

Exegetical Notes – 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

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Verses 5-8

If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. 6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

- These verses refer to a particular event which occurred in the life of the Corinthian Church. A particular person had committed some offense against the word of God and had been disciplined severely by the elders of the congregation for his offense. We are not given enough information in these verses to know who or what Paul is referring to. What we know is that the discipline of the elders worked. The person involved saw his error and repented of what he had done.
- The phrase “by the majority” implies that not everyone agreed with the decision. However, the decision was accepted and the person in question was put under discipline.
- Because the person repented of the wrongdoing, Paul says that he should now be welcomed back into the congregation, forgiven of his past sin, and comforted by it. The discipline should end, and the congregation should receive the individual in love.

Verses 9-11

9 Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10 Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

- Apparently, Paul had written to the Corinthians about the matter. He told them how to handle the matter and the instructions he sent to them were

a test to see if they would follow his instruction. Perhaps we see this model in 1 Corinthians 5. In fact, 1 Corinthians 5 may be the incident to which Paul refers here.

- Paul says that when the Corinthians resolve to forgive the person in question, the matter will be settled for him as well. He will forgive the person involved, too, and the matter will be resolved (see 1 Corinthians 13:5). There will be “no record of wrong.”
- Satan is at work to divide the Church through the grievances Christians hold against each other. Therefore, all Christians must be aware of Satan’s scheme and guard/work against it.

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