

“A Tender Heart”
2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4

Introduction:

1. Please Turn In Your Bibles With Me:
 - To 2 Corinthians:
 - Where We Have Been Looking At:
 - How The Apostle Paul Was Able To Maintain:
 - A Clear Conscience:
 - Before God & Before Men!
 - Back In 1:12 - Paul Appealed:
 - To The “Testimony” Of His “Conscience” To:
 - Defend His Integrity:
 - As A Christian & As An Apostle Of Jesus Christ!
 - And He Was Able To Look Back & Examine:
 - His Own Heart & Life:
 - And Claim That His Conscience Was Clear!
2. Is This A Claim That You Can Make:
 - This Morning?
 - That In Your Relationships With:
 - The Lord & With Others:
 - Your Conscience Is Clear?
 - To Have A “Good” & A “Clear” Conscience As A Christian Is Of Great Value!
 - But Just How Was Paul Able:
 - To Make This Claim?
 - According To 1:12-14:
 - He Lived A Transparent Life!
 - With Nothing To Hide! What You Saw In Paul Is What You Got In Paul!
 - Is This The Kind Of Life You Are Striving To Live As A Christian?
 - According To 1:15-22:
 - Paul Lived A Truthful Life!
 - 1:18 - “But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay!”
 - Are You Living A Life Of Truth?
3. Well - This Morning:
 - We Are Going To See Another Area:
 - Of Paul’s Life - That Helped Him Maintain A Clear Conscience!
 - In 1:23-2:4 - Paul Lived A Tender Life!
 - He Had A Tender Heart!
 - Not Only Was He An Apostle To The Corinthian Church - He Was Also Their Pastor - And Their Friend!
4. And In The Verses We Come To This Morning:
 - We See That Paul’s Love & Tenderness:
 - For Them - Was The Motive Behind Everything He Did!
 - Let’s Look At These Verses More Closely Together!
 - “Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. / Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. / But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. / For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? / And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. / For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you!”
 - Here - Paul Is Still Talking About:
 - His Change In Travel Plans To Corinth!
 - Which - His Accusers Claimed To Show:
 - Selfishness & Fickleness!
 - “You Didn’t Come When You Said You Would, Paul!”
 - But In Reality:
 - Paul Was Reflecting:

- The Tenderness Of Jesus Christ Himself In His Relationship With Them!

* The First Thing We See Is That Paul Wanted To Be:

1. A Tender Help:

- To The Christians There In Corinth!
 - Even After All The Accusations & Actions Taken Against Him!
 - 1:23-24 - “Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. / Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand!”
 - So - The Reason Paul Changed His Travel Plans:
 - Was Not About Him & His Own Convenience:
 - But For Them & Their Benefit!
 - He “Came Not” So That He Might “Spare” Them!
 - But - To “Spare” Them From What?
 - From Another Visit Of Correction!
 - In 1 Corinthians 4:21 - Paul Even Asks - “What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?”
 - Paul Wanted To Extend To Them:
 - Even More Mercy & Kindness:
 - To Help Them See The Error Of Their Ways Toward Him!
- Is This What Your Relationships Look Like?
 - Are You Reflecting The Tenderness Of Jesus Himself:
 - In Your Own Relationships:
 - Even As Paul Did?
 - Sometimes It’s Hard! Very Hard!
 - But You Can When It Is:
- Based On God’s Own Witness!
 - In 1:23a - Paul Appeals To A Higher Witness Than His Own Conscience:
 - He Appeals To God - “Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul!”
 - We Need To Remember That:
 - God Knows Everything About Us! Everything! Nothing Is Hidden From His Sight!
 - And When You Live Your Life:
 - With The Knowledge That:
 - God Is Always A Witness Of Your Soul:
 - It Will Help You Live A Life Of Transparency, Truthfulness, And Tenderness:
 - As It Did For Paul!
 - Also:
- Based On God’s Own Wisdom!
 - In 1:23b - Paul Gives The Reason For The Change In His Travel Plans - “That to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth!”
 - There Was Still “Sin In The Camp” Of The Corinthian Church!
 - Shouldn’t Paul Have Gone There To Deal With It?
 - The Truth Is - Paul Already Had!
 - By “Sparing” Them From Another Visit Of Correction:
 - He Was Extending To Them:
 - More Grace & Mercy!
 - He Did Not Condone Their Sin, But He Did Care For Souls!
 - We Need This Same Kind Of Wisdom!
 - And Even Though We Must Not Condone Sin:
 - We Must Care For Each Other’s Souls!
 - In The Spirit Of Ephesians 4:32 - “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you!”
 - And We Are Able To Do This:
- Based On God’s Own Work!
 - 1:24 - “Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand!”
 - Paul Wanted Them To Know:

- That He Was Writing To Them:
- **Not** As A Master Over Their Faith!
 - Even Though He Was An Apostle:
 - He Was Not Given This Position To Be A Spiritual Dictator Over Them!
 - Instead - He Was Writing:
- As A Minister Of Their Faith!
 - “Helpers Of Your Joy!”
 - Paul Was Their Pastor! Shepherd! Paul Knew That Every Christian & Every Church Is God’s Own Workmanship!
 - Ephesians 2:10 - “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works!”
 - This Means That - Our Spiritual Condition:
 - Is Not Dependent On Any Man:
 - But On God Himself!
 - And Their Personal Faith In Jesus Christ! “By Faith Ye Stand!”
- And So - Paul Was Going To Let:
 - God Do His Work Through His Word:
 - In Their Hearts!
 - And The Purpose Of His Ministry Was To Bring Them To A Fuller Joy In Jesus!
- And Shouldn’t This Be The Main Object & Purpose:
 - For Our Own Service To Each Other?
 - To Be - “Helpers Of Your Joy!”
 - To Encourage! To Lift Up!
 - We Need To Remember:
 - That We Are All In This Journey Of Faith:
 - Together!
 - And So - We Need To Be A Tender Help To Each Other!
 - So That Our “Joy May Be Full!”
 - After All - This Was The Tenderness Of Jesus!
 - Who Came - To Bring Us Joy!
 - John 15:11 - “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full!”
 - Are You Reflecting The Tenderness Of Christ:
 - In Your Relationships?
 - Are You Trying To Be A “Tender Help” To People?
 - Doesn’t Mean That You Condone Their Sin, But That You Care For Their Souls!
 - Remembering That God Himself & God Alone Is The Master Of Their Souls!

* The Second Thing We See Is That Paul Had:

2. A Tender Hope:

- For The Christians There In Corinth!
 - When Paul Said Back In 1:24 - “By Faith Ye Stand!”
 - Upon **What** Was Their Faith Standing?
 - The Work Of God!
 - See In 1:21-22 - “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; / Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts!”
 - It Was The **Work** Of **God** – And Not His Own Work:
 - That Gave Paul Hope For The Corinthians!
 - And That Is Why He Was In No Big Hurry To Return To Corinth!
 - And So - Instead - He Wrote Them Another Letter - And Waited For God To Do His Work Through His Word! See This In:
 - 2:1-3 - “But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. / For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? / And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all!”
 - Do You Have This Kind Of Tender Hope:

- For Those In Your Life:
 - Who Are Still Wandering From The Lord?
 - Remember - God Is Always Present, Even When You Aren't!
 - And God Is Always Working, Even When You Can't!
 - There Is Always Hope!
- Hope For Repentance!
 - Which We See In 2:1:
 - "But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness!"
 - Paul Made A Difficult Decision:
 - To Not Return To Corinth "In Heaviness!"
 - In Deep Sorrow Because Of Their Sin!
 - Instead - He Was Willing To Patiently Wait:
 - For God To Work In Their Hearts!
 - Too Many Times We Are Impatient!
 - Instead - Paul Gave Them "Space To Repent!"
 - Because There Was Hope!
 - Even When He Wasn't There!
- Hope For Restoration!
 - Which We See In 2:2 - "For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?"
 - "His Joy Was Intimately Connected With Theirs To Cause Them Pain Was To Experience Pain Himself!" (ECB)
 - There Was A Great Strain:
 - In Their Relationship!
 - And He Did Not Want It To Get Any Worse!
 - And This Was Another Reason Why He Changed His Plans To Visit Them!
 - Instead - He Was Willing To Patiently Wait:
 - For God To Work In Their Hearts!
 - Until Their Relationship Could Be Restored!
 - There Was Hope!
- Hope For Rejoicing!
 - See This In 2:3 - "And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all!"
 - So - Instead Of Visiting Them Again:
 - He Wrote To Them:
 - To Remind Them Of What Needed To Be Done By Them!
 - **IE:** God Can Often Use A Tenderly-Written Letter To Do A Good Work In A Persons Heart! Someone You Need To Write To?
 - But After He Wrote That Letter:
 - He Was Then Willing To Patiently Wait:
 - For God To Work In Their Hearts!
 - And Its Pretty Clear:
 - That Paul Was Convinced That They Would Respond To The Lord, Repent Of Their Sin, And Have Their Relationship Restored!
 - "Having Confidence In You All!"
 - Hebrews 6:9 - "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak!"
 - There Is Always Hope:
 - When God Is At Work In A Person's Heart!
- Are You Reflecting The Tenderness Of Christ:
 - In Your Relationships?
 - Is There A "Tender Hope" In God's Work:
 - In The Hearts & Lives Of Others?
 - Sometimes - It Can Be Discouraging! But Be Hopeful!

* The Third Thing We See Is That Paul Had:

2. A Tender Heart:

- For The Christians There In Corinth!

- 2:4 - “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you!”
 - Here - Paul Describes What It Was Like:
 - When He Wrote That Sorrowful & Painful Letter!
 - Which Is Likely A Letter Written Between 1 & 2 Corinthians!
 - But Look At How Paul Wrote To Them!
- He Wrote In Deep Labor!
 - “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears!”
 - There Was A Deep Internal Struggle Within Paul:
 - When He Wrote To Them!
 - There Was Some Apprehension:
 - When He Wrote!
 - Some Inner “Affliction!”
 - 7:8 - “For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season!”
 - There Was Some Heart-Ache:
 - When He Wrote!
 - “Aguish Of Heart!”
 - Ever Felt This Way? A Great Burden For Someone?
 - Paul’s Passion For Them:
 - Affected Him Completely!
 - His Heart & Mind & Body:
 - So Much So That He Wrote “With Many Tears!”
 - Through A Flood Of Tears!
 - Many Tear-Stains Likely Peppared The Parchment On Which He Wrote!
 - But All Of This Deep Labor:
 - Was So That Their Joy In The Lord Might Return!
 - Through Repentance & Restoration!
- He Wrote With Deep Love!
 - “Not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you!”
 - Paul’s Heart Reflected The Tender Heart:
 - Of Jesus Christ Himself For His People!
 - And It Was This Great Love That “Constrained” Him & Motivated Him To Go Where He Went / To Do All That He Did / To Say All That He Said!
 - In 12:15 - Paul Reminds Them:
 - Of The Kind Of Love He Had For Them:
 - “Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved!”
 - His Love Was A Fervent Love!
 - “Abundantly!”
 - His Love Was A Faithful Love!
 - Even When Their Love For Him Diminished!
 - Instead - “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you!”
 - Now, That’s A Deep Love!
 - Are You Reflecting The Same Kind Of Tenderness:
 - In Your Relationships?
 - The Tender Heart & Tender Love:
 - Of Jesus Christ Himself!
 - A Love That Spurred Him On To “Spend & Be Spent” For Us?
 - When He Died On The Cross For Our Sin!

Conclusion:

1. William Ogden:
 - “Sweet is the tender love Jesus hath shown, Sweeter far than any love that mortals have known; Kind to the erring one, Faithful is He; He the great example is, and pattern for me!”
 - Let The Tenderness Of Jesus Christ:
 - Influence Your Own Relationships:
 - With Others!

- Other Christians! Unbelievers!
 - No Doubt - It Was The "Love Of Christ" That:
 - "Constrained" Paul To Have This Kind Of Tenderness:
 - Toward The Corinthian Church!
 - He Wanted To Be:
 - A Tender Help To Them!
 - He Had:
 - A Tender Hope In Them!
 - And He Wanted To Show:
 - A Tender Heart To Them!
2. Are You Reflecting The Tenderness Of Christ:
 - In Your Relationships As Well?
 - "May Christ Be Seen In Me!"

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