

II Corinthians: Lesson #23 – Introduction
Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children
For Sunday, July 8th

Read II Cor. 1:1 - 2:11 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: II Cor. 2:11 “Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

Paul Wanted to Comfort the Corinthians.

- The Apostles were often treated badly because they preached about Jesus. Sometimes other Christians were also treated badly because they followed Christ. People might make fun of them or treat them mean.
- No one likes to be treated that way, but sometimes we can't do anything about it. We just have to keep on serving the Lord, no matter how people act towards us.
- Paul did remind the Corinthian Christians that during times like that they had gotten comfort from God.
- When you are young things don't seem so bad, but as we get older things get harder in life. Troubles are like big weights you have to carry and they press you down and make you sad. But we can always go to the Lord in prayer. He will help us with those troubles and help us to know what really matters. Always remember that God wants to help comfort you. But also remember that if we don't love God and serve Him, He can't help us.
- One thing that helps a lot is to pray. When we pray to God, we know we've put our troubles into His hands to help us. We also need to remember to pray for other people who are having troubles: like people who are sick or sad.

Some People at Corinth said Paul Didn't Keep his Promises.

- We know that anytime we promise to do something, we should always do it. People should be able to depend on us to keep our word.
- But some people at Corinth who didn't like Paul very much said he didn't keep his promises.
- Paul said he was coming to Corinth. But then he said he wouldn't come right away, but later on. The people who didn't like Paul said he wasn't keeping his promise and that you couldn't trust Paul.
- It is sad that they said that about Paul, because he loved them very much and would never have broken his promise to them.
- Paul was still going to come to Corinth, but he wanted to give them a little more time before he came and he wanted to come when he could stay longer.
- If your mother or father promised you that they would take you to a movie tomorrow, but then your grandmother got sick and they had to take care of her, they might have to wait to keep their promise. That doesn't mean they have broken their promise to you, but that problems came up they had to take care of. They will keep their promise as soon as they can.
- Paul did keep his promise and went to Corinth, a little later on.
- Paul said that he was a man of his word. That his “yes” meant “yes” and his “no” meant “no.”
- He said that all the promises God makes, He will answer “Yes” to in Jesus. That means that if we are in Jesus, we will be given every wonderful thing God ever promised. Heaven is one of those wonderful things.

A Person that had Done Wrong Repented

- We may remember back in I Corinthians (chapter 5) that there was a man in the church doing some very sinful things, things God would never be pleased with. Paul had told the Corinthians that that man could not continue to be part of the church if he was going to act that way.
- In II Corinthians Paul tells about a man who became sorry that he had sinned and wanted to come back and be a faithful Christian.
- Paul now told the Corinthians that they should forgive this man and take him back as part of the church and show him that they still loved him.
- Paul said that if we don't forgive that person, that the Devil could take advantage of us. That means that Satan could make things even worse in the church. Anytime someone says they are sorry for what they did that was wrong and wants to act right, we should always forgive them. We don't want Satan to use us to make things even worse at church.
- We need to remember that Satan is always waiting to do us harm.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

Paul Comforts and Encourages the Corinthians

2 Cor. 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and brother Timothy, to the church of God which is at Corinth, along with all the saints that are in the whole region of Achaia.

2 May grace and peace be yours from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Praise God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion, and also the God of all encouragement and comfort.

4 He has brought us this comfort and encouragement in all our distress and trials, so that we will have the ability to give comfort and encouragement in all troubles, with the same comfort and encouragement God gave to us.

5 Since there are so many ways Christ's sufferings is directed towards us, in the same way we are shown so much comfort and encouragement through Christ.

6 And if we are pressed down with troubles, it will be for your comfort, encouragement and salvation. Because if you are enduring the same troubles we are dealing with, when we are comforted, it will allow us to give you comfort and encouragement as well, and this will bring about your salvation.

7 And our hope for you can be sure because as you share in our suffering, in the same way you can share in what comforts and encourages us.

Paul and Timothy's Troubles Taught them to Trust God

8 Brethren, I've told you this because I don't want you to be ignorant about all the distress and trials that came to us in Asia. Our troubles were so bad that we felt pressed down beyond what we felt we had the strength to endure. It was so bad that we gave up all hope of even living.

9-10 But we had that feeling like we were under a death sentence in our hearts, so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; the God who rescued us from such a threat of death, who has rescued us and who we will trust will still rescue us.

11 You also should help by praying for us so that many people will thank God for the kind favor He will show us because many people prayed on our behalf.

Paul Was Sincere and Didn't Make Empty Promises [Some people at Corinth were attacking Paul's character saying he said things and didn't mean them. The proof they offered was that Paul had said he was coming to Corinth. Paul had changed his plans. He would not come immediately, but would come when he had more time to spend with them. Some at Corinth were trying to make it sound like Paul didn't keep his word.]

12 Now the very reason we have to rejoice boast is this: That our conscience testifies that with a godly sincerity, not a heart mixed with impure motives, and not with wisdom motivated by sinful ways of this world, but by the gracious kindness of God we have shown the way our lives have been turned around in the midst of the world, but even more so we have shown this life to you.

13 In our writings, there are no hidden meanings or motives. What you read and understand is exactly what we meant to say. And I hope you will continue to understand it all the way to the end.

14 Just as you have understood us in part that we are your reason to rejoice, just as you will be our reason to rejoice when the Day of Jesus comes.

15-16 It was in this very confidence that I intended before to come to you so that you could be blessed a second time. I mean by that that I intended to pass through Corinth into the province of Macedonia. Then from Macedonia I had planned to come to visit you at Corinth and have you send me on my way to Judea.

17 But when I was thinking about doing this, was I being fickle-minded? Or the things I decide to do, do I decide them in a fleshly way? As if I were telling you both yes and no at the same time?

18 As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No.

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who we preached among you (by Silvanus, Timothy and me), was not yes and no, but in Him "Yes" came to be.

20 However many promises of God there are, in Christ they are "Yes" and in Him "Amen" (truly, it is so, a firm promise) to the glory of God through us.

21 And the One that makes us firm and established us along with you in Christ and has anointed us, is God.

22 God has also set His seal on us and given us the promised guarantee (like earnest money) of the Spirit in our hearts.

23 But I call on God as a witness upon my soul: The reason I have not yet come to Corinth was to spare you.

24 We did not want to be lords that tried to force you in your faith. Instead we want to be fellow workers of your joy. After all, it is faith that helps you stand.

2:1 But I decided this myself, that I would not come back to you in sorrow.

2 For if I'm the one causing you sadness, who is going to make me glad? The ones who I'm giving grief to?

The Reasons Paul Had Written Before. [In First Corinthians Paul had to say some hard things because the Corinthians weren't acting right. Paul didn't want to have to upset the Christians there, but he wanted them to do better.]

3 That's the reason I wrote you – so that when I came there I wouldn't be getting grief from those who should be making me happy. You see I still believed about all of you, that what made me happy would make all of you happy.

4 I wrote you with many tears, out of great trouble and distress in my heart, but I wasn't trying to make you sad. I just wanted you to realize the great love I have for you.

Paul Tells them to Forgive the Person Who Repented.

5 If someone caused you to be sad, he didn't cause it to me, but to some extent (although I don't want to overburden him too much) he has caused the grief to all of you.

6 The punishment that was brought on this person by many is enough.

7 So now its time to do just the opposite: forgive them, comfort and encourage them. If you don't they could be swallowed up by too much sorrow.

8 For this reason I urge you to reaffirm your love for them.

9 Another reason I wrote was to test you, to see if you would be obedient in all things.

10-11 Whoever you've forgiven, so do I. And what I have forgiven (if I had anything to forgive), I did in the presence of Christ on account of you so that Satan will not take advantage of us. For we are not ignorant of the way he plans and schemes.