

Exegetical Notes – 2 Corinthians 7:2-16

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2 Corinthians 7:2-16

Verses 2-4a

Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. ³ I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. ⁴ I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you.

- These verses return us to Paul's thoughts in 2 Corinthians 6:11-13. There, Paul pleads with the Corinthians to open their hearts to him as he has opened his heart to them.
- Paul says he has not wronged, corrupted, or exploited any of them. The fact that he mentions this would imply that someone, or many of them, have accused him of doing so.
- He tells them that he did what he did out of his love for them. He tells them that he will stand with them in life or in death.
- He confesses that he has spoken to them openly. He has not "pulled his punches." But he has told them the truth because he has pride in them. He trusts that God is at work in them.

Verses 4b-7

I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

⁵ For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. ⁶ But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷ and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

- These verses refer to 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4. Paul and the Corinthians were at odds over matters in Corinth, perhaps related to the situation discussed in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. He had delayed visiting the Corinthians because

things were not good between him and them. He had waited in Troas for Titus to come, hoping that Titus would bring him good news about the situation between him and the Corinthians, but Titus had not come. Circumstances in his ministry caused him to move on without any encouraging news from Corinth. At last, Titus caught up with Paul and the news he brought about the Corinthian situation encouraged Paul.

- Titus told Paul that the Corinthians were as concerned for him as he was for them. This news, Paul says, was from God and brought him great joy. Despite the harsh words and bad feelings, Paul and the Corinthians were restored.

Verses 8-9

⁸ Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us.

- Paul recognizes that the Corinthians were hurt by the letter that he wrote to them. Though he was sorry that his letter hurt them, he was not sorry about it now because he saw the good outcome his letter had on them. Though his letter had hurt them initially, in the end it had produced good.
- Paul is “happy,” not because his letter caused pain but because it produced repentance on their part. Their sorrow over his letter led to their repentance. This was God’s good intention. So they were, in fact, not harmed by what had happened nor by what Paul had written to them (see Romans 8:28).

Verses 10-13a

¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹² So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. ¹³ By all this we are encouraged.

- The purpose of “godly sorrow” is repentance. Repentance leads to salvation. There is no regret in a process which sanctifies us as we “work out our salvation.” The Corinthians have been changed by all this in a positive way. They have grown closer to Christ through it. They have repented and been forgiven.
- So, the purpose of God in Paul’s harsh letter was for the entire church in Corinth, not the parties directly involved in the matter whatever it was. God’s purpose in this whole affair was to unite Paul and the Corinthians together. Paul is encouraged!

Verses 13b-16

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴ I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. ¹⁵ And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶ I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

- Paul is also encouraged by Titus’ experience while in Corinth. The Corinthians had welcomed him warmly. Paul had told Titus that this would be the case despite the trouble between them. And it was as Paul had said it would be.
- Paul is happy, because now he knows that he can be completely confident in the Corinthians.

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