

A Study in II Corinthians

Strength in Weakness

Chapter Two - Lesson Three

Paul's Purposed Visit Discussed (1-5): To better understand this portion of scripture one needs to read back over I Corinthians. I Corinthians was an epistle full of rebuke to the Corinthians. Throughout the whole of the epistle Paul corrects and rebukes them in a whole host of areas. I Corinthians stems from Paul's first visit to them in which he had to rebuke them for their many divisions and contrary living. Though Paul received of Titus a semi good report from Corinth it was only "in part" for there was still more work to do.

Paul chose not to go to Corinth at that time (hence the writing of 2 Corinthians) but sent Titus with the epistle. The reason for Paul choosing not to go in person is so he would not have to be heavy handed with them once again. This would only cause Paul and the Corinthians to be sorrowful. Paul did not desire to cause the Corinthians grief, but he understood that if they had not yet gotten some issues right then grief would be the natural outcome.

Forgive, Lest Satan Get Advantage (6-11): In I Corinthians 5:4-5 Paul dealt with a certain man that had committed fornication. Paul had delivered judgment for this man, telling the congregation at Corinth they needed to "deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh..." However, according to Titus' report the man had repented and sought forgiveness and restoration. Paul acknowledges that the man's punishment was sufficient, the man being much grieved by the affliction of many within the church (6). The Corinthians, however, were not willing to restore the individual nor to forgive him for his wrongdoing. Paul's answer to the Corinthians is this: "I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him" (8). And in so doing the man would not be swallowed up in much sorrow (7).

Given the context Paul underscores how Satan could take advantage of such unforgiveness toward one another (10-11). Such unforgiveness would most certainly lead to bitterness and by this would defile many (Heb. 12:15).

Paul's Ministry at Troas (12-17): While in Ephesus Paul had sent Titus away to Corinth, seeking to meet up with him at Troas and get report how the church at Corinth fared. However, for reasons unknown Titus did not show up at Troas which caused Paul to have unrest in his spirit (12-13). However, even with this discouragement Paul had received an open door at Troas, bearing fruit there before going into Macedonia (13).

Paul gives "thanks" to God for the successful ministry in the Macedonian region, making known the knowledge of the Savior in every place (14).

Paul underscores in verses 15-16 the great responsibility to be the preacher of the Gospel of Christ. For all those who hear the message of Christ are brought to the crossroads of choosing life or death. And who is truly sufficient for such a calling? The answer is none, for it is God that makes us triumph in Christ! Our strength and calling are of God, through Christ (14-16).

It is because of this great privilege of being proclaimers of the Gospel that Paul says "we are not as many which corrupt the word of God but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (17). Yes, Paul held true to the truth of scriptures no matter the cost, even if the cost was his life (Acts 21:13).