

The Message of the New Testament

2 CORINTHIANS

Background

To put 2 Corinthians into perspective . . .

- Paul was the first to preach the gospel in Corinth and on that first visit he planted a _____.
- While away starting other churches, Paul learned of _____ in Corinth (factions and other problems). He responded with the letter we call 1 Corinthians.
- A follow-up visit did not go well. Paul did not make a good impression. Problems were not resolved.
- After leaving, Paul wrote what many call the severe letter. We do not have this letter. It is referred to in 2 Corinthians 2:4 and 7:8-9. It seems to have had an effect.
- When he heard the good news he wrote this letter.
- What is apparent in this letter is that some people in Corinth were following some teachers whom Paul calls “_____ -apostles.” Outwardly they were very impressive. They had that certain something that attracts followers. These teachers were disparaging Paul’s credentials as a legitimate teacher.
- He wrote the letter also to defend his _____ versus these trouble-makers.

The Message of 2 Corinthians

The message of 2 Corinthians is that the _____ displayed and experienced in the course of serving Christ _____ rather nullify the credibility of one’s calling.

In other words, when we experience difficulties, challenges, heartaches, and when we display unimpressive characteristics amidst the world, it does not detract from the credibility of Christ’s calling us to himself. Rather, the comfort and strength from Christ that we experience in the midst of our afflictions and weaknesses demonstrate His power and presence in our lives.

This is clear from the outset of the letter.

1:3-5 ---

Notice how Paul magnifies his _____. He is unashamed of the fact that he has been afflicted. This is not some unthinkable experience for the Apostle not to mention the “ordinary” Christian. Rather, he makes much of the _____ of God that has attended to him in the midst of his sufferings. And that comfort has a further impact that he may comfort others in their affliction as well.

When Christians suffer affliction, their calling is to patiently endure and thereby to experience the _____ with which God attends the suffering.

1:6-7---

Sometimes the afflictions of the Christian might become terribly _____, but the goal of God is that we rely on him not on ourselves. He has delivered and he will deliver time and time again. He is worthy upon whom to set your _____.

1:8-10---

Paul's Manner with the Corinthians

1. Paul had come to the Corinthians in a non-_____ way, without pomp and flair.

1:12---

2. The reason Paul had changed his mind about a visit was because he did not want to come again in a painful way for them or for him. Rather he wrote to them. And he was in much _____ and anguish of heart because of his love for them.

2:1-4---

This is further evidence of a kind of weakness and affliction which Paul experienced, but instead of discrediting him it _____ his sincerity and love.

Dealing with the Pain of Sin

2:5-7---

1. Paul tells the church that they are the ones who have _____ pain due to their arrogance over the man's sin.
2. Paul sees it as right that the man suffered _____ but thought it not good that he would suffer excessively.

2:12-13--

2:14---

15b-16---

Here again we see Paul's sense of weakness in accomplishing the very thing for which he was called, but he also carries with him _____. It is not an assurance based upon his own efforts, wisdom, smoothness, or ingenuity, but an assurance based upon the word and power of Christ.

Boldness and Confidence

1. Paul lacks a flashy _____ of commendation written with ink like some apparently have. But in fact the Corinthians themselves are a letter certifying the power of God upon their ministry.

3:1-3---

2. Paul's confidence is not in himself but in God.

3:4-6a---

3. Paul is _____ because the glory of God is manifest in the new covenant in which people are brought to faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. He, therefore, does not become discouraged nor resort to human ingenuity or cleverness to produce converts.

3:11-13---

4:1-3---

4:5-6---

Where's the Power?

Paul argues that God works through human _____ to display that the power that is at work belongs to God. Our weaknesses give rise to the display of God's strength.

4:7-11---

Paul encounters tremendous afflictions, but he remains _____ because he is looking to the future and to the eternal. We know that we have an eternal heavenly body to replace this one. And we know that when we die, we will be with Christ.

4:16-18---

5:1---

5:6-8---

What Really Matters

What really matters is not appearance but substance. If we look weird to the world it is for Christ and for those who would be saved.

5:12-15---

Ministry

Paul characterizes the nature of his ministry as being at the same time on opposite ends of the spectrum. The Corinthians should open their hearts wide as well.

6:4-10---

6:11; 13---

Joy

Joy is not the absence of _____. It is delight in God and in His accomplishing His purposes.

7:4-7; 11---

Sacrifice

God uses _____ for good and shows his power through it in mighty ways.

8:1-4---

Battle

Living in the flesh we tend to think of battles only in the fleshly sense. This is the way they appear. But this is not where the most important battles are fought.

10:3-5---

Paul's Weakness in Person

It is not the appearance or impressiveness in appearance or speaking that validates God's calling. Rather it is the _____.

10:1---

10:10---

11:5-6; 10---

The Disguise

Paul would continue to draw attention to the nature of his ministry in terms of suffering and in terms of not being a burden on those to whom he brought the word in order to distinguish himself from false teachers who _____ themselves as teachers of truth.

11:12-15---

Paul's Further Evidences of Weakness

In contrast to the "super-apostles" Paul says the following:

11:19-21a---

Here is what gives _____ to Paul's apostleship:

11:21b-30---

Paul's Final Evidence of Weakness

On the one hand he saw _____ of heaven.

12:2-4---

On the other hand he was being kept from conceit by a messenger from _____.

12:7-10---

What the Messenger of Christ Seeks

12:14---

What the Messenger of Christ Sacrifices

12:15---

The Vulnerability of the Messenger of Christ

12:20-21---

The Power of Christ

13:1-4---

The Message of 2 Corinthians

Over and over and over we see the theme running through this letter that human weakness in whatever form is not evidence of _____ weakness. We see that God uses weakness to magnify and display his _____. Credibility is far from established on the basis of smoothness, cunning, or worldly success. Consider this closing word that Paul utters.

13:5---

Christ in you is the hope of glory—not surface stuff

13:6-9---

Conclusion

13:11---