



## A Letter of Grace 2 Corinthians

A Painful Visit  
and Difficult Letter (1:12-2:4)

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### Introduction

- Review - things are not going well relationally
- The challenge of expositing a letter written to other people in other circumstances and applying to ourselves
  - How does Paul deal pastorally with the churches?
    - What are enduring principles to be extracted?
    - What is particular to this situation, including Paul's apostolic authority?
      - What is to be applied in our own setting?

2

## A Mutual Boast (1:12-14)

For our boast is this,  
 the testimony of our conscience,  
 that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity,  
 not by earthly wisdom  
 but by the grace of God,  
 and supremely so toward you.

For we are not writing to you anything other than  
 what you read and understand  
 and I hope you will fully understand—  
 just as you did partially understand us—  
 that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us  
 as we will boast of you. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

3

## A Planned Visit (1:15-17)

Because I was sure of this,  
 I wanted to come to you first,  
 so that you might have a second experience of grace.<sup>(8:6)</sup>  
 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia,  
 and to come back to you from Macedonia  
 and have you send me on my way to Judea.

Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this?

Do I make my plans according to the flesh,  
 ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time?

4

## A Faithful God (1:18-22)

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

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you,  
Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No,  
but in him it is always Yes.

For all the promises of God find their Yes in him.

That is why it is through him  
that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ,  
and has anointed us,  
and who has also put his seal on us  
and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

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## A Cancelled Visit (1:23-2:2)

But I call God to witness against me  
—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth.

Not that we lord it over your faith,  
but we work with you for your joy,  
for you stand firm in your faith (*better “you stand firm by faith”*).

For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you.

For if I cause you pain,  
who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained?

6

## A Difficult Letter (2:3-4)

And I wrote as I did,  
 so that when I came I might not suffer pain  
 from those who should have made me rejoice,  
 for I felt sure of all of you,  
 that my joy would be the joy of you all.

For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart  
 and with many tears,  
 not to cause you pain  
 but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

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## Application/Participation

- The difficulty of human relationships - sin, suspicion, betrayal, gossip, accusations, insecurities, selfishness, pride, etc.
- Living as Jesus followers is often solutional, not preventative
- Theological Underpinnings
  - Father - the faithful, promise-keeping God
  - Son - sacrifice, forgiveness, reconciliation, humility, grace
  - Spirit - sealed and guaranteed the work in His people
- Anticipated hope - mutual boasting in the Day of Christ

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