

2 Corinthians 7 pt. 2 v.8-16 Feelings

Let's talk about feelings. Sometimes when we are being brought up in God's ways by God's Word we get our feelings hurt.

Potentially the Pastor or Bible teacher expounds on a portion of scripture (and let's say for our purposes, he does so guided by the Holy Spirit, in love, and truth) -- and what we hear challenges us.

Perhaps our world view, our politics, our deepest held yet faulty beliefs are called into question. Perhaps some secret sin has been hit upon by God's Word that calls for our attention.

Incidentally, the same series of events that comes forth from the pulpit and challenge us ALSO occurs to us in our private devotional time as we search the scriptures.

We can be equally irked by God's word shaping us in our individual studies; but there we can put the lid back on the box and not deal with those things that we deem uncomfortable - whereas in the public realm there it is - out for all of us to receive or reject.

This is the situation that Paul finds himself in with the Corinthians. Having been pulled forcefully into the ministry by Jesus Christ earlier in his life, Paul is charged with the same solemn task as all shepherds - feed the sheep on God's word - whether they like it or not!

William Still - the Scottish pastor explains the propensity for a negative reception of God's word in His book, "The Work of the Pastor":

"The sense of the presence of God, and the cutting edge of His Word, may make him (the hearer) mad, so that he rushes out, bangs the door...The pastor is called to feed the sheep, even if the sheep do not want to be fed. He is certainly not to become an entertainer of goats. Let goats entertain goats, and let them do it out in goatland. You will certainly not turn goats into sheep by pandering to their goatishness. Do we really believe that the Word of God, by His Spirit, changes as well as maddens men? If we do, to be evangelists and pastors, feeders of sheep, we must be men of the Word of God."

So we enter into Paul's reflection on how the Corinthians received his instruction...

V.8-9

Paul was momentarily remorseful that the correction he had offered them in his previous letter, biblically sound as it was, had caused them sadness or sorrow.

But he changed his mind after seeing that they had to go through that sorrow to learn about the nature and purpose of repentance.

Great is the danger to those who sin against God with total impunity of conscience, without ever feeling that they have erred. Those are the

people whose consciences have been seared, their hearts have been hardened. Repentance has become improbable and impractical from where they stand.

Their sorrow led to repentance.

What is repentance? You've heard it called a 180, an about face. That is practically helpful to us.

Vines: The change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God.

IBE: ...a complete and sincere turning to God involves both the apprehension [understanding] of the nature of sin and the consciousness of personal guilt...

Biblical repentance isn't simply, "my bad, God" in that most flippant way whereby we indicate that we do not fully grasp the cancerous nature of sin that we carry about in our lives.

Biblical repentance is understanding that unless we slay the sin with the flesh that we will be dragged down into eternal death, and having acknowledged that fact we turn toward God fully counting on His divine Grace and His Holy Spirit to make us move toward Him.

[Rom 8:13-14 NKJV] 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Sin should make us sorry. If sin does not make us sorry then we need to confess that, and pray for all we are worth that the Lord will change that hard heart of ours - we need to repent.

There is a difference though in how one is sorrowful.

Being sorry in a godly manner v. a worldly manner - what does that look like?

Psalm 51 - all about repentance - David sinned against God by committing adultery with Bathsheba.

[Psa 51:16-17 NKJV] 16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give [it]; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart--These, O God, You will not despise.

[Psa 34:18 NKJV] 18 The LORD [is] near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

The repentant heart is found along with a poverty of spirit that Christ teaches upon in the Beatitudes:

[Mat 5:3 NKJV] 3 "Blessed [are] the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

A.W. Pink remarks: "...the one who is poor in spirit is nothing in his own eyes, and feels that his proper place is in the dust before God. He may through false teaching or worliness, leave this place, but God knows how to bring him back; and in His faithfulness and love He will do so...He who is in possession of this poverty of spirit is pronounced "blessed"...because he is an heir of the kingdom of heaven..."

Repentance is a good word, not a bad word - repentance can be the cathartic moment that banishes the guilt of our sin - where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty!

(9) Suffer loss from us in nothing - by coming to a position of repentance the Corinthian church held on to all that God had been doing in their church.

They had the opportunity to throw it all away, to turn away from God and back to their old selves but they didn't! By God's grace they received Paul's instruction, even though it was difficult, and by God's grace they came to a place of repentance and ultimately their faith was strengthened by the trial.

V.10 Characteristics of godly sorrow

The main hallmark of godly sorrow - it produces repentance REF v. 9 - this is the mark of godly sorrow, the proof is in the pudding.

Leading to - salvation - you have to follow the path all the way up.

Godly sorrow - isn't regretted

On the other hand, worldly sorrow produces death - guilt, depression, leads to isolation, leads to abandonment, leads to death - BEWARE!

V.11 Observe = look, pay attention - Paul uses the Corinthians as a case study in godly sorrow.

Corinthian sorrow, godly sorrow, proves the point - their godly sorrow led to a whole bunch of fruit - it kept them in the fight rather than sidelining them by guilt and depression.

In their godly sorrow they bore fruits worthy of repentance (REF. John the baptist)

[Mat 3:7-8 NKJV] 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

BTW these were "church folk" - guys we need repentance in our lives.

It's not necessarily a one time deal.

In Revelation chapter 2 Christ speaks directly to the Churches and exhorts them to Repent! Turn away from sin, turn toward God.

Yes, when we came to Christ we had our initial repentance moment. But, do we not find ourselves side-tracked from time to time - indulging some secret sin from time to time?

Repent! Understand the density of sin - small amounts weigh heavy on our souls!

Once we have come to Christ we are His treasured children! AND, when we grieve our Lord's heart through our sin we need to repent, show some humility, show some understanding that we are aware that Christ has called us to holiness and we often fall short of that mark.

Forgive us Lord when we fail.

The fruits that Corinthian repentance produced were:

Diligence - a renewed commitment to being diligent in holiness

Clearing of themselves - (apologia) a defense

Indignation - rather than flaccid apathy, the church was indignant regarding sin, sin was an offense to them

Fear - reverence, awe, respect for God

Vehement (define) desire - earnest desire, longing

Zeal - properly means heat, they were fired up!

Vindication - set the wrong things right

Proved themselves - They proved who they were in substance not just in their appearance.

V.12 the purpose of Paul's letter -

What it is not about - not for "him who had done the wrong, nor..."

It's not just about one incident, or one person.

The letter was to demonstrate Paul's heart for the church - that they would know that he cared about them in every facet of their life - and thereby demonstrates Christ's care for the churches and us his children! Jesus Christ cares in all facets, not just on Sunday.

He cares all the time, not just when things are in conflict.

Not only when there's one knucklehead stirring the pot at church, or one sensitive spirit who has taken offense.

He cares always.

V.13-15

Turning the corner moving forward. Finding comfort in a prickly situation. Paul will still address errors, challenge and correct the church - that's part of a Shepherd's job - keep the flock safe, keep them fed.

Titus' report was incredibly comforting to Paul. Titus himself was blessed by the Corinthian church - amazing given their issues.

Sometimes all we hear about people is the bad. Sometimes we forget that there is good - especially in the churches. Especially with the Corinthian church!

This church proved themselves true by serving God's people - by doing good to the household of faith reverently, so reverently that it showed - fear and trembling.

Paul had boasted on the Corinthians as he has noted a few times previously and he was so glad that having boasted on them that Titus didn't come back saying, "what are you talking about, those guys are the worst!?"

Incidentally, if anybody had the right or experience to make such a judgment about that church it was Paul! But Paul didn't spend his words and time defaming the saints.

We could take a lesson from his play book.

Titus confirmed Paul's boasting.

Having met them, Titus loved them more as he reflected with Paul on their heart for service and how they took care of him.

REF. other churches - know them, love them, encourage them. (Lima, Tally, Columbus, Mobile) - we are part of something far larger than these walls.

V.16 Paul's cause for rejoicing specifically was his confidence in the Corinthian church. His confidence in them was IN EVERYTHING. They were capable of living out their faith in all areas - sure did take some correction! But they received that correction and with repentance and sorrow turned to God who is able to make us stand.