



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians

Chapter 2

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Introduction

- St. Paul continues to defend his integrity by explaining that his change of plans was an effort to prevent his coming to them in sorrow
- Indeed, his previous letter was written for the same reason, and with anguish of heart (1-4)
- Speaking of grief, he reminds them that the one who caused most of it had properly repented after their disciplinary actions, and they should be careful to forgive and comfort the person



Introduction

- St. Paul himself was willing to forgive the penitent offender, because he knew how Satan could easily take advantage of their situation (5-11)
- He then reveals the anxiety of trying to find Titus, which prompted his leaving an "open door" in Troas to go on to Macedonia (12-13)
- He will return to the subject of finding Titus and the comfort he received upon doing so (7:5-7)



Introduction

- But at this point St. Paul begins vindicating his ministry as an apostle of Christ
- With thanks to God, St. Paul describes the "triumphant" nature of his ministry, in which God leads him as in a victory procession
- Carrying the imagery of a victory procession a little further (in which it was common to have incense as part of the parade), St. Paul views himself and his work as the "fragrance of Christ"



Introduction

- The fragrance of Christ to those being saved is an "aroma of life", but to those who are perishing it is an "aroma of death" (14-16b)
- Realizing his own insufficiency for such things, he speaks not as those who "peddle" the Word of God, but with sincerity and with an awareness that it comes from God, and is in the sight of God (16c-17)



Sparing the Church (2:1-2)

- He desired not to come to rebuke, but to rejoice with them
- This verse seems to point to a time when he had come in heaviness
- He did make such a visit, probably while preaching at Ephesus, running across the sea, a voyage of two or three days, for a short visit. This visit seems to be proved by 2 Cor 12:14,21 & 13:01



Sparing the Church (2:1-2)

- If someone may say that this is not my reason for not coming since I showed no regret in causing "heaviness," or sorrow, in my Epistle and visit
- But I answer, If I be the one to cause you sorrow, it is not that I have any pleasure in doing so
- No, my object was that he "who was made sorry by me" should repent, and so "make me glad"
- So, your sorrow in a way gladdens me on account of your repentance



Forgive the Offender (2:3-11)

- I wrote this very thing to you: What he had written concerning the delay of his coming (1 Cor 16:5)
- He delayed, having confidence that they would repent, so that all could rejoice together
- He trusted that they, too, would feel that there was sufficient reason for the postponement, if it interfered with their mutual joy
- V. 4 refers to First Epistle, which rebuked their divisions and immorality



Forgive the Offender (2:3-11)

- He wrote sharply, but in great sorrow, not to grieve them, but to demonstrate his love by his attentive care of them and rebuke of their sins
- If any has caused grief: The reference is to the incestuous person named in 1 Cor 5:1
- He has not grieved me. It was not me only, that this man had grieved, but the whole church
- To some extent: because of his repentance



Forgive the Offender (2:3-11)

- I do not want to be too severe on him because he has repented
- The punishment is the excommunication of the offender (1 Cor 5:4,5)
- The whole church took action, thus the command of St. Paul was endorsed by the whole church
- St. Paul firmly commands excommunication of the offender, but tenderly enjoins forgiveness of the penitent sinner



Forgive the Offender (2:3-11)

- The object of the discipline was to save (1 Cor 5:5)
- Since it had had the desired effect, the offender should be restored
- Another reason why they should restore the offender is as a "proof" of their obedience "in all things"; now in love, as previously in punishing (2 Cor 2:6), at the apostle's desire
- Besides his other reasons for delaying his visit, he wants to test their fidelity and obedience



Forgive the Offender (2:3-11)

- As your excommunication of the man was my act, so also your restoration of him will be my act
- It is for your sakes I have forgiven, and do forgive, that the Church may suffer no hurt by the loss of a soul, and that you may learn compassion as well as faithfulness
- In the presence of Christ: representing Christ, and acting by His authority



Forgive the Offender (2:3-11)

- By letting one member be lost through despair, we ourselves furnishing Satan with the weapon, by our repulsive harshness to one now penitent
- St. Paul had "delivered" the offender "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit might be saved" (1 Cor 5:5)
- Satan sought to destroy the spirit also: to let him do so, would be to give him an advantage, and let him overreach us



Triumph in Christ (2:12-17)

- St. Paul expected to meet Titus at Troas, to receive the news as to the effect of his first Epistle on the Corinthian Church; but, disappointed in his expectation there, he passed on to Macedonia, where he met him at last (2 Cor 7:5,6,7)
- The book of Acts does not record his passing through Troas, in going from Ephesus to Macedonia; but it does in coming from that country (Acts 20:6)



Triumph in Christ (2:12-17)

- In Acts 20: 7 we read that he had disciples there, which accords with the Epistle (2 Cor 2:12, "a door was opened to me by the Lord")
- Though a wide door of Christian usefulness opened to him at Troas, his eagerness to hear from Titus the tidings from Corinth, led him not to stay but he hastened to Macedonia to meet him there
- "In the Lord," in His work, and by His gracious Providence



Triumph in Christ (2:12-17)

- His "spirit" under the Holy Spirit, hence, concluded that it was not necessary to avail himself of the "door" at Troas any longer
- Now thanks *be* to God. He did meet him there, and heard news that filled him with thankfulness
- God always gave the victory, through Christ, in the end
- The image is taken from the triumphal procession of a victorious general



Triumph in Christ (2:12-17)

- As the approach of the triumphal procession was made known by the odor of incense scattered far and wide by the incense-bearers in the train, so God “makes manifest by us” the sweet savor of the knowledge of Christ, the triumphant Conqueror (Col 2:15), everywhere
- As the triumphal procession strikes the eyes, so the savor the nostrils; thus every sense feels the power of Christ's Gospel



Triumph in Christ (2:12-17)

- We not only scatter the savor; but "we are the sweet savor" itself
- As the light, though it blinds in darkness the weak, is for all still light; and honey, though it taste bitter to the sick, is in itself still sweet; so the Gospel is still of a sweet savor, though many perish through unbelief [Chrysostom]
- The conquered enemies led in triumph were put to death when the procession reached the capitol



Triumph in Christ (2:12-17)

- So, to them the smell of the incense was the “aroma of death leading to death,” while to those saved, it was the “aroma of life,” so the Gospel was to the different classes respectively
- The knowledge of Christ to unbelievers is a mere announcement of a dead Christ, and a lifeless Gospel “aroma of death”, thus ends in their death
- To the saved, it is announcement of a risen and living Savior, thus ends in life



Triumph in Christ (2:12-17)

- Who is sufficient for diffusing aright everywhere the savor of Christ, so diverse in its effects on believers and unbelievers
- He here prepares the way to defend his apostolic mission from its attackers at Corinth, who denied his sufficiency
- He answers in (2 Cor 3:5,6), "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers"



Triumph in Christ (2:12-17)

- “The many” namely, the false teachers.
- Peddling, as those who adulterate the wine for gain, so are the Judaizers, who adulterated the gospel with ingredients of Judaism
- On the contrary, he and his fellow-preachers spoke the words of genuine sincerity and with a sense of responsibility to God
- We speak in the sight of God who is noting every word which are given and approved by Christ



Conclusion

- In this chapter, St Paul forgave a man who had sinned. Where in the bible was the story of this man mentioned?
- What would have been the danger awaiting that man if he was left for a longer time without forgiveness?
- In verse 9, St Paul says “obedient in all things”. This refers to two acts by the people of Corinth, one that had already happened, and another yet to happen. What are these two acts?



Conclusion

- Although St Paul had the apostolic authority, he put himself as equal to the people of Corinth. What is the reference of that in the chapter?
- In presenting the man's case to the people of Corinth, how did he make sure that they will forgive him?
- "Because we are not ignorant of his devices". What does this verse mean in the light of the sinner's story?



Conclusion

- God comforts His followers during their hardships by different means, sometimes through other people. How is this shown in the chapter?
- What would be the result of enduring hardships joyfully?
- The word of God is effective and powerful, regardless of people's reaction to it. What verse in this chapter confirms this truth?
- God's servants that are entrusted with His word may at times corrupt the word. How can they do that?