

***“Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians —  
Godly Sorrow and the Sorrow of the World, Part 1”***

**Review:**

- ***The Burden of God's Grace Was On Paul for the Sake of the Corinthians***
- ***The Burden of God's Grace Was On the Corinthians for Paul's Sake***
- ***The Apostle's Primary Exhortation is Clear, for the Corinthians and for Us***
  
- ***The Burden of God's Grace Was On Paul for the Sake of the Corinthians***

***2 Cor. 6:1-2***

***1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.***

***2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)***

- “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain ... behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”: ***The reference is from Is. 49:8 and let's look at that amazing Millennial prophecy from the prophet Isaiah. Our study last time was primarily a study in what was in the apostle's heart as he wrote these words. For this is foundational to his exhortations in the rest of this chapter and in the letter as a whole. Isaiah 49 was surely on his heart as he wrote the words before us today:***

***Is. 49:1-5, 8, 13-16***

***1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.***

***2 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;***

***3 And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.***

***4 Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.***

***5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet***

shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

...

8 Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

...

13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

14 But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* hands; thy walls are continually before me.

- *There is little question that this passage of scripture was a major motivator for the apostle. Although that prophecy of Isaiah is Millennial and Messianic, meaning that its proper interpretation is for Israel and the Jews, and primarily for the future Millennial Kingdom where believing Jews will finally receive their promised inheritance, nevertheless it meant much to Paul personally. I suspect that the prophet Isaiah was for him a special example even of his own life, since Isaiah was sent to Israel knowing that the nation would NOT receive his testimony and exhortations and would in rebellion suffer the consequences.*

*In this period of Paul's ministry he was sent to the Jews first and then, when they had largely rejected his message and he himself (for he suffered greatly), he then had gone to the Greeks, such as the Corinthians. So there are similarities with Isaiah's ministry that Paul took very much to heart as is often reflected in his writings. For Isaiah's calling as a prophet had begun like this:*

**Is. 6:8-10**

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

**10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.**

- *Comparing then this with Acts 28:26-27, we cannot but see the similarities in Paul's calling and ministry. And this is from the Lord's point of view, not merely Paul's own. For the Lord had ordained Paul as apostle of the Gentiles and with a special ministry to the Jews as well. So it is no wonder that Paul himself also saw himself in this way, as a minister of God sent forth in the same spirit as Isaiah had been:*

**Acts 28:23-28**

**23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.**

**24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.**

**25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,**

**26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:**

**27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.**

**28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.**

- Let's continue, for now this is all about Paul and the Corinthians, and the apostle is preparing now to give his strongest exhortation of all. But would the Corinthians receive it or would they be like the Jews as they so often had rejected the message of the prophets that they had sent, or our Paul, apostle of the Gentiles but who was sent to the Jew first and then also to the Greeks!

I suspect that Paul had often taught the Corinthians about Israel's rejection of his preaching but the Gentiles welcoming of it during the 18 months he was in Corinth. And the Corinthians themselves were in the center of that teaching, for they were the "first fruits" there.

- *The are powerful and one would think convicting words chosen by the Holy Spirit but reflecting so intimately Paul's ministry among the Corinthians. How can they possible NOT respond as the apostle has so hoped and prayed? Let us see how he now applies this all to them personally:*
- *The Burden of God's Grace Was On the Corinthians for Paul's Sake*
  - *Paul deserves a positive response, he writes, which he calls a "recompense" or a reward:*

**2 Cor. 6:11-15**

**11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.**

**12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.**

**13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto *my* children,) be ye also enlarged.**

**14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?**

**15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?**

- *And so Paul used language very much like those he knew so well from the Holy Scriptures, like Moses. This is what has been called the "song" of Moses, given just before his death:*

**[READ ] Deut. 32:16-21**

**16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.**

**17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods *that* came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.**

**18 Of the Rock *that* begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.**

**19 And when the LORD saw *it*, he abhorred *them*, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters.**

**20 And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end *shall be*: for they *are* a very froward generation, children in whom *is* no faith.**

**21 They have moved me to jealousy with *that which* is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with *those which* are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.**

- ***Surely this must have had a significant effect on the believers there as the letter was read to them once and again and again probably. So, to conclude this section, Paul, as spiritual father of the Corinthians expects a proper reward for his service there, he expects and hopes for their positive response to his exhortations to separate from evil in all of its forms. But to do that, they must receive him back as their spiritual father, for, it seems, they may have abandoned him for other teachers and even other mentors. As he saw it, there was no other way. And so he writes: “O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?”***

***The reason there was no other way is that this was not a matter of legalisms regarding the full keeping of the law as it had been for the Jews under Moses (who had been presented as their spiritual father). Indeed, following Moses as their guide in every way and honoring him was the order of that day. But in this day, as the apostle writes, in this day grace must rule and not law and this was the day of salvation therefore, if they would receive the grace of God not in vain but with the proper consequence. For this is about their salvation in the larger sense, in regard to their proper growth and sanctification. It must be by grace through faith alone even as their initial salvation was necessarily the same.***

- ***And so is ours. Rejoice! His grace is so very wonderful. Israel’s spiritual blessings were promised in an Earthly and Kingdom context. But we have the spiritual blessings and more, although in an often purely spiritual and heavenly context. Praise God for his unlimited grace to us today! And, indeed, may we also receive that grace to a blessed life abundant. In other words, may we cleave to Paul and not Moses, may we imitate Paul, not receiving in vain that grace that has been and is freely offered, but taking Paul’s mantle upon us and always accepting the ministry of that transforming grace in his stead, for he is our spiritual father. Amen and amen.***

#### **Our Outline Today:**

- ***Two Enemies for the Believer Threaten Us All, The Flesh and the Spirit***

- ***But God Is There To Comfort Us In Both Great and Small Ways***

***I. Two Enemies for the Believer Threaten Us All, The Flesh and the Spirit:***

***[READ ] 2 Cor. 7:1-4 “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit”***

1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

3 I speak not *this* to condemn *you*: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you*.

4 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

- ***“... These promises”, what are they, and are they significant enough to be the basis for this exhortation opening chapter 7? 2 Cor. 6:1 is the key here to our understanding...***

***2 Cor 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.***

- ***We must then go back to these verses in chapter 5:***

***2 Cor. 5:14-21***

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

**[READ ] 2 Cor. 6:16-18**

**16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**

**17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,**

**18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.**

- *These were for Israel, of course, but remember why. For Paul was alluding, as so often he has done, to Moses and the prophets as we have seen. For the Jews had rejected the witness of Moses and the prophets and so had they also in Paul's ministry. For the Jews had rejected Paul's preaching in the synagogues and then he had turned to the Gentiles. So now the burden was on them, in this case, on the Corinthians. For they had received the gospel of grace believing, and now the challenge before them was whether they would continue in that grace, whether they had believed and received the grace of God "in vain". Would they be willing to live under that abundant gift of grace. The contrast is so magnificent indeed, isn't it?*

*To turn back to the religious and inherently evil and as he calls it here the "filthiness of the spirit" apart from the guidance and blessing of God under grace, while an option for believers, is to refuse the free blessings of God offered by his grace. Religious systems are always based on works, ultimately works of law, and they can never deliver grace and peace to their devotees. Amen.*

## **II. But God Is There To Comfort Us In Both Great and Small Ways:**

**[READ ] 2 Cor. 7:5-7 "God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus ..."**

**5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.**

**6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, *[The general principle ...]* comforted us by the coming of Titus; *[The application of the general to the specific circumstance ...]***

**7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.**

- *Now we come to a practical example given by Paul for the sake of the Corinthians: Verse 6: “Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.”*
- *But this reminder of how the Lord God had faithfully cared for Paul in this special and very personal way, is used by the Holy Spirit as he inspires this letter to hammer home to the Corinthians how the Lord God, the father mercies, would do the same for them, for “God comforteth those that are cast down”, the general principle being now taught here. But how to apply it? I believe the teaching here is that we must not forget to count the small stuff! In other words, we shouldn’t be looking only for the great and miraculous evidence of the working of Almighty God. For he is working “all things” together for our good! The small things count too. Let’s never forget that.*

**Application / Conclusions:**

- *An application in a larger sense is also needed. Next time, Lord willing, we will focus on the difference, and it is a very large one indeed, between the sorrow which is godly and the sorrow of the world which is at root ungodly, the one leads always to blessing whether in this life or eternally. The other leads to death. For unbelievers, that death is ultimately eternal. For believers, as we will see next time, that ungodly sorrow leaves the believer in life situations that are separate from God’s best for the believer. In particular, there is the loss of the comfort and rest of Almighty God which is the gift to all believers who are dwelling in his wonderful and abundant grace and truth. And this is important. Let’s close by reading some of those verses that are so near and dear:*

**2 Cor. 1:1-5**

**1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:**

**2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;**

**4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.**

**5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.**



**Rom. 8:26-28**

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

**2 Cor. 1:3-7**

3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

6 And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

7 And our hope of you *is* stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation.

**2 Cor. 7:3-4**

3 I speak not *this* to condemn *you*: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you*.

4 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.