

"Paul's Love for the Corinthians"**Part 4****2 Corinthians 7:2-16**

Introduction: Last week in our study of 2 Corinthians we looked at the results of the letter which Paul had sent to the Corinthians at the hands of Titus. The letter was sharp but it was a letter which needed to be sent. Paul regretted the fact that the letter had to be sent to them but he knew the potential which existed for them. The church at Corinth had a great opportunity to reach the world with the Gospel but in their spiritual condition they were far from being salt and light. They were walking in darkness because of the sin in their lives and therefore they were out of fellowship with God. They needed to be confronted with their sin and then they needed to confess the sin in order to get back into fellowship. In order for the Gospel to work in the lives of the unsaved it had to go out in the power of God. But as it stood they were not functioning in the power of God because of the sin.

Application:

Let us all be reminded that sin hinders the Holy Spirit and when a believer is living in sin the power of God is hindered in that individual's life.

2 Timothy 2:19-21

¹⁹ *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

²⁰ *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.*

²¹ *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

In Joshua 7 we see clearly what happens when there is sin in the lives of God's people.

Joshua 7:1-5

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

² *And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.*

³ And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

⁴ So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

⁵ And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

Israel was humiliated because of the sin of Achan and when they went to battle against Ai they had no power and 36 men died. This was the result of sin in the midst.

This is why Paul was so concerned about the church at Corinth and therefore he sent the letter which needed to be sent.

The results of the letter brought great joy to the life of Paul.

Notice 2 Corinthians 7:9-11

The believers at Corinth had repented of the sin. They were broken over their sin and in verse 11 we looked at the results of the Godly sorrow which had made its way into their lives. This now brings us to where we are tonight in our study.

i. The Purpose of the Letter

Notice 2 Corinthians 7:12a

There are several thoughts about the "man who had done the wrong" and who he was. Some believe he was the man in 1 Corinthians 5 who was guilty of the immorality and others believe he was a man who spearheaded the attack against Paul's character. We do not know for sure who he was but we do know that he had caused much pain and grief in the life of Paul.

Getting back to the verse, Paul did not write the letter for the cause of him who had brought the sin in nor did he write the letter for the one who had been hurt by the sin and that was Paul himself.

There is a very important message here which we need to grasp. Paul would not allow this to become a personal battle between himself and the man who had brought in the sin. He did not write the letter out of personal vengeance. Paul was able to see the actions of the man for what they really were.

Ephesians 6:12

¹² *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Paul was able to see this was a spiritual battle and Satan was throwing all he had at the ministry of Paul and the ministry and growth of the church. Let me show you what Luke recorded in the book of Acts.

Acts 2:42-43

⁴² *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

⁴³ *And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.*

The early New Testament church did not have the New Testament Bible so they followed the doctrine of the apostles and to show who were authentic apostles God gave them the gift of miracles.

I show you that to help you to see that the church needed to accept what Paul was teaching because it was the APOSTLE'S DOCTRINE and was also Scripture. So the attack by this man within the church at Corinth against Paul was a spiritual attack and Paul could see it clearly.

Notice 2 Corinthians 7:12 again.

Paul wrote the letter out of love and care for the church at Corinth. Paul manifested agape love to these people. I want to show to the description of agape love in 1 Corinthians 13 and then break it down to show you how this love was manifest in Paul's life.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

⁴ *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

⁵ *Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*

⁶ *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*

⁷ *Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

⁸ *Charity never faileth:*

1. **Love is long suffering.** - Love does not retaliate.

2. **Love is kind.** - Love shows kindness instead of seeking to get even.
3. **Love does not envy.** - Love does not resent the success or advantage of others.
4. **Love does not boast.** - Love does not brag.
5. **Love is not puffed up.** - Love does not consider itself to be superior to others.
6. **Love is not unseemly.** - Love is not rude.
7. **Love does not seek her own.** - Love seeks to meet the needs of others while setting its own needs and rights aside.
8. **Love is not easily provoked.** - Love is not easily aroused to anger but is patient when offended by others.
9. **Love thinketh no evil.** - This means that love "keeps no records".
10. **Love does not rejoice in iniquity.** - This can be seen in 2 ways. First, love does not rejoice WITH someone who has chosen to live a life that is offensive to God. Second, love does not rejoice when someone who has offended us in the past falls into sin.

11. **Love rejoices in the Truth.** - This is the flipside of the previous characteristic. Agape love cannot rejoice in that which is an offense to God.

12. **Love beareth all things.** - Here is Vines definition of this phrase,

"To cover over with silence, to keep secret, to hide, conceal, of the errors and faults of others"

The idea here is that love will never uncover the sins of others. Love will bear the pain that it feels but it will never uncover something about someone else that would do damage to their character.

13. **Love believes all things** - This does not mean that love is gullible but it means that love sees the positives in someone's life. Love does not focus upon the negatives seen in someone's life but love is able to see the positives and believes in the potential of that person.

14. **Love hopes all things.**

Let me back up to the previous point to help you to grasp this characteristic. As love continues to believe all things which means it holds on to the positives within a person's life and the years pass by but we see no "change" within their lives our belief can begin to grow thin. That is where hope comes in. Hope is the deep down refusal to never give up. Hope holds on to the Truth of God's Word. Let me show you what hope holds to.

15. Love endures all things.

When love has covered all things and when it has believed all things and when it has hoped all things but there is still nothing but darkness to be faced in the situation then love endures all things. No matter what it is that love faces it will endure all things.

This was all seen in Paul's love for the Corinthians. The subject of "LOVING ONE ANOTHER" is one which is spoken of over and over in God's Word.

The phrase, "Love one another" is used 19 times in the New Testament.

John 13:34-35

³⁴ *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

³⁵ *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

John 15:12-17

¹² *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

¹³ *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

¹⁴ *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

¹⁵ *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

¹⁶ *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

¹⁷ *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

These are just a few of the references but from these we can see that our Lord commanded that we are to love one another and that is exactly what Paul practiced. Because of his love for these people they were restored back into fellowship with him and with the Lord. Paul refused to give up on them.

Notice 2 Corinthians 7:13-16

There are 2 points we need to see in these verses.

1. The source of Paul's joy.

The results of the letter brought great joy to Paul and to Titus because the Corinthians had repented of their sin. I point this out because we need to be reminded that Paul's joy was not in this world. Paul's joy was in the Lord. Let me show you the words of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah 8:10

¹⁰ Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

Paul found his joy in serving the Lord and in seeing God at work in his life and in the lives of others.

Application:

Too many believers today look in the wrong place for joy. It is not found in the world but it is found in serving God and living a life of devotion to the Lord.

John 15:1-5, 11

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

² Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

³ Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

¹¹ These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Walking in fellowship and serving the Lord is where TRUE JOY is found.

John 10:9-10

⁹ *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

¹⁰ *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

2. The forgiveness of Paul.

Paul never held this situation against the Corinthians. He told them he had confidence in them in ALL things. When the sin was addressed and confessed he did not use it against them later. He left it in the past where it needed to stay.

Conclusion:

Love is so important in the church. We live in a day when Satan is leading many into apostasy and he would love nothing more than to also cause division within the church. If we walk in the Spirit then agape love will flow from our hearts out to those around us.