in Jesus all of the Promises are not if/then but yes and Amen

1) Yes = certain, they are true.

Amen = they are accomplished.

C) See because Jesus fulfilled all of the conditions of those promises. He fulfilled all of the if's

1) And since you and I as believers in Jesus have been placed in Christ – therefore we get all the **THENS**

D) Because Jesus fulfilled all of the if's – all of the promises are yes and amen in Christ

In the OC it was up to you to produce or your were left out

A) But in the NC Jesus did the work completely – so that we get the blessings because of what he did

B) So the blessings are not really things that we receive from Jesus – they are things found in Jesus

1) In Him is Peace – In Him is Joy – In Him is life

Bb)He said I am the way/ I am the light / I am the bread

C)That is why our greatest aim and goal in life needs simply to be to draw near to Jesus

1)The closer we get to Him the more that things fall into place

D)The more we experience of the promises of God being worked out through our lives

1)Key Truth of the New Covenant –

V.21-22gives us another key truth

21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

#3 God establishes us and has sealed us with the Holy Spirit.

A)Now He who establishes us with you in Christ - Note that phrase is in the present tense meaning –

B)it is an ongoing establishing the HS is constantly affirming and establishing us - -

C)That was the experience of Paul – infact he will say later in ch.3 that he is in the process of being renewed day by day

Paul says everyday the HS is establishing us

A)Part of the process of the Christian life – Work in progress – Salvation army letters sowed

Under Construction sweat shirt - window

B)Renewed day by day – that is what God is doing with all of us – Daily establishing – Daily renewing

1)Constantly being established because He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it

C)Not complete yet – Part of the goal of the Church – present everyone complete in Christ -

21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Interesting in John 6:27 John uses this same language in talking about Jesus – we are told there that God set His seal on Jesus

Ephesians 1 Paul said we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise

Seal was a stamp of ownership! Seal on cargo

A) Letter sealed **hot wax – Kings signet ring** – it came from Him and couldn't be opened –

B) **God has placed his seal on our lives – ownership and protection – He has marked you and me**

C) When a seal was put on a item of cargo – it guaranteed that it would get to the right destination

The idea being that the sealed guaranteed the the crate would get to the right port – pick up for Mrs Smith in the Port of Troas – Had Mr. Smith's seal

So when God says he has placed the seal of His spirit on us it is His way of also saying –

A) **You belong to me I have placed my mark on you and you are going to make it to the Destination –**

B) **Holy Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee –**

1) Down payment – or a Deposit on a business deal

C) **Earnest money – I am serious – about this**

Also Engagement ring: I like better – takes it out of the impersonal and makes it very personal.

A) **Not a business relationship but a love relationship**

B) **Guys save up for ring – sell what they can**

1) **Why they are madly in love –**

C) **They will sacrifice –**

D) **Propose that ring is a symbol of their love and of the fact they are serious about that relationship**

God says I have placed my spirit in your hearts as an engagement ring – I am serious about you

A) I am madly in love with You!

B) I am not ashamed to put my mark on you – claim you as my own – Associate myself with you

C) Every scene a girl with a guy – who is just a dork

1) No better way to put it { She loves him

D) You are thinking – What does she see in him?

1) LOVE IS BLIND

God is not blind – He sees all our flaws – failures

A) He knows what we look like without make up

B) Guys always wonder that – go swimming – get that face wet – see what we are working with

C) God knows what we look like without make up

1) Sees the good the bad and the Ugly – He loves us

He is committed to us

D) His love is going to transform us

It is that love that motivates us to anticipate his coming –

A) So in love with Jesus longing to be with Jesus

B) Love that is to motivate us to live Holy lives – because the time is getting short

C) Everything around us is telling us right now that it is time to be sober and to be vigilant

B) CNN – FOX news – Be sober be vigilant – Jesus could come back at any moment

C) The world is freaking out – we need to be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us

1) Whether he takes me or sends for me – My love Jesus is taking me home

His love ruins us for this world – we grasp his love – His promise – of Heaven – Ruins us – something better than this

We have been ruined for this world – we actually believe that Jesus could come back at any moment with a shout with a voice of the Arch Angel – with the trumpet of God

We could be in the presence of Jesus – TODAY

In the blink of an eye –

Amen if you believe that

V23-V.3

23 Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. 24 Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.

2 For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me? 3 And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that **my joy is the joy of you all.** 4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

Paul says we weren't trying to Dominate you.

A) We can't legislate holiness – we can't force you to walk with the Lord.

B) No it was love that led me to write to you and I did so with tears – It broke my heart to do it

1) But I did it because I loved you and wanted the best for you.

C) So Paul says God knew – I didn't want to come to you again in sorrow –

1) I don't enjoy being the heavy the disciplinarian

D) I don't get any joy out of your sorrow – contrary

My Joy comes from your Joy!

2 Lessons in this:

#4 True love doesn't dominate! – Not forced.

A) Relationship – Run { Church or ministry – Run

B) A Ministry is not there to control you – it is there to serve you.

#5 True love will discipline and rebuke even though it is not enjoyable.

A) Paul didn't enjoy discipline !

B) It is a sick parent who enjoys Discipline

C) Sometimes I hear Pastors – I really laid into them today - Run!

Paul said – That was hard – no enjoyment out of that – I didn't want to do it again-

A) God spared me in coming – while still problems

**B) Sometimes in our relationships with those we love we have to say hard things –
TRUTH HURTS**

1) Love is not toleration –

C) But we are to Speak the truth in love

**We exhort sometimes come on rather heavy – reason A) we have experienced the
emptiness of life without Christ**

B) We have experienced the frustration of living for self

**C) But we have also experienced the Joy of living for Jesus because we love someone we want
them to experience that too**

**D) When someone is going in the opposite direction it breaks your heart – You want to
shake them**

God's heart is broken even more!

A) He sent His Son – pay the price – give us life

B) To do a work in us