

II Corinthians 2 – 13 March 2022

“Guiding Others Toward Freedom”

Introduction

- *Paul is on his 3rd Missionary Journey (see Acts 20)
- *Paul wrote 3 letters to the Corinthians
 - *I Cor – to seek repentance for their sin
 - *A 2nd ‘sorrowful’ letter (don’t have) (II Cor 2:4)
 - *This letter we call II Corinthians
- *Paul was 1.5 yrs here (2nd M.T.), made lots of disciples
 - *Some of them needed lots of growth & help
- *Theme of Book: The life of the minister: temporary pain & eternal victory
- *Chap 1 Paul taught them how to ‘thrive in the fire’ by depending on the Holy Spirit
- *Now he addresses the Corinthians man that has repented as a case study for guiding everyone toward freedom in Christ Jesus
- *So let’s look at 3 tips for guiding others toward freedom in Christ**

1st tip for guiding others toward freedom in Christ is to love them into repentance (Chap 1:23-2:4)

Read Vs 23

1. Why Paul hasn't come back to them yet?
 - a. Not b/c he lacks integrity or was fearful
 - b. But simply b/c he didn't want to come w/ a hard message as he previously did

Read Vs 24

1. But he's careful to say that although he wants to help their faith, he doesn't have authority to force them to do anything
2. God has reserved to Himself 3 things
 - a. To make something of nothing
 - b. To know the future before it happens
 - c. To have dominion over man
3. There's no religious leader that should force you to do or believe anything
 - a. We've gained authority over death by Christ and it's by Christ we stand today!

Read Vs 1-2

1. We should want to be united w/ the sinful?
 - a. Read Jam 4:10-11
 - b. Humility & kindness is the way
2. Once you give someone the hard news of the need for repentance – there's no need to keep beating them with it, but rather wait for repentance
3. A lifestyle of correcting isn't the goal, but repentance is the goal

Read Vs 3-4

1. Although hard, Paul's letter expressed his love & compassion thus seeking their repentance unto joy
 - a. It's the looking for a loving relationship that leads to repentance (Read Romans 2:4)
2. He wants their sin to be behind them, so there can be rejoicing when he comes to them

2nd tip for guiding others toward freedom in Christ is that all should forgive when the offended forgives (Chap 2:5-11)

Read Vs 5-6

1. “Bible in Basic English” (BBE) says, “But if anyone has been a cause of sorrow, he has been so, not to me only, but in some measure to all of you, I say this that I may not be over-hard on you.”
2. The man that Paul asked the Corinthians to punish in I Cor 5 has been corrected, & Paul realized that this has affected and wounded the Corinthians even more than himself
3. The punishment they meted out was enough & apparently did the job of leading to repentance

Read Vs 7-8

1. Once someone is repentant & sorrowful, we should forgive & comfort them publicly
2. We don't want them to see no way to restoration

Read Vs 9

1. Paul wrote his 2nd sorrowful letter to determine if they would be obedient to Jesus Christ (not him) in seeking repentance & then forgiving

Read Vs 10

1. The Corinthians are the ones directly involved w/ forgiving this man, so Paul honors and agrees w/ whatever forgiveness the Corinthians offer
2. “For their sakes” – b/c he trusts the Corinthians are making the right decision

Read Vs 11

1. Has to be agreement among ALL Christians to take the lead of those directly involved (Corinthians) in forgiving b/c Satan’s method is to divide us
2. We like to say, “well I don’t know if they’ve really changed”.
 - a. Trust the ones directly involved and always be ready to give grace upon grace

3rd tip for guiding others toward freedom in Christ is to give the perfect Gospel & allow it to have its different receptions (Chap 2:12-17)

Read Vs 12-13

1. Paul's concern for struggling Corinthians was even more severe than the chance he had of sharing Gospel in Troas, so he began coming to them
2. Paul knew he couldn't force repentance but greatly desired them to get beyond their sin

Read Vs 14

1. He's using the imagery of a Roman Triumph
2. He's grateful for the opportunity to be the one to spread the sweet-smelling Gospel all around

Read Vs 15

1. Preaching Christ, whether it's received or not is seen as a wonderful thing to God
 - a. To the receivers - it's powerful (I Cor 1:18) & clear to understand (II Cor 4:3)
 - b. To the ignorers - it's foolishness (I Cor 1:18) & hidden (II Cor 4:3)

Read Vs 16a

1. The one & only Gospel is received by different people in different ways
2. As a Roman Triumph parade...
 - a. The smell of the incense was the smell of victory to Romans in attendance
 - b. But the incense was the smell of death to the prisoners in the parade
3. Read John 3:17-21 – uses ‘light’ for same point

Read Vs 16b-17

1. Paul admits that no one is qualified to preach the Gospel apart from Christ’s empowerment
2. But that he preaches the Gospel for what it is, he’s not peddling it for profit
 - a. Wine sellers would water down their wine for greater profits
 - b. Paul preaches like a lame-duck president that has nothing to lose and isn’t beholden to anyone

Conclusion

So as servants of the Gospel, we're guiding others toward finding freedom in a relationship w/ Jesus Christ. How do we do that?

1. Love them into repentance

- a. A little humility about our own sinful tendencies goes a long way to helping others
- b. Don't be eager to correct, but to forgive

2. When the offended one forgives, everyone should forgive

- a. You can't expect more from someone than contrition, repentance and asking to move on
- b. Trust those closest to the situation to see if there's true repentance

3. Give the perfect Gospel & allow it to have its different receptions

- a. There is but one message we can give out that smells right to God Almighty
- b. As you give it out, it hastens some towards salvation, and hastens others towards destruction.