

2 CORINTHIANS

PURPOSE: To affirm Paul's ministry, defend his authority as an apostle, and refute the false teachers in Corinth.

AUTHOR: Paul

SETTING: 1 Corinthians is more practical; it focuses on the Corinth church's character and their questions on marriage, freedom, spiritual gifts, and the order of the church. 2 Corinthians is more personal; He focuses on his love for this church and deals with the problem of false teachers, whereby Paul defends his authority and the truth of his message.

BLUEPRINT

- 1:1 - 2:11 Paul explains his actions.
- 2:12 - 7:16 Paul defends his ministry.
- 8:1 - 9:15 Paul defends the collection.
- 10:1 - 13:14 Paul defends his authority.

MEGATHemes:

Trial

God is faithful. His strength is sufficient for any trial. He comforts us so we can comfort others.

Church Discipline

The goal of all discipline in the church should be correction, not vengeance. For churches to be effective, everything must be act of love.

Hope

To know we will receive new bodies offers us hope. No matter what adversity we may face, we must be faithful and just keep going.

Giving

Our giving must be generous, sacrificial, well-planned, and based on need.

Sound Doctrine

We should share Paul's concern for correct teaching in our church. share his motivation: love for Christ and people and his sincerity.

1

Comfort

- "Being Comforted by Christ" means receiving strength, encouragement, and hope to deal with our troubles. It doesn't mean we will no longer suffer or experience difficulties in life.
- The more we suffer the more comfort God gives us. Overwhelmed? Allow God to comfort you.
- In every trial we endure, God will always help us comfort others who are suffering the same troubles.
- We need to depend on God and hold on to His promises so that we can be comforted.
- God is our greatest comforter and no matter what we face, we face it with God.

Sufferings of Christ

- "Sufferings of Christ" pertains to our experience of rejection, persecution, and other hurdles whenever we do ministry.
- Christ suffered with His people since they are united with Him (Acts 9:4-5).
- Paul explained that together with his companions, have suffered greatly for bringing "comfort and salvation" to the Corinthians.
- God would also comfort the Corinthians like He did with Paul when they suffer for their faith - He would give them the strength to endure.
- We usually depend on our own skills and abilities when life is easy, we only turn to God when we start to feel unable to help ourselves.
- Depending to God should be a moment-by-moment choice with our need for Him in our lives.
- God should be our only source of power always.

Gifts for Believers

- 2 Corinthians 1:22-23 Paul mentioned two gifts God gives to believers:
 - ① seal of ownership to show who our Master is, and ② the Holy Spirit, who guarantees that we belong to Him & will receive all His benefits (Ephesians 1:13-14)
- We must be real, transparent, and not be ashamed to let others know that you are this.

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2 Rebuke with Love

• Proverbs 27:6 says that we need to rebuke our friends when they are already on the wrong path. If we ignore their behavior and let them continue it, we won't be showing love to them. We must show love by being honest to them and help them be their very best for God. We shouldn't be more concerned on being liked than what will happen to them.

Confront and Comfort

- Paul reminded us to forgive the person once he/she had already experience church discipline. We should forgive, accept and comfort them so that the devil won't have a foothold on that person. If we couldn't bring ourselves to forgive, accept, and comfort them, they might continue to feel indifferent to the whole church as well. There is a time for confront and a time for comfort.
- We must remember that the main purpose of discipline is to re-align, redeem, and restore that person to the fellowship, not to destroy him/her. Never discipline someone just to vent out personal anger on that person.

Uphold the Truth of the Gospel

- Whenever we share the Gospel, it may be good news to some while repulsive to others.
- Who are qualified to share the Gospel? All believers! Why?
 - ① 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 3:5
 - ② Matt. 28:18-20 God already commissioned and sent us.
- God already given us the Holy Spirit to enable us to speak with Christ's power.
- Christ will make us competent and useful.
- We must uphold the truth of the Gospel and be concerned to people who opted for money rather than salvation itself.
- 1 Timothy 6:5-10 We must preach the Gospel with sincerity and integrity and not preach it for selfish reasons.

3 Only God can us

- the believers to whom the apostle Paul and his companions preached were enough of a recommendation.
- The Apostle Paul no longer need a letter of recommendation to certify his authenticity.
- Only through God, one can be converted. No one can take credit for a person's conversion. It is the work of God's Spirit.
- There is no manual or instruction but only a result of God's implanting His Spirit in our hearts, giving us new power to live for Him.
- No one can claim to be adequate without God's help.
- As followers of Christ, we need everything that only God can give.
 - "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" means that if we are trying to be saved by keeping the old testament laws will only end in death.

The New Covenant gives life

- Only in believing in Jesus can a person receive eternal life through the Holy Spirit.
- The 10 commandments can help us realize the sins but can not give us life; it may show us how to obey God, but forgiveness comes only through grace and mercy of Christ. (Romans 7:10-8:2)
- the New Covenant, the law and the promise are fulfilled. Christ has come - by faith, we can be justified.

The Spirit changes us

- Where the Spirit is, there is liberty.
- In the Gospel, we see the truth about Christ, and it transforms us morally as we understand and apply it.
- Through learning Christ's life, we can understand how wonderful God is and what he is really like.
- As our knowledge deepens, we get to know more of God and the Holy Spirit helps us to change.
- Christlikeness is a journey. (Romans 8:29; Galatians 4:19; Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2)

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4 Witness in Truth

- Paul reminded us that whenever we talk about Christ, we stand in His presence. This is a good reminder that we must be careful in sharing the gospel. God can hear every word that we will say, even more the words we refuse to say but linger in our hearts. We must never distort the gospel for our own glory.
- We must share the gospel in truth & love in order to win souls for Christ and not for ourselves.
- The gospel was entrusted to us, imperfect beings, so that the "perfect" gospel would be pointed God's glory. God's power indwells in us & we are called to do this work. Let this not be a source of pride but motivation. They should see God through us.

Purpose of Sufferings

- God never abandons us.
- We may be fragile jars of clay but with God's power, we are sustained, we are not crushed, and not driven to despair.
- All of our risks, humiliation, and trials are opportunities for Christ to demonstrate His power & presence in & through us.
- Just like the Apostle Paul, instead of allowing the persecution to wear us down, we should concentrate on experiencing the inner strength of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:16). Our very weakness allows the resurrection power of Christ to strengthen us moment by moment. See opportunities in our life troubles.

Eternal life: Our Greatest Reward

- No matter happens in life, we must have the faith on the assurance of eternal life. All our sufferings will end. (Isaiah 35:10)
- It is easy to lose heart & quit.
- We need to realize that life is not all there is. There is life after death.
- Knowing that we will live forever with God in a place without sin & suffering can help us live above the pain that we face in this life.
- We must never give up! We are renewed everyday in spirit though our bodies are physically dying.
- We have to look ahead on things that cannot be seen yet permanent. For what we see now may be gone, but things we cannot see lasts forever.

5 New Bodies

- The apostle Paul reminded us that we shall have new bodies when we die and it'll be perfect for our everlasting life.
- Paul described our resurrected bodies in 1 Corinthians 15:46-58 but more than anything, through Christ's work, our bodies will be better than we can imagine (Philippians 3:21; Revelation 21:4)
- Having eternal life with new bodies should give us the confidence, courage and patience to endure anything we might experience.
- For believers, death is just a prelude to eternal life with God.
- This will give us hope to continue pressing on & inspire us to faithfully serve Him.

Ambassadors of God

- As we understand our role, we have a fearful responsibility to the Lord.
- God knows who is sincere and not.
- All of us must give account for how they have lived. (Matthew 16:27; Romans 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:10-15)
- We are considered as false preachers if we take pride in appearance and not in heart.
- We should no longer live to please ourselves; we should spend our lives pleasing Christ.
- Being God's Ambassadors, we must not take it lightly and we do have a responsibility.

We are Made Right with God

- Once we have accepted Christ as our Lord & savior, we become brand-new people on the inside.
- We are re-created as the Holy Spirit gives us new life.
- A conversion is not just starting anew but continuously living a new life under a new master.
- When we trust in Christ, we make an exchange - our sins for His righteousness.
- He has given us the wonderful message of reconciliation.
- For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

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6 Right time to accept Christ

- The Apostle Paul reminded us that if we are to accept God's wonderful gift of salvation, we must not ignore the importance of it.
- Let's not allow ourselves be swayed by false teachings by false preachers.
- God offers salvation to all people.
- There is no time like the "present" to accept Him.
- Let's not allow anything to hold us back from coming to Christ.

Be Firm

- When we become a believer, eyes will be on us.
- Since we are now ambassadors of Christ, everyone will observe you.
- Co-believers will make sure you won't stumble out of their love for you while some non-believers are just waiting for you to fail.
- Don't let careless or undisciplined actions be another person's excuse for rejecting Christ.
- Be firm! We have to continue living and protecting God's testimony in our lives.
- May we have a heart like Paul; he stood faithful to God despite the condemnation and persecutions. He humbly establishes his authority as an apostle and bearer of the gospel.
- Let's not allow circumstances/people's expectations affect your faith to God.
- Be firm in standing for the truth and refuse to compromise.

Be Set Apart

- While we cannot avoid to socialize with other people, we are reminded to be careful and set ourselves apart among non-believers.
- It is also easy to react and voice out on social media but we must never forget that we are ambassadors for Christ.
- Never allow yourself to compromise your faith just to please the world or to avoid persecutions.
- Temptation will always be there but we must always flee from it and resist through the help of the Holy Spirit.

7 Joy in every Progress

- Despite the first letter the Apostle Paul gave the Corinth church, he said that he had never lost his confidence in them.
- Perfecting Holiness may never be easy and the Corinth church managed to prove their progress when Titus came.
- Apostle Paul knew there's more that needs to improve but he commended and was joyful for their progress.
- This reminded me not to lose heart & must always find joy in our progress - no matter how big or small. PROGRESS is still a PROGRESS.

Sorrows that leads to Christ

- God allows both joys & sorrows in our lives mainly because it is for our own good.
- All of the sorrows that we are experiencing shall produce repentance and is part of God's plan for us.
- We should feel sorry & repent for the causes of our sins not just because we were caught.
- May our sorrows bring us closer to Jesus through repentance and not steer away from His love.

Pride hinders growth

- Just like the Apostle Paul called out the Corinth church's sins, may we accept and let go of the pride whenever we are corrected.
- It is difficult to be called out because of our sins however we need to accept that these corrections are out of love and concern from our brothers & sisters.
- Let's not allow pride to hinder our progress in our spiritual growth.
- May we be like the Corinth church wherein the Apostle Paul found confidence with.
- Our open hearts and accepting attitude can make Jesus and the Holy Spirit proud and happy for us as well.

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8

Sacrificial Giving

- Acce~~d~~ to Apostle Paul, the Corinth Church already excels in a lot of things (faith, preaching, knowledge, earnestness, and love); He wants them to excel in GIVING just like Macedonia.
- Giving must be out of willingness & a cheerful heart is more important than the amount given.
- Sacrificial giving means giving until it hurts but we must not neglect our financial obligations.
- Giving is a response to Christ's love and not for expecting something in return.
- We should be responsible whenever we give. We can only give what we have.

We are Rich because of Jesus

- Jesus is God and not just that He has all the richest one could think of but He has the power and Glory of a God. He is limitless and deserves all the best things but, He chose to be poor (a human, someone with limit, He gave up His Glory and Rights as the son of God the father).
- He made Himself "poor" in order for us to become "rich" because we received salvation and eternal life.

Importance of serving in groups

- Apostle Paul explained that it is best to travel & serve the Lord in groups or with fellow believers to avoid suspicion and to protect the credibility as expected by the people.
- Together with fellow believers, we can help each other build good reputation as we are all ambassadors of Christ.
- Fellow believers help us not to claim the glory from our human efforts and still lifts & encourages you up to serve with great joy.

9

Giving Cheerfully

- The Apostle Paul reminded us that our attitude when giving is more important than the amount we give.
- whatever we give, it should be like a gift and not something like done under pressure or out of guilt.
- We shouldn't feel embarrassed on how much should we give; it is how we give straight from our resources that matters. (Mark 12: 41-44)
- God loves a cheerful giver and trust that He will generously provide for our needs.
- We were reminded that we should not neglect our financial obligations and anything in excess from our resources, from God, should be shared cheerfully to others.

Blessed to Bless Others

- All of our resources come from God & He created us to be stewards of it.
- The seed or the resources given to us should not be kept hidden, mishandled or thrown away. It should be cultivated in order to produce more.
- Let's invest on what God provided us in order to share it with others.
- We are blessed to bless others and the Apostle Paul cited that there are results from giving cheerfully:
 - ↳ people who were blessed by our gifts will give glory to God whom they see in us.
 - ↳ They will see how obedient we are and they will pray for us and PRAISE GOD.

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10 Walk the Talk

Compare with God's Standards

Always Give Credit to God

- The Apostle Paul reminded us that we have to be careful in listening to preachers; there are still who tries to steer us away from the truth by preaching false teachings.

- The Gospel can be very offensive and may not say what we wanted to hear but rest assured that it will give us what we need to hear.

- Without Christ, it'll be impossible to live out God's teaching & face this spiritual warfare.

- Do not be afraid to speak the true gospel.

- We are reminded to NEVER compare ourselves to others using our own standards.

- We, as humans, are imperfect and weak to sins; our standard should be

someone who is righteous, blameless, and pure - Jesus Christ. Jesus is God's standard and apart from the Holy Spirit, we are far from even an inch of it.

- We should never call ourselves righteous by comparing our sins & our good works towards others.

- The Apostle Paul reiterated that what he & his group were doing is not to gain personal honor, credit, and glory. They aim to point everyone to God's glory and to honor Jesus.

- We should always be reminded to keep ourselves grounded by giving all credits & praises to God since He alone allows & unallows things to happen. He doesn't need our honor & nothing more could add to His glory but it is a fitting response to the One who is sovereign of all, the Alpha & Omega, the One who gives us our every waking day.

11 Believe Only in the Bible

- The Apostle Paul reminded us not to be complacent in listening to preachers.
- He pointed out that there are alot of false apostles preaching things you only wanting to hear so that they can take advantage of you.

- We are reminded to only listen to sound doctrines and the Bible is our ultimate authority on the sound doctrine.

- We may be keeping and living up our faith but we can also be led astray by false teachings especially if it sounds convenient to us.

- The Apostle Paul reminded the Corinth Church not to allow the messenger be a factor in listening to sound doctrine.

- The MESSAGE > MESSENGER should always be put into mind.

- The content of the message should only come from the Bible.

- We are encouraged not to believe easily and to check our Bible for reference.

Do Not be Swayed

- In our age and time, distractions and noise are left & right.

- Sometimes, those distractions give us the satisfaction that it traps us.

- We must not allow ourselves to lose focus on what matters most because the distractions are crowding our minds already; enough to confound us.

- Many false teachers are doing their best to either twist the truth or make it sound like it's the truth just to make profit out of it - It exploits our faith and it takes advantage of us.

- Take caution and always come back to the Bible to double check what is being preached.

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12 Boast in the Lord

- The Apostle Paul reminded us that he continued to share his visions and revelations he had received from the Lord. though he can continue boasting it to everyone, he did not make any profit for it.

- He reminded us of what he said during his first visits not to boast for ourselves but boast in the Lord.

- cf: 1 Cor 1:29; 1 Cor 1:31; 1 Cor 3:7; 1 Cor 3:21; 1 Cor 4:6; 1 Cor 13:4

- let anyone boasts boast in the Lord!

- The Apostle Paul reminded us that we can never be self-sufficient.

- God will continuously make us humble so that we are reminded to fully depend on Him and in Him alone.

- Personally experienced God's strength amidst my weakness and it was indeed, a humbling experience.

- when we admit our weakness, we affirm God's strength.

- whenever we feel strong due to our abilities & resources, we are tempted to do God's work on our own and that leads to PRIDE.

- God doesn't intend for us to be weak, He intends us to be dependent on Him.

- Like the Corinthian church, we have heard the gospel over & over again. we have already been constantly reminded of what is right and wrong. We have also been guided by other leaders and God-appointed authorities, however we sometimes deliberately disregard obeying.

- We must live differently from unbelievers so that we cannot be influenced by the secular society on how we treat others & how we live our lives.

13 EXAMINE YOURSELF

- The Apostle Paul really did experience a lot of troubles dealing with the Corinthian church. Even though he founded it for the Lord, the Corinthian church still made him feel the need of proof that he really is an appropriate messenger of Christ.

- If the Apostle Paul could have not been rooted in Christ, he could have been easily discouraged and things may not be good. He reminded me not to lose heart and always seek strength to guide and lead those who are given to us (DS group)

- Just like the Corinthian church, we are called to examine ourselves. Spiritual check-up is equally important as the physical check-up.

- I should continue and never stop seeking for opportunities to grow spiritually. We should continue to take active steps to grow closer to Christ.

- The Apostle Paul did not give up on them and as a leader, I should not give up on my group as well. I must keep my eyes on the goal of guiding them to be spiritually matured.

- I learned from 2 Corinthians that it is only with God's strength we could possibly be whole. latch on our weaknesses so that we can finish this race only through God's strength. We are called to be ambassadors of Christ and once we are with Him, we must not waste any minute of it to make Him known.

- The Good News is meant to be shared, lived by it and identified by it.

- Seek to build or help build God's kingdom rather than of this world.