

## Forgiveness and Reaffirmation of Love

- Apostle Paul gives us = one of clearest pictures in Scripture
  - how truth / love = must work together in = life of / church
- Setting = deeply personal / even painful = but lessons / timeless
- After founding church / Corinth
  - Paul faced serious opposition / disorder among believers
- Rather than making another difficult visit = wrote **“severe letter”**
  - message filled w/ strong correction / deep emotion

**2 Corinthians 2:3–4** reflects on that moment = “Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears... that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.”

- Notice = **correction / flowing from / love = what was result?**
- When Paul met Titus later in Macedonia = rcvd encouraging news
- Church had responded = not w/ rebellion = but w/ repentance

**2 Corinthians 7:8. 10** “Though I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it... For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

- Powerful distinction: **Worldly sorrow** leads to shame / despair
  - **Godly sorrow** leads to repentance / restoration
- Paul rejoiced = not because they were hurt
  - but because their sorrow = **brought them back to God**
- Vital lesson = lovingly speaking truth = even when it **stings**
  - Can lead to healing
- Paul also rejoiced = because church stood united
  - Where there had been division / there was now support
    - for truth / leadership / and for what was right
- Reminds us / how important it is = to **support spiritual leadership**
- When members work w/ —not against—godly leadership
  - Church becomes place of strength / healing / growth
- But = there’s more to story

- **2 Corinthians 2:5–11** Paul addresses issue of offender—someone who had caused harm in church
  - Whether this = sexually immoral man from **1 Corinthians 5**
  - or another individual = **principle is clear**
- Paul had counseled church to discipline him
- Corinthians had done the hard part—they confronted sin
- Offender had repented = forgiveness must follow repentance
- **2 Corinthians 2:6–7 (AMP)** <sup>6</sup>For such a one this censure by the majority [which he has received is] sufficient [punishment]. <sup>7</sup>So [instead of further rebuke, now] you should rather turn and [graciously] forgive and comfort and encourage [him], to keep him from being overwhelmed by excessive sorrow and despair.
- One of the most important biblical teachings on church discipline
  - **goal of discipline is not punishment = goal is restoration**
- In their zealous response to confront sin
  - now faced danger of holding on to / offense
- Paul warns = if they fail to forgive / they could actually harm
  - very person = they were trying to help
- Think about that = A person can move from sin / to repentance
  - then be crushed / by **lack of forgiveness from others**
- So Paul urges them = forgive him / comfort him / reaffirm your love
- **2 Corinthians 2:8 (AMP)** I therefore beg you to reinstate him in your affections and assure him of your love for him;
- Passage reveals = two dangerous extremes = church must avoid
  - 1) Avoiding discipline altogether** = some churches / wanting to be “loving” never confront sin = But ignoring sin does not heal —it allows spiritual damage to spread
  - 2) Being harsh / unforgiving** = other churches confront sin but fail to restore/ sinner = they discipline / but do not forgive
- Both / dangerous = Love W/O truth = becomes shallow
  - Truth W/O love = becomes harsh
- God calls us to = avoid both

- Paul adds = sobering warning
- 2 Corinthians 2:11** “Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”
- I.E both extremes—tolerating sin / refusing to forgive
  - **Can be used by Satan**
  - If sin is ignored = church becomes compromised
  - If forgiveness is withheld = church becomes cold / destructive
  - Either way = enemy wins
- But when truth / love work together= restoration happens
- Why could Corinthians forgive?
  - Because they themselves had been loved
- Paul says his correction came from love (2 Cor. 2:4)
  - Thru Paul = they had experienced = love of God
- Reveals powerful principle:
  - We can only extend = what we have received from God
    - Forgiven people = forgive
    - Loved people = love
    - Restored people = restore
- If we struggle to forgive others = may be because
  - we have not fully grasped
  - how deeply we have been forgiven
- What does this mean for us today? Speak truth in love
  - Do not avoid difficult conversations
  - But let your motive always be restoration = not control
- Respond to conviction = when God corrects us = don’t resist it
  - Let it produce godly sorrow = that leads to change
- Forgive fully = if someone repents / don’t hold their past over them
  - Release it = restore them
- Reaffirm love = don’t just forgive silently / express love intentionally
  - People need to know = they are still valued

- **CLOSING THOUGHT:** gospel is not just about being forgiven
  - about being restored to relationship
- The church / called = to reflect that same heart
- So when someone falls:
  - confront w/ truth
  - Accept their repentance
  - Extend forgiveness = reaffirm love
  - Because = this is how God has treated us
- And when / church lives this way
  - Becomes what it = was always = meant to be
  - Place where grace restores / love heals
    - Lives are transformed