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Affirmations of Love
2 Corinthians 2:1-11

2 Corinthians 2:1-11 But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again. (2) For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful? (3) This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy would be *the joy* of you all. (4) For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

(5) But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree--in order not to say too much--to all of you. (6) Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority, (7) so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort *him,* otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. (8) Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love for him. (9) For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. (10) But one whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it* for your sakes in the presence of Christ, (11) so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

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Letters to Corinth – Alternative 1

- Letter #1: Described in 1 Co 5:9 "I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people"
- Letter #2: 1 Corinthians itself (A.D. 53 or 54)
- Letter #3: 2 Corinthians (A.D. 57?)

Letters to Corinth – Alternative 2

- Letter #1: Described in 1 Co 5:9 "I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people"
- Letter #2: 1 Corinthians itself
- Letter #3: "The Sorrowful Letter" 2 Cor 2
- Letter #4: 2 Corinthians

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Which Letter is the Sorrowful Letter?

- Epistolary Aorist: “I wrote” = “I am writing” (but the effects of the letter are described in 7:8)
- 1 Corinthians itself (but will need to accept that 1 Corinthians is a letter written out of much affliction and with many tears)
- Intermediate Letter
  - Last 4 Chapters of 2 Cor (very stern, yet poses difficulties in how we understand ch 2)
  - Lost letter – simple, plausible, supported by many

Positive Results for the Letter

2 Corinthians 1:13-14 For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end; (14) just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

2 Corinthians 7:8-9 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it--*for* I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while-- (9) I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of* God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

Some Application Points

- Paul "determined" to not come again in sorrow (2:1)
- It's OK to look in your heart to decide what to do… if:
  - You are walking in godliness, not in flesh (1:12)
  - Close fellowship with others (1:1, 19)
  - Open to God's will (1:23)

Application Points

- Trust your team (and inspect what you expect)
- Paul wrote a letter, and expected positive results w/out being present
- James Armstrong:

  There is a certain lack of faith that characterizes a leader who feels they always have to be present at every meeting, make every decision, worry about the results, and constantly check on progress. On an earthly level, it's a lack of faith in your team, but ultimately, as a Christian, it's a lack of faith in God.

The Notorious Offender

Alternative #1: The incestuous person

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1 Corinthians 5:1, 5 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife… *I have decided* to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The Notorious Offender

Alternative #1: The incestuous person

Alternative #2: Someone had affronted Paul

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The Notorious Offender

Alternative #1: The incestuous person

+ The traditional view

- Severity of discipline for the individual

- Unlikely if the “intermediate letter” was 1 Cor

Alternative #2: Someone had affronted Paul

+ 2:10 (and some others) seem to hint of a personal offense that Paul can forgive

Paul is being discreet “… in order to not say too much” (2:5)

Notorious Offender – Consensus

- The issue was not a "doctrinal aberration" leading to "theological dispute" (makes sense, 1:24 "in faith, you are standing firm")
- Somebody has been offended:

  2 Cor 7:12 So although I wrote to you, *it was* not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended…
- Committed by a single individual (2:5-11; 7:12)
- Altercation was serious – leading Paul to change his travel plans, and impelling him to write a letter to deal with the situation created by the individual (1:23, 2:1, 3, 4; 7:8)
- This actions of this one individual, touched the life of the entire church (2:5)

Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 40, 2 Corinthians, Ralph Martin, 1986

Steps to Restoration

- Making a choice to forget (v5)
- Repentance is involved – “godly sorrow” (v6-7, 7:10-11)
- Reaffirm your love (v8)
- Forgive in the presence of Christ (v10)
- It’s a blow to Satan’s schemes (v11)

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1 Peter 3:7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Ephesians 6:11-12 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. (12) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

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The Schemes of Satan

- Satan uses all manner of stratagems to turn souls from the truth:
- A sieve to “sift” them (Luk 22:31)
- “weeds” to “choke” (Mat 13:22)
- “wiles” [or trickery] (Eph 6:11)
- The roaring of a lion to terrify (1 Pe 5:8)
- The disguise of an angel to deceive (2 Co 11:14)
- “snares” to entangle them (2 Ti 2:26)

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Adapted from Bill MacDonald, Believers Bible Commentary

It costs to forgive…

Stated psychologically, forgiveness takes place when the person who was offended and justly angered by the offender bears his own anger, and lets the other go free. Anger cannot be ignored, denied, or forgotten without doing treachery in hidden ways. It must be dealt with responsibly, honestly, in a decisive act of the will. Either:

- the injured and justifiably angry person vents his feelings on the other in retaliation—(That is an attempt at achieving justice as accuser, judge, and hangman all in one)—or
- the injured person may choose to accept his angry feelings, bear the burden of them personally, find release through confession and prayer and set the other person free. This is forgiveness.

http://bible.org/illustration/forgiveness-…
David Augsburger, *Cherishable: Love and Marriage*, 141-144.

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it matters

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