

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
A Sweet Fragrance: Repentance, Forgiveness, and Restoration
2 Corinthians 2

Last time...we finished 2 Cor 1 with an exhortation to:

1. not trust our flawed and finite selves in the midst of trials but to trust the Almighty and Infinite God in the midst of them
2. in simplicity and godly sincerity read and acknowledge the Word of God in our walk with the Lord unto the end
3. get the help we all need by wanting it and asking for it

This time...in 2 Cor 2...repentance, forgiveness, and restoration – a sweet fragrance

- v1-2 2 Cor 1:17 In ministering to the carnal church at Corinth, did the Apostle Paul
- use lightness/levity in instructing them in righteousness?
No, he had some “heavy” things to say to them that yielded sadness and heartache in the church
 - write his first letter to them in the flesh or in the Spirit?
In the Spirit
 - try to navigate the winds of doctrine swirling thru the church?
No, he stood on the Rock that cannot be moved

Eph 4:11-15

- 2 Cor 1:24 The Apostle Paul did not turn a blind, uncaring eye to the errors in the Corinthian church; he loved them enough to help them by confronting the errors in a loving way
- He helped them according to their need:
- chastisement (Heb 12:5-12)
 - correction (2 Tim 3:16)

But now, in his 2nd letter to them, he decided to not write another “heavy” letter, again helping them according to their need:

- edification
- comfort (1 Cor 14:3, 2 Cor 1:3-5)

Paul had been saddened and distressed about the situation recorded in 1 Cor 5

- the man fornicating with his father’s wife (not his mother!)
- the church’s acceptance of such wicked behavior in the name of “grace”

He rebuked the man and the church, instructing them in righteousness to

- deliver the man to Satan...disfellowship him...for the destruction of his flesh that his spirit would be saved
- purge the leaven/sin from the camp/church, putting away the wicked person from their midst

2 Cor 1:14 they received what the Apostle instructed and, by faith, obeyed,
even though they were distressed by Paul's instruction

And, as a result of their obedience to the Holy Spirit, the man who so grieved Paul
repented

The motive of the instruction was God's love

The whole purpose of the instruction in 1 Cor 5 was the restoration of the man back into
fellowship...when/if he repented

And God's Word went forth and did not return void but accomplished that which pleased
the Lord

Obedience to God's Word (by faith and by submission) by those who are opposing
themselves yields the fruit of repentance and the acknowledging of the truth

So, being disfellowshipped, the man in 1 Cor 5 wanted help, asked for help, received help
And now the Apostle Paul is rejoicing in what the Lord did!

v3-4 Paul wrote the first letter after his first visit so that he would not come to them with
sorrow on his second visit

They are his spiritual children, he is their "father in the faith"

1 Cor 4:14-16 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I
warn *you*. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ,
yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten
you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers
of me.

Therefore, he should rejoice in their presence, not suffering distress and heartache among
them

He loved them enough to lovingly speak the help they needed, rather than not helping
them by saying what they wanted to hear or by avoiding the issue altogether
His first letter was a "tear-stained" letter!

The work of

- much affliction and anguish of heart with many tears
- the heart and mind of God
- the love of a shepherd for his flock

The motive: the *agape* love of God for His children, loved by the Father as the
Father loves His only Begotten Son (John 17:23b)

The purpose: repentance and reconciliation, the restoration of fellowship

- v5-6 The Apostle Paul, ever mindful of his own failures/sin
- consenting to the death of an innocent and righteous man – Stephen (Acts 7:58 – 8:1)
 - making havoc of the Church, breaking and entering into the homes of followers of Jesus Christ and hauling them off to prison for blasphemy (Acts 8:3)
 - breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1)
 - zealously hunting down righteous people as vile criminals (Acts 9:2)
 - persecuting the Lord Jesus Christ and the Church (Acts 9:4, Gal 1:13)
- suffered a righteous sorrow, seeking merciful brokenness and repentance, which he knew so well.

Paul did not seek a self-righteous condemnation and justice/punishment

He knew personally the truth of Rom 2:4

And now so does the man of 1 Cor 5!

The Godly chastisement of disfellowship by the church “did the trick”

PTL!!

Now what?

- v7-8 The man has repented
- So now, the ministry of the church in his life is to
1. forgive him
 2. comfort him
 3. restore him back into the fellowship
 4. love him with the Father’s *agape* love, making sure he knows it!

Matt 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matt 5:7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

James 2:13a he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy

2 Cor 1:3-5 exercise their ministry of comfort, lest the man’s faith is shipwrecked and restoration is hindered/thwarted

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

v9 The first letter was a tear-stained letter of correction and chastisement
This second letter is a letter of forgiveness, comfort, and love

The church, by faith, obeyed the instruction in the first letter
Paul is confident the church will, by faith, obey the instruction in this letter

v10-11 The Apostle “There by the grace of God go I” Paul has done to the repentant man of
1 Cor 5 what the Lord...who bore the sin of both Paul’s and the man of 1 Cor 5...
has done with him AND with the man of 1 Cor 5 – forgiven him

With the Godly chastisement the man of 1 Cor 5 received the gift of repentance from the
Lord

By faith he

- received God’s gift of repentance
- displayed the gift in his life...works worthy of repentance by turning back to the Lord and resuming his walk with Jesus

Suffering much for the name of Jesus Christ, Paul was forgiving and gracious

Who am I to not forgive whom the Lord has forgiven?!

Given the filth of my sin removed by the blood of Jesus, who am I to not forgive anyone
for any wrong?

To forgive the repentant is of God’ heart

To not forgive, repentant or not, is of Satan’s heart

Satan is a liar and a slanderer, spewing strife, envy, confusion, doubt, and division
in order to destroy

Unforgiveness in our hearts produces poison – bitterness,
a self-inflicted wound that has many dominos

Heb 12:14-15 Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man
shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace
of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and
thereby many be defiled;

For the health (relational, emotional, physical) and unity of fellowship:

- forgive every bit as much as we have been forgiven
- be as merciful to others as the Lord has been merciful to us
- grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

May the sweet fragrance of repentance, forgiveness, and restoration of fellowship fill
our homes, the places of our gatherings, and our moving about!

v12-13 Referring to his 2nd Missionary Journey...in Acts 16-17...Paul mentions the open door the Lord opened (Rev 3:7) to preach the Gospel on the European continent – Macedonia

Acts 16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

Paul obeyed, being led of the Spirit, resulting in much spiritual fruit:

- Lydia
- the Philippian jailer and his house/family
- Thessalonica
- Berea

which of course did not come without much suffering

Fruit of the Gospel in Macedonia: fellowships of followers of Jesus Christ in

- Philippi
- Thessalonica
- Berea

All heard the same Gospel

Not all who heard believed

Not all who heard the Lord knocking on the door of their heart opened their hearts to Him

v14-16 But some did open their hearts to Jesus, some did believe the Gospel

God the Father drew whosoever would believe unto His Son Jesus Christ
Jesus Christ brought to His Father those who heard His words, believed on Him, and
passed from condemnation and death unto justification and life

All the faithful labor unto the Lord,

All the suffering of so laboring,

Resulted in victory...comfort and salvation for some

Rom 8:28

Rom 8:31

Rom 8:35a

Rom 8:37

The sweet fragrance of God: knowing Jesus and making Him known

Shadows: sweet savor of the offerings in the Law

Substance: Jesus Christ

John 1:17

For those who believe (obey/repent and are forgiven and redeemed),
the sweet fragrance of Jesus is that of eternal Life by grace thru faith
For those who do not believe (disobey/remain defiant and are not forgiven and
not redeemed), the sweet fragrance of Jesus smells like death

There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy (James 4:12a)...determined by
a person's judgment of the sweet fragrance of Jesus

The same Gospel...the only true Gospel, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of Grace
The same sweet fragrance
2 radically different responses/realities (heaven for belief or hell for unbelief)

We followers of Jesus Christ should always smell...like Jesus!

- a. Very simple relationship counsel for husbands and wives, fathers and mothers
and children, friends and loved ones:
 - Smell like Jesus!
 - Liberally apply "Jesus perfume"
- b. Make the Lord Jesus Christ a part of all your conversations
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Those whose path crosses yours this day

To some, you (Jesus) will smell like life!
To some, you (Jesus) will smell like death!

v17 Paul, the helper of their joy, stands uncompromisingly on the Word of God
No additions, no deletions, no dilutions

He spoke "in Christ"

- in sincerity (Ch 1:12)
- as one of God's children
- in the sight of God..."as God as my witness"

But there were/are many false teachers and winds of doctrine that corrupt the pure
Word of God

- add or delete or dilute the Word of God
- pick and choose what to believe in the Bible (making themselves judges of the
Word of God)
- preach false gospels – Social, Prosperity, Love, Works, etc
- sweep sin under the rug so as to not offend people (who have offended God)
- thru covetousness make merchandise of God's people
- wolves in sheep's clothing speaking perverse things to draw away disciples
after themselves

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the sweet fragrance of God

- Repentance by the sinner, confronted with his/her sin against God
- Forgiveness by God and God's people
- Restoration/reconciliation in the Family of God

Motive: supernatural love of God
Rom 5:8

Received by faith by sinners/offenders...Rom 3:10, 23

Shared as freely as received

Lived before God and man with simplicity and Godly sincerity by the grace of God

“Revives” and “perfumes” all of our relationships

Application

Have you done God wrong or somebody wrong?

Do what the man on 1 Cor 5 did:

- receive by faith God's chastisement and gift of repentance
- repent...corrective action
- want the help of God
- ask for the help of God
- submit to and obey the help of God

Been done wrong by somebody?

Do as God has instructed:

- Be quick to forgive, lest the wound in your heart turns into bitterness and defiles you and everyone around you
- Wait patiently, with open arms, for corrective action by the one who wronged you
- With repentance by the wrong-doer, be quick to restore them into fellowship
 - forgiveness
 - comfort
 - love
- Be merciful and gracious

Everywhere you go, in every relationship:

Smell like Jesus!

Know Jesus and make Him known