

October 19, 2025

God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing

The Book of 2 Corinthians – Part 6

Hurt That Heals, Sorrow that Leads to Repentance

Today we continue on our multi-year journey through the New Testament where we are seeking to understand the historical, chronological & missiological of the 1st Century Church so that we in the 21st Century Church can keep the “CHURCH ALIVE & GROWING”. We pick up where we left off with Paul at the end of his 1st Letter to the Church in Corinth. As I mentioned before, Paul had spent 1 ½ years previously in Corinth evangelizing, discipling and planting churches. He then left to go to Ephesus where he stayed 3 years. During this time, Paul received news of the chaos that had erupted in the Corinth Church. That’s when he wrote we know of as 1st Corinthians. It appears that he left Ephesus and made a quick ‘painful visit’ as we will learn in Chapter 2:1,2. Paul then left and promised to return for a longer visit and then he went to Macedonia. It appears he stayed in Macedonia longer than expected by him and by the Corinth church and they began to accuse him of forgetting them and seemed to question his integrity and intentions. This prompted Paul to **write the letter we know of as 2 Corinthians** about 1 year after he had sent them 1st Corinthians. Approximately 55/56 BC.

REVIEW: The Ministry of Comfort & Reconciliation

1. Receive God’s Comfort—
2. Extend God’s Comfort—
3. Walk in Integrity—

**We Have A Triumphant Faith &
A Transforming Faith therefore**

‘Don’t Lose Heart-Be of Good Courage

**Be Ambassadors of Christ Compelling Others with a
Ministry of Reconciliation.
Be Pure & Obedient.**

As we keep in mind the previous pleas to be pure and obedient and to seek reconciliation in the midst of conflict and division, Paul strikes at the heart of the problem by sharing a painful truth and reality.

The purity that we need does not come easily. The cure for what ails us will often bring us pain and sorrow.

Thus, the title today is **Hurt That Heals, Sorrow that Leads to Repentance**. Like a Doctor who must painfully set a broken bone back in place, or put a dislocated joint back in place, or a surgery to heal a disease, or an injection to stop a disease; healing can be a painful process, but the end result is wholeness and restoration.

Let’s go back two verses into last week’s passage to set up today’s passage found in 2 Cor. 7.

2 Corinthians 6:16b-18...^{16b} *For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”*¹⁷ *Therefore, “Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”*¹⁸ *And, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”*

2 Corinthians 7:1-16...¹ *Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

We see Paul reminding them since they are the very Temple of God where God’s very presence dwells it should motivate us to purity. There is a price to purity!

² *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. 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.* 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.* 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. 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, 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.*

The point I am focusing on today from this passage is...

The Healing Power of Godly Sorrow

Key Verse: [2 Corinthians 7:10](#)... “*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*”

Let’s get the setting clear, let’s look at the attitude, the motivation of in other words: (Adapted from co-pilot)

I. The Heart of Paul:

We find a Painful Truth but with a Loving Intent (2–4)

Paul is a loving and caring “spiritual father” but he is not a sentimental, doting, “whatever you want to do dear” type of parent. His deep abiding love for God and His commands combines with a tender, yet firm love for the

believers requires him to sometime have a ‘tough love’ approach. This ‘tough love’ approach is often not received well or truly understood in its true focus.

Many a Parent or authority figure has had to ‘lay down the law’ so to speak, only to receive groans and complaints from those you are trying to correct and direct. It is easy to be misunderstood when calling on someone to change or correct their ways. Our human nature of pride and self-will drives us to have a “don’t tell me what to do” response. However, Paul, makes it clear that change and correction are necessary to be a faithful follower of God. His correction is coming from a heart of love and concern.

Paul, again, pleads with them to get a clear picture of what he is trying to do. He wants them to be pure, holy and acceptable to the Lord, and for that to happen, there are changes, often painful changes, that need to take place. There is a painful price for purity. Of course, Jesus Christ gave the ultimate ‘painful price’ dying for us on a cruel, rugged cross. Paul then reminds them of the “painful price’ he has personally paid, and with those two examples he pleads for them to receive the needed correction he has given to them. He is also speaking from a heart that has been wounded by the very church members he has given so much for.

He’s not just writing theology—he’s writing as a spiritual father who’s been wounded yet still loves.

- Paul appeals for reconciliation, asking the Corinthians to “*make room in your hearts*” for him.
- He reminds them: “*We have wronged no one.*”
- He expresses deep affection and confidence in them despite past tensions.

Lesson for us today: Sometimes love means saying hard things. Paul’s previous letter caused grief, but it was necessary. As spiritual leaders, parents, friends—are we willing to speak truth in love, even when it hurts? True spiritual leadership involves vulnerability. Are we willing to love even when it hurts?

Next Paul clarifies what is the proper sorrow that will bring the desired healing:

II. **Godly Sorrow vs. Worldly Sorrow (vv. 8–11)**

It is obvious that the previous letter and his previous short visit had caused pain for the church. Paul lovingly, yet firmly and directly had addressed several problems and shortcomings within the church. This had brought about an atmosphere of animosity, conflict, grief and division in the fellowship. Some had wisely understood Paul’s ‘tough love’ message and responded properly. But most had not. This created a rift among fellow members and with Paul.

- Paul’s previous letter caused grief—but it was **godly grief**, leading to repentance.

In verses 10, 11, Paul contrasts **godly sorrow** (which leads to life) with **worldly sorrow** (which leads to death).

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.

Godly Sorrow

Leads to repentance

Produces life and salvation

Motivated by love for God

Worldly Sorrow

Leads to guilt and shame

Produces death and regret

Motivated by fear or pride

In verse 11 Paul gives more detail of how this ‘*Godly Sorrow*’ produces fruit and maturity:

- *Earnestness* – a renewed seriousness about sin
- *Eagerness to clear yourselves* – a desire to make things right
- *Indignation* – hatred of the sin itself
- *Alarm* – a holy fear of offending God
- *Longing and concern* – restored relationships
- *Readiness to see justice done* – a commitment to righteousness

Lesson for us today:

Purity can be a painful process. Because of our hard hearts and selfish will, God lovingly allows us to experience sorrow with the hope that it will lead us to true repentance which leads to a restoration of our relationship with God. This process is more than just a “Oops, I’m sorry” flippant comment or just a regret... but a true sorrow that leads us to a transformation of our thoughts, words and actions. It is not just regret, but

This leads us to the final verses and the desired outcome:

The Fruit of Repentance: Restoration and Joy (vv. 12–16)

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. 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, 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 had not written them to bring shame on them them—he wrote them with the goal for them to be restored and made holy and pure. Thankfully this approach worked.

- Titus returned with a good report: the Corinthians had repented and welcomed him with love.
- Paul rejoices: “*I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.*” (vs. 16)
- Their repentance restored not only their relationship with Paul but also their testimony.

This is the beauty of repentance—it doesn’t just restore our relationship with God, it restores our relationships with each other. Unity among believers is a source of great joy. Strive for harmony and unity in our community, reflecting the oneness we have in Christ.

Final Lesson for Us today: Genuine repentance Restores Relationships and Renews Joy. Trust in God’s Faithfulness to “*Work All Things Together for Good*” (Rom. 8:28)

Now, What About You and I?

- Do you truly understand and believe that God is working in your life for your good, even in the times of sorrow and pain?
- Is there sorrow in your life that God wants to turn into repentance?
- Are you holding back from restoring a broken relationship? Do you need to make room in your heart for someone you've shut out?