



9/16/26

I love being a grandparent. If at all possible, I try never to have to discipline my grandchildren. Of course, there are times that I have to, especially for their safety. One of my granddaughters, who I almost never say no to, was running down the sidewalk when it was time to go home. She had a big smile on her face as she started playing this fun game. I walked after her quickly... she's only 2... how fast could she be? Well, fast enough that I had to break into a light jog. When I caught up to her, she turned and started running toward the street. I had to put her safety over her happiness. I called her name with a stern voice and said, "no." She's not used to me saying no. She turned to me, got a look of shock on her face, and then started sobbing. The whole way back to my house, she kept crying for her mama as I held her and told her that I love her. It broke my heart to say no, but it was what she needed. It was because I love her that I said no.

Well, it was because Paul loved the church at Corinth that he had to say no to some of their behavior, and they didn't like it. We have 2 recorded letters that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, but he actually wrote 4. One was written before he wrote 1 Corinthians. One was written in between 1st and 2nd Corinthians. Contained in his letters was quite a bit of scolding for some pretty abhorrent behavior. But there was a lot of love. Paul made it very clear that his admonition for their choices was out of love and not condemnation.

In this passage, 2 Corinthians 1:12-22, I'll see that the Corinthians were accusing Paul of lying to them for not coming to see them when he said he would. They were the child who had run into the street and cried when they were called out, even though it got them to stop running into the street and turn back to where they needed to be. As many of us do when scolded, they deflected and blamed Paul and his process. Paul was defending his actions and letting them know how much they mattered to him. A true servant leader doesn't just speak the truth to his hearers. He loves them deeply. He wants them to thrive in their relationship with Jesus because he wants the absolute best for them.

Vs. 12 ~ "For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you."

If I hadn't looked up why Paul was writing, I wouldn't understand why he was talking about boasting. I think they were accusing him of being all talk and no action... of being arrogant. This had to break his heart. (I think I've accused the Lord of this before. I'm sure it grieved Him, too.) Paul said his boast and the witness of his conscience was that he behaved with the simplicity and genuineness of God as His ambassador. Later in this book, he would speak of boasting in His weakness for the sake of God's strength through His grace sustaining him. None of his boasting had anything to do with his own flesh. He would not use plausible words of earthly wisdom, but everything he did was according to the grace of God lavished on him so that he could abundantly lavish it on them. These are not words of an apathetic, transactional leader.

This gives me hope. Even when I am belligerent toward the Lord, it doesn't make Him turn away from me or reject me. He cares. His reproof and discipline are because He loves me. He's willing to speak the truth even if it hurts because He knows that enabling me to stay in my sin is like letting my two-year-old granddaughter run into the street.

Vs. 13-14 ~ "For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand— just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you."

The Corinthians accused Paul of saying one thing and meaning another. They were hurt, even though they knew they had been wrong. He told them that his words toward them were consistent, and even though he knew they didn't understand, his hope and prayer was that they would eventually fully understand. His hope and prayer was that they would be able to boast about him, and that he would be able to boast about them on the day Jesus takes us all home.

He wanted them to be able to boast about him, that he truly did come to them in the simplicity and sincerity of God... that he had no hidden agenda, no selfish plan to take advantage of them. He prayed they would eventually trust that his motives were pure.

He wanted to be able to boast them, that their faith in the Lord Jesus was true to the end, that they grew more and more in their love for the Lord and His word, and their love for each other. Isn't that what a parent wants for his children? I've always thought that it would be good for my daughters to grow up and live happy, healthy lives... but none of that truly matters if they don't know the Lord. I praise God that they do. And now I continue to pray that my grandchildren and their grandchildren will love Jesus with all their hearts. It's not enough to say they are saved. My prayer is that Jesus will be the absolute center of their lives.

Vs. 15-18 ~ "Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace. I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say 'Yes, yes' and 'No, no' at the same time? As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No."

In his first recorded letter, Paul had told the Corinthians that he was going to come and visit them. He wanted to go and share the grace of God with them. But his last visit had been pretty confrontational, and he was concerned that it might have to be a hard visit again. In 2 Corinthians 2:1, he told them that he had "made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you." And a few verses later he said, "For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you." The letter he wrote between 1st and 2nd Corinthians was a hard letter for him to write, not because he didn't care, but because he cared so much that his letter to them brought him to tears.

Even though he didn't go to see them when he had planned to, he did send Titus to them to encourage them. They didn't understand his reasons. They accused him of being fickle. He said, "To say yes one minute and no the next is to make plans according to the flesh." The flesh is about SELF... what makes self feel good. Paul represented Jesus faithfully. Because of that, he never took his words lightly. He certainly didn't make plans just to please himself. All I have to do is look at his life and all the afflictions he experienced for the sake of serving Jesus, and I see that he wasn't about himself.

In fact, right before he started talking about his reasoning in chapter 1, he spoke of being so utterly burdened beyond his strength that he thought he had received the sentence of death. But God's purpose was to teach him to depend on Him even more than he was already. Paul modeled what he taught. He said, "As surely as God is faithful to you, so are we."

Vs. 19-20 ~ "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in Him it is always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory."

Paul proclaimed Jesus with simplicity and sincerity. Paul wanted to represent Jesus with authenticity. He absolutely knew that God does not EVER make a promise He won't keep. I love what Mark Vroegopp shared that his wife said to him in his book, "Waiting Isn't a Waste." He had told her that he was worried God wouldn't come through in a difficult circumstance. But his wife answered, "Yes He will. He HAS to." Why does He have to? Because He promises to. And all His promises are yes and amen. God will not break a promise because He will not deny Himself. Paul knew that. Paul lived that. Paul modeled that.

Vs. 21-22 ~ "And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."

Everything Paul said that God did for him and the missionaries with him in these two verses is what God does for ALL believers.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:3, Paul said, "But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one." He established Paul and He establishes all of us. He makes our stand in

Him secure.

In 1 John 2:20, John said to the believers, "But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge." We are all anointed by the Lord, consecrated by Him for the work of ministry.

In Ephesians 1:13-14, Paul said, "In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory." We are all sealed by the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance.

Paul was not separating himself from the Corinthian believers. He was showing them that He was one of them. I pray that I will never think that God singles out special people and reserves special places for them. He has a place for ALL of us. He consecrates ALL of us. He seals ALL of us.

I pray that I will have a heart for people like Paul's... that I will love them and not just speak truth to them. I pray that because I love them I will speak truth to them, the whole truth. I pray they will be able to trust that I keep my word. I pray that I will know that God ALWAYS keeps His word. Paul made a different choice by not going to see the Corinthians as he had planned to. That's because he didn't have the whole picture. I can trust that the Lord always has the whole picture. That's why I can also trust that His promises are truly yes and amen. O Lord, please help me not to be afraid to speak the truth when someone is running into the street. And please help me not to run into the street. But if I do, please help me to trust You when You tell me no. Amen.

*Blessings,
Jonna*