



# A Letter of Grace

## 2 Corinthians

Accusations and Forgiveness  
(2:5-11)

1

## Introduction

- The specific incident from Paul's previous visit that caused his grief and sudden departure from Corinth
- He leaves the person unnamed, and leaves out the details, both of which they already knew
- "His goal is to bring healing, not to recount the events to prove how right he was." (Garland)
- Most older commentators identify the man from 1 Corinthians, but unlikely the case...

2

## Introduction

- What we can discern of the offense:
  - (1) it was personal against Paul (and undermined his authority)
  - (2) based on a partial understanding of Paul's actions
  - (3) a good number in the church were persuaded
  - (4) it had caused Paul such pain that he would leave the church and write a tearful letter calling for church's repentance and support
  - (5) it affected the whole church community
  - (6) the man had sufficient influence within the church that he was believed apart from Paul getting a fair hearing and opportunity for personal response

3

## Reaffirming the Offender (5-8)

Now if anyone has caused pain, (sorrow, sadness, grief, offense)  
 he has caused it not to me,  
 but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you.  
 For such a one, this *punishment* by the majority is enough,  
 so you should rather turn to *forgive* and *comfort* him,  
 or he may be *overwhelmed* by excessive *sorrow*.  
 So I beg you to *reaffirm* your love for him.

4

## Testing the Church (9)

For this is why I wrote,  
that I might *test* you and *know*  
whether you are obedient in everything.  
Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive.

5

## Paul's Forgiveness (10)

Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything,  
has been for your sake in the presence of Christ,

6

## Satan's Work (11)

so that we would not be *outwitted* by Satan;  
for we are not ignorant of his *designs*.

7

## Application

- [The difficulty]
- While leaders are not untouchable and do sin, accusation itself (even by a group) is not proof (1Tim 5:19-21), especially when done in private
- False* accusations of church leadership not only hurts them, but the whole of the church
- It is the church's responsibility to confront false accusations, and to call an offender to account as a test of obedience

8

## Application

- *Sorrow* is a proper response to that confrontation, but following *affirmation* is crucial to their restoration
- Satan's schemes include both coverup as well as over-zealous punishment - damage can be redeemed
- Forgiveness, both personal and corporate, is in the presence of Christ and the good of the church
- For those desirous of leadership...