

"Paul and His Critics"

Part 4

2 Corinthians 10:1-13:10

Introduction: In our study of 2 Corinthians we have been looking at 2 Corinthians 10:7-18 and it is in these verses that we are learning how to discern between a true messenger of God and a false teacher. Let me quickly review what we have looked at so far.

I. Discernment of Bible Teachers

1. Research his background!!!

Notice 2 Corinthians 10:7a

2. Examine his testimony!!!

Notice 2 Corinthians 10:7b

3. They will edify with their ministry.?

Notice 2 Corinthians 10:8

This brings us to where we are in our study tonight.

4. They will have love and compassion for the people.

Notice 2 Corinthians 10:9-10

The critics of Paul accused him of using his letters to intimidate the Corinthians. They saw within him what they considered to be a weakness when he was present with them but what they were seeing was not weakness but it was meekness, compassion and love for these people. We this in chapter 7.

2 Corinthians 7:2-9

² *Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.*

³ *I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.*

⁴ *Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.*

⁵ For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.

⁶ Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

⁷ And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

⁸ For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

⁹ Now I rejoyce, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

Paul loved these people so much that when they believed the lies of the false teachers his heart was broken and he longed to see the fellowship between himself and the Corinthians restored. He wrote the "LOST LETTER" which was very sharp and pointed but he had no pleasure in writing the letter. His heart was broken because he had to be so firm with the Corinthians.

Paul had great compassion for the Corinthians and he also had love. It was the combination of the love and compassion which caused him to be firm at times. The critics viewed his firm words as a way to terrify the people but that was far from the truth. He did not wish to terrify but to correct the Corinthians for their own good.

Leviticus 19:17

¹⁷ Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: **thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.**

Application:

True messengers of God are going to be people who have compassion and love for the people whom God has entrusted into their care. The messenger of the Lord should be a man who is controlled by the Spirit and therefore Christ will be manifest in his life. With that said let me show you some verses from Hebrews pertaining to the qualifications of the high priest.

Hebrews 5:1-2

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:

² **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.

I want you to see how Vines defines the word "**compassion**" here because this will help us.

"to treat with mildness, or moderation, to bear gently with". The idea is that of not being unduly disturbed by the faults and ignorance of others;

Now let me explain what this means. The high priest was a man who was to be able to have compassion upon those who were facing difficulties in their lives. In other words, he was NOT to be a man who was critical of the people NOR was he to be a man who really did not care what someone was going through. He was to be a man who could feel the pain and the hurt of the people and at the same time be someone who provided stability for them in the midst of the storms. Back to Vines definition, he had to be able to "GENTLY BEAR" the burdens and the faults of those whom he ministered for and to.

I need to take a moment and apply this to our Great High Priest Jesus Christ. The word "**compassion**" here in 5:2 now causes Hebrews 2:17-18 to take on an entirely different thought.

Hebrews 2:17-18

¹⁷ *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a **merciful** and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

¹⁸ *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

Jesus is so tenderhearted toward you and me that when we fall to temptation He does not criticize us but He instead comes to our aid to restore us. That is a Merciful High Priest. We see this in action with Jesus and Peter.

Luke 22:31-32

³¹ *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:*

³² *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art **converted**, strengthen thy brethren.*

The word "converted" means "to turn around".

Matthew 26:73-74

⁷³ *And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.*

⁷⁴ *Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.*

Luke 22:61

⁶¹ *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

Matthew 26:75

⁷⁵ *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.*

Peter was broken because of his sin. Now let me show you what happened after the resurrection. Now notice the words of the 2 Emmaus disciples.

Luke 24:33-34

³³ *And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,*

³⁴ *Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.*

Let me take you back to Hebrews 5:2 again.

Hebrews 5:2

² 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.

The high priest had to be able to identify with two groups of people. They were:

- A. **"Ignorant"** - This refers to people who committed sins out of ignorance. Let me show you how Vines defines the word:
 - 1. *to be ignorant, not to know*
 - 2. *not to understand, unknown*

3. *to err or sin through mistake, to be wrong*

This would refer to people who "accidentally" fell into sin or "unknowingly" committed sin.

B. **"Them that are out of the way"** - Let me show you how Vines defines this phrase.

1. *to cause to stray, to lead astray, lead aside from the right way*
2. *to go astray, wander, roam about*

This would refer to people who were somehow led astray. It would refer to people who had wandered away from God maybe by some means of enticement.

The writer of Hebrews is showing the qualifications of the high priest to help his readers to see that Jesus qualifies to be our Great High Priest. As we carry these thoughts back to 2 Corinthians we can clearly see that Jesus Christ was working in Paul and the love and the compassion was coming from the Spirit of God.

I use this to help you to see that a true messenger of God will have compassion and love for his people. He will be firm when it comes to dealing with sin and he will be compassionate when there is repentance. He will NOT be someone whom his people fear.

The next point which we are going to look at is one that really is lacking in our day and age.

4. **They will be people of integrity.**

Notice 2 Corinthians 10:11

Here in this verse Paul makes it clear to the Corinthians and to his critics that he was the same man when he was away from them as he was when he was with them. He was hiding nothing from the Corinthians. He had no hidden sins, and he had no deceitful methods.

2 Corinthians 4:1-3

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not:

² But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

³ But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

Application:

Those who are messengers of God and are led by the Spirit will be people of integrity. They will not live double lives. They will conduct their lives in the public the very way they

do in private. If a man is not a man of integrity his double lifestyle will be exposed in time by the circumstances around him.

Numbers 32:23

²³ But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

Integrity is consistency and therefore when a man is exercising integrity he will be consistent in his life. Integrity is NOT affected by the circumstances of a man's life. If he is a man of integrity he will be consistent NO matter what the circumstances that are surrounding him. Let me show you some examples from the Bible.

- **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego - Integrity cannot be intimidated!**

Daniel 3:12-18

¹² There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

¹⁵ Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made: well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

¹⁷ If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

¹⁸ But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

These three men stayed consistent in the face of GREAT pressure.

- **Daniel - Integrity cannot be bought!**

Daniel 5:13-17

¹³ Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?

¹⁴ I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.

¹⁵ And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing:

¹⁶ And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered and said before the king, **Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another;** yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

➤ **Joseph - Integrity cannot be enticed!**

Genesis 39:7-9

⁷ And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

⁸ But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

⁹ There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

Conclusion:

Compassion and **integrity** are two very good barometers to know if a man is a true messenger of the Lord.