

2 Corinthians: Encouragement in Troubling Times
"Battling Discouragement" Pt. 1, # 6
2 Cor. 2:12-14a
5-22-16 Sun AM

Last week we talked about forgiveness- Judicial, parental, and relational forgiveness. Paul was troubled over the churches lack of forgiveness to the repentant sinning believer "furthermore" [v. 12].

The primary interpretation of this passage is about restoring the disheartened Pastor's joy.

2 Cor. 11:23-28, Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. (24) Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. (25) Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; (26) In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; (27) In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. (28) Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

It was the church at Corinth that caused Paul the most discouragement and disappointment immaturity, shallowness, sin, indifference, selfishness, rebellion against his apostolic authority. Don't forget the false apostles (v. 17).

Paul's investment in their lives and his love for them gave the Corinthians opportunity to hurt him deeply, which they did.
Paul's discouragement is apparent in this passage.

The **practical application** is for all of us. We often get discouraged and disheartened by the trials and hardship of living in these fallen bodies in a fallen world. We need encouragement in troubling times!

Q- How do we overcome these things? We do what Paul did.
Two divisions- trouble (vs. 12-13) and Triumph (vs. 14-17). We could say,
"Turning trouble into triumph.

I. Trouble (2:12-13).

v. 12: After leaving Ephesus, Paul came to Troas. Some believe the riot and Ephesus prompted his departure. Paul hoped to meet Titus at Troas. He was not there!

Paul was heavy with concern over the condition of Titus among his other concerns and burdens.

2 Cor. 7:5, For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.

Paul had an open door from the Lord to preach the gospel, but he was overcome and burdened by the hardship of the ministry and found it difficult to focus on the opportunity.

v. 13: Note than phrase, "no rest in my spirit" means he had no peace because of the turmoil and discontent in his heart over not locating his friend in the gospel.

This was a dark hour in the Apostles life. He was battling discouragement and possible depression. Something needed to happen...

1500 pastors leave the Pastoral ministry each month. Their own hardships compounded by the cares of the church weight heavy on them.

You have trials and hardships that trouble you and leave you hard pressed, discouraged, and disheartened. You might be ready to give up- don't lose heart!

What do we do? Look to the victory we have in Christ!

I. Trouble (2:12-13).

II. Triumph (2:14a).

v. 14a: Marks a change in Paul's attitude and launches him into thanksgiving to God. Paul does not give the reason for this abrupt change in attitude.

Paul did not look to his circumstances for comfort and joy but the God. The cure for a discouraged heart is a thankful heart. It is a matter of focus.

vs. 14b: Paul used an important event in the Roman world, a victory parade of the victorious Roman general called a "Triumph."

William Barclay describes it as such: It is amazing how the Scripture comes alive when we know the historical background.

He pictures the Roman triumph and Christ's as universal conqueror. A Triumph was the highest honor given to a Roman general.

First came the state officials and senate.

Second, the trumpeters.

Third, the spoils taken from the conquered land.

Forth, came pictures of the conquered land.

Fifth, came a white bull for sacrifice.

Sixth, then came the captives in chains ready to be cast into prison and executed.

Then came the lectors and musicians.

Then the Priests swinging the sweet-smelling incense.

Then came the conquering general in all his military attire.

Then came the general's family and the army shouting triumph!

This is the picture Paul describes as he sees Christ marching in triumph throughout the world!

This picture lifts Paul from the pit of despair to marching in a triumphal parade.

Next time in 2:14b-17 we will see five privileges or blessings we have in spiritual triumph in Christ. These are what Paul saw in this triumph parade!

1. We are led by a sovereign God.
2. We have promised victory.
3. We can be used by Christ.
4. We can please God.
5. We have power in Christ.

It's all "in Christ" he is our conquering general. No need to be discouraged or disheartened, we are in the midst of a Triumph!

Q- Are you in the Christ's triumphal procession?