

"Paul's Love for the Corinthians"

Part 2

2 Corinthians 7:2-16

**Introduction:** A while back in our study of the book of James we looked in chapter 3:1-12 and in that passage James focused upon the subject of the tongue. When we studied those verses we looked at how the tongue is a true revealer of the heart.

The Bible is very clear that the tongue will tell exactly what is within the heart of a man.

**Matthew 12:33-35**

<sup>33</sup> *Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.*

<sup>34</sup> *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*

<sup>35</sup> *A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*

**Judges 12:1-6**

*And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire.*

<sup>2</sup> *And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands.*

<sup>3</sup> *And when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me?*

<sup>4</sup> *Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites.*

<sup>5</sup> *And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay;*

<sup>6</sup> *Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.*

The tongue of the Ephraimites revealed their true identity. The tongue will manifest what is in the heart and if there is bitterness it will be manifest and if there is love it too will be manifest.

When writing about the unsaved Paul wrote in Romans that the tongue will manifest the unsaved heart.

**Romans 3:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> *Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*

<sup>14</sup> *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:*

Now let us get our minds back to 2 Corinthians 7. Paul loved the Corinthians but his critics tried to convince the Corinthians otherwise. They accused Paul of corruption through his message of grace and they accused him of making merchandise of the Corinthians, meaning that he was only focused upon personal profit and personal gain. Paul defended himself against these accusations in 7:2.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 7:2-3**

Paul will now go on and tell of the joy which this church had brought into his life.

I. **Paul's Loyalty**

**Notice 2 Corinthians 7:4a**

Paul not only spoke boldly to the Corinthians when he was with them but he also spoke boastfully about them when he was separated from them. There were many negative things which could have been said about these believers at Corinth but when Paul was speaking about them when he was separated from them he would ONLY speak of the work which God had done in their lives. Some of the negative points about the Corinthians was they had allowed the city to work its way into the church, they had not separated completely from the old lifestyle, they permitted immorality within the church, there were divisions, there was strife and there was very little growth. But Paul refused to spread the negative points about these people.

Now someone may ask, "What could Paul possibly glory in concerning these believers at Corinth?"

There were changes in their lives which came from their salvation. They were certainly not perfect but they were saved and there were changes which Paul could see in the lives of the Corinthians. Let me show you one of the fruits in the lives of these people which Paul

boasted of. The Jewish believers in Jerusalem were very poor due to several situations and therefore Paul had exhorted the Corinthians to give to help meet their needs.

### **1 Corinthians 16:1-3**

*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.*

<sup>2</sup> *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

<sup>3</sup> *And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.*

Now let me show you how they responded to Paul's exhortation.

### **2 Corinthians 9:1-2**

*For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:*

<sup>2</sup> *For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.*

Here we see that Paul boasted of their generosity. Let me give you 2 lessons from all of this:

- 1. When we speak about other believers let us be sure that our words are positive or let us say nothing at all.**

To talk about our fellow believers in a negative way is the sin of backbiting or slander. Paul knew there was tension within the Corinthians because of what his critics were saying and he knew that negative words about the Corinthians would only fuel the strife.

### **Proverbs 26:20-22**

<sup>20</sup> *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.*

<sup>21</sup> *As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.*

<sup>22</sup> *The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.*

- 2. When there is TRUE salvation there will be fruit in the life of the one who is saved.**

### **2 Corinthians 5:17**

<sup>17</sup> *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

**Notice 2 Corinthians 7:4 again.**

Here in this verse we see that Paul was overflowing with joy within his heart even in the midst of his tribulations. The question is, "What caused this joy?"

**Notice 2 Corinthians 7:5-7**

Here in verse 5 Paul is picking up where he let off in 2 Corinthians 2.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 2:13**

Paul now gets back to the thoughts in this verse in 7:5-7.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 7:5 again.**

The incident which Paul speaks of here is recorded briefly by Luke in the book of Acts.

**Acts 20:1-3**

*And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.*

<sup>2</sup> *And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,*

<sup>3</sup> *And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.*

These were the fightings without. But there was also the fear within. Let me explain where that was coming from. Paul was looking for and waiting on Titus. He had sent the SHARP/POINTED letter with Titus and he was awaiting word as to how the Corinthians responded. Would they shred the letter? Would they completely abandon Paul? What would happen to the believers if they continued to lend their ear to the critics? There were many questions in Paul's mind and these were the fears within. Paul was battling depression because there was so much hanging in the balances here.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 7:6**

This verse is amazing! Paul and Titus finally came together and it was God who brought to Paul exactly what he needed. Paul starts this verse by saying NEVERTHELESS GOD. It

was God who knew what Paul needed so he allowed Titus to arrive at just the right time. Paul tells the Corinthians and us here that God comforts them who are cast down.

**Application:**

The words "cast down" refer to those who are depressed. This takes my mind back to Hebrews and what the writer recorded in chapter 5.

**Hebrews 5:1-4**

*For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:*

<sup>2</sup> *Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*

<sup>3</sup> *And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.*

<sup>4</sup> *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

This is a list of qualifications for the high priest of the Old Testament and one of the qualifications was they had to be able to identify with the common man. So the question of the Hebrews would have been, "How can Jesus, who is the Son of God, relate to the common man?" The writer of Hebrews then goes on to answer that question.

**Hebrews 5:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;*

<sup>8</sup> *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*

Jesus was the Son of God but He did not receive special treatment. He learned His OBEDIENCE by the things which He suffered. Let me explain what this means. Jesus was NOT born a sinner so He was obedient all of His life. But the Father wanted Him to be able to identify with us in the times of heartache and trials so the Father allowed Him to feel the pressures of life just as we do and it was under the pressure that He had to walk in obedience. So He learned what it is to walk in obedience while feeling the pressures of life and now he can relate to us in the times of pressure.

There is another verse that carries the same thought.

**Hebrews 2:10**

<sup>10</sup> For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation **perfect through sufferings**.

Jesus was made PERFECT in experience by what He suffered so that He can relate to what we face in life. I give you all of this to help us to see that God knows exactly what we need when we are weary and weak.

In Paul's situation he brought Titus along at just the right time. But there was more.

Notice 2 Corinthians 7:7

Titus not only showed up but he showed up with good news. The Corinthians had accepted the letter and had a change of mind concerning Paul. This was also a great comfort to Titus which he then passed on to Paul. All that Paul experienced when Titus showed up is a living picture of what is recorded in chapter 1.

### **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;*

<sup>4</sup> *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

#### **Application/conclusion:**

God used Titus to bring strength and comfort to Paul at a time when he was really depressed. Titus made a journey from Ephesus to Corinth and then back to Paul.

I need to point out to all who are of the body of Christ that there is a ministry in visitation. God will use us just like He did Titus if we are willing to give up our time and be used by him. Many people believe it is the responsibility of the Pastor to do all the visitation but that is not what the Bible tells us. It is the responsibility of the entire body of Christ.

### **James 1:27**

<sup>27</sup> *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, **To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction**, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*