

“The Heart Of A Church”
2 Corinthians 7:2-4

Introduction:

1. Let’s Turn Back In Our Bibles This Morning:
 - To 2 Corinthians 7:
 - Where We Just Finished Looking At:
 - One Of The Clearest & Strongest Appeals In The Bible:
 - For Christian Separation!
 - Back In 6:14 - “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers!”
 - In Other Words:
 - Do Not Let This World:
 - Squeeze You Back Into Its Mold!
2. Now - Why Did Paul Find It Necessary:
 - To Issue Such A Strong Statement To The Corinthian Church?
 - Because The World Was Crowding Out:
 - Their Love For Him & Their Love For The Lord!
 - Remember Back Further In:
 - 6:11 - Paul’s Heart Was Open & Enlarged Toward Them! But Their Heart Was Closed & Shrinking Toward Him!
3. But After Paul Addressed:
 - This Major Issue In Their Hearts:
 - He Sought To Reassure Them:
 - Of His Love For Them!
 - And So - In 7:2-4 - We Hear The Gracious Words Of:
 - A Father Toward His Children & A Pastor Toward His Church!
 - 7:2-4 - “Receive Us!” - Paul Writes - “Receive Us! We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. / I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you. / Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation!”
 - In These Three Verses:
 - Paul Gives Us A Living & Inspired Illustration:
 - Of What The Heart Of A Church:
 - Should Look Like!
 - It Should Be A Heart Throbbing:
 - With Love For The Lord & For Each Other!
 - 5. Even As Jesus Said In:
 - John 13:34-35 - “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. / By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another!”
 - Now - Its One Thing:
 - To **Say** That We Love Each Other As Christians:
 - And As A Church!
 - But - Its Another Thing:
 - To **Show** That We Love One Another As Christians:
 - And As A Church!
 - But Here, Paul **Shows** Us:
 - What True Christian Love:
 - Looks Like & Even Feels Like!
 - And The First Thing We Notice Is That:

* The Heart Of Our Church Should Be:

1. **A Heart Of Desire For Each Other!**
 - A Heart Of Desire!
 - In 7:2 - Paul Says - “Receive Us!”
 - Now The Word Translated Here “Receive” Comes From A Word That Means:
 - The Country! **IE:** As In The **Country** Life Verses The **City** Life! One Of The Reasons Why We Moved From Indianapolis To Greenfield To Fountaintown Was To Live In “The Country!” A Place Known For Its Wide Open Spaces!

- So Here - Paul Makes Another Appeal:
 - To The Corinthian Church:
 - Not Just To Receive Him:
 - But To Make Some Space:
 - For Him! To Give Him:
 - Some Room - In Their Hearts!
- It Is A Parallel Request To:
 - What He Wrote In 6:13 To Them:
 - “Be Ye Also Enlarged!”
 - One Of Paul’s Greatest Desires For This Church:
 - Was For Their Love To Be As Strong As His Love!
 - And So He Asks Them To:
 - Make Room In Their Hearts For Him:
 - Once Again! “Receive Us!”
- Is This The Desire We Have For Each Other & For Our Church?
 - Do We Make Room For Each Other In Our Hearts & In Our Lives & In Our Time?
 - I Think We Will When We Remember That:
 - Our Heart For Each Other Is Based On God’s Heart For Us!
- After All - Who Are We:
 - As A Church?
 - Go Back To 6:16 - “Ye Are The Temple Of The Living God!”
 - And So - Our Love For Each Other Is Based On:
- The Presence Of God With Us!
 - Every True Christian & Every True Church:
 - Is The “Temple Of The Living God!”
 - And God Dwells With Us & In Us!
 - And We Need To See Each Other & Treat Each Other As:
 - “Living Stones” That Make Up God’s Temple!
 - Our Love For Each Other Is Also Based On:
 - The Promises Of God To Us!
 - Like The Promises Mentioned In:
 - 6:16 - “As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people!”
 - 6:17b-18 - “I will receive you, / And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty!”
 - If God Shows His Grace To Us:
 - With These Promises:
 - We Need To Show His Grace:
 - To Each Other As Well!
 - Is There This Kind Of Heart:
 - In Our Church?
 - A Heart Of Desire For One Another?
 - Where We Receive Each Other:
 - As The Temple Of The Living God?
 - We Need To Make Space For Each Other!
 - In Our Hearts!
 - As We Seek To Love One Another As Jesus Himself Loves Us!
 - In Our Minds!
 - And Think About Each Other! Philippians 2:3-5 - “In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. / Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. / Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus!”
 - In Our Lives!
 - Make & Spend Time With Each Other! For Worship, For Fellowship, For Service!

* The Heart Of Our Church Should Also Be:

2. A Heart Of Diligence With Each Other!

- A Heart Of Diligence!
 - Going On In 7:2 - Paul Explains How His Heart For Them:

- Could Be Seen In How He Lived With Them!
 - “We Have Wronged No Man, We Have Corrupted No Man, We Have Defrauded No Man!”
- These 3 Things Mentioned By Paul:
 - Were Probably Accusations:
 - That Were Made Against Him:
 - By Some Of The False Teachers & Leaders Who Had Infiltrated The Corinthian Church!
 - And So - Paul Wanted To Reassure Them:
 - That Any Accusation Leveled Against Him:
 - Was Unfounded!
 - Because - As Paul Said In Acts 24:16 - “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men!”
 - Paul Was Diligent To Maintain:
 - A Clear Conscience With The Church!
 - And This Is To Be The Heart Of Our Church As Well!
 - We Need To Be Diligent To Have A Clear Conscience In Our Relationships With Each Other!
- In Our Treatment Of Each Other!
 - Even As Paul Said:
 - “We Have Wronged No Man!”
 - This Means That Paul Never Harmed Or Hurt Anyone:
 - By Acting Unjustly! By Violating God’s Law And Word!
 - Now - This Does Not Mean That Some People:
 - Were Not Offended By Paul!
 - Because Some Were!
 - But He Sought To Never Offend Anyone Based Upon God’s Standards Of Conduct!
 - And When We Have The Right Kind Of Heart:
 - For Each Other:
 - We Will Always Seek To:
 - Treat Each Other Right!
 - Can You Say With A Clear Conscience:
 - “We Have Wronged No Man?”
 - If Not - Perhaps You Need To Get With That Person To Clear Up That Offense! Be Diligent!
 - Also - We Need To Be Diligent:
 - To Have A Clear Conscience:
- In Our Talks With Each Other!
 - Even As Paul Said:
 - “We Have Corrupted No Man!”
 - To “Corrupt” Means To Infect Or Influence Someone That Would Eventually Bring About Failure & Destruction!
 - **IE:** Like The Rust That Gets On Your Car! Once It Begins, Its Hard To Stop It!
 - This Seems To Refer Here To Paul’s Talking & Teaching!
 - Paul Knew The Importance Of Speaking The Truth & Speaking The Truth In Love!
 - And Because Of His Heart For God, His Word & His People:
 - He Did Not Want To Do Or Say Anything:
 - That Might Corrupt Or Defile “The Temple Of God” - Which Is The Church!
 - And When We Have The Right Kind Of Heart:
 - For Each Other:
 - We Too Will Always Seek To:
 - Speak To & Teach Each Other The Right Things In The Right Way!
 - Not Just In Sunday School:
 - Or In Services - But In Your Casual Conversations & Even In Your Social Media Interactions!
 - Ephesians 4:29 - “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is

- good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers!”
 - Can This Be Said Of You?
- Also - We Need To Be Diligent:
 - To Have A Clear Conscience:
- In Our Tasks With Each Other!
 - Even As Paul Said:
 - “We Have Defrauded No Man!”
 - One Of The Main Accusations Against Paul Was That He Was In The Ministry Just For Himself! To Take Advantage Of The People Who Were Listening To Him!
 - For Prestige Or Power Or Money!
 - But The Way Paul Lived:
 - Proved That His Conscience Was Clear In This Matter As Well!
 - In Fact - What He Said In Acts 20:33-34 - Was How He Lived His Life - “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. / Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me!”
 - Instead Of “Defrauding” & “Taking Advantage” Of The Corinthians:
 - His Ministry Actually:
 - Consumed Him & Even Cost Him Very Dearly At Times!
 - But That Was Ok! 12:15 - “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you!”
 - Does This Describe Your Service:
 - For & With Each Other?
- We Need To Have This Kind Of Heart:
 - In Our Church!
 - A Heart Of Diligence Toward Each Other!
 - As Paul - To Have A Clear Conscience - “A Conscience Void Of Offense!”
 - In How We Treat Each Other!
 - In How We Talk With Each Other!
 - And In Our Tasks & Service For Each Other!

* The Heart Of Our Church Should Also Be:

3. ***A Heart Of Devotion For Each Other!***

- A Heart Of Devotion!
 - 7:3 - “I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you!”
 - Once Again Paul Is A Living Illustration:
 - Of What Christian Love Is To Be Like!
 - 1 Peter 4:8 - “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins!”
 - Even Though The Corinthians:
 - Did Not Show Their Love For Paul:
 - In The Same Way:
 - Yet His Love - His Charity - “Covered Up” Their Lack Of Love For Him!
 - This Does Not Mean That Their Sins Against God Were Not To Be Addressed!
 - But That He Would Not Let Their Sins & Offenses Toward **Him** Cause Him To Be Bitter Against Them!
 - And So He Tells Them:
 - “Ye Are In Our Hearts!”
 - With This One Simple Statement, Uttered With The Utmost Sincerity, Paul Reveals His Affection & Love!
 - And This Is What Our Heart Needs To Be Like For Each Other!
 - We See:
- The Depth Of Our Devotion!
 - “Ye Are **In** Our Hearts!”
 - In Our Innermost Thoughts!
 - And In Our Innermost Feelings!
 - In Spite Of All The Issues & Problems:
 - That Paul & The Corinthian Christians:
 - Were Struggling Through:

- Yet He Could Say:
 - “Ye Are In Our Hearts!”
- This Kind Of Heart & Love:
 - Can Only Come From One Place!
 - From The Grace & Love Of Jesus Christ Toward Paul!
 - Remember Romans 8:35 - Paul Asks - “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” - Then Paul Answers - 8:38 - “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, / Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!”
 - Because Christ Shows This Kind Of Love To You & To Me:
 - Shouldn’t We Reflect His Love Toward Others? And Especially Toward Each Other?
 - We Also See:
- The Duration Of Our Devotion!
 - 7:3 - “For I Have Said Before, That Ye Are In Our Hearts To Die And Live With You!”
 - Although Paul Said Some Things *Like* This:
 - Earlier In This Letter To Them!
 - Perhaps He Is Referring To The Time In Acts 18 - When After 18 Months Of Ministry - He Was About To Leave!
 - When He First Arrived In The City Of Corinth:
 - There Was No Church!
 - And Seemingly Little Interest!
 - But God Had Big Plans!
 - Acts 18:9-11 - “Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: / For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. / And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them!”
 - And After Those 18 Months:
 - As He Was Setting Sail From The Port Of Cenchrea:
 - Perhaps It Was Then When He Shared These words Of His Abiding Love For Them!
 - “Ye Are In Our Hearts To Die And Live With You!”
 - What A Way To Say Goodbye!
 - And Now - After All That Time:
 - And After All Their Issues:
 - They Were *Still* In His Heart!
 - Do We Have This Same Kind Of Devotion:
 - In Our Hearts Toward Each Other?
 - A Love That Is Deep?
 - A Love That Endures?
 - Leads Us Also To:

4 *A Heart Of Delight In Each Other!*

- The Heart Of Our Church Should Be:
 - A Heart Of Delight!
 - Which We See In 7:4 - “Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation!”
 - With These Words - We See:
- The Genuine Expressions Of Our Delight:
 - As Christians & As A Church!
 - All Too Often:
 - We Express Things That Are Negative:
 - To Each Other! But Our Focus, Like Paul, Should Be More On The Positive!
 - We Can & Need To Have:
 - A Settled Confidence In Each Other!
 - Even As Paul Did - “Great Is My Boldness Of Speech Toward You!”
 - The Phrase “Boldness Of Speech” - Can Also Be Translated - “Confidence!”
 - But It Was Paul’s Confidence In Them & In God’s Work In Their Lives That Caused Him To Speak Freely & Frankly & As A Friend!
 - Proverbs 27:6 - “Faithful Are The Wounds Of A Friend!”

- We Need To Be Confident That God Is Working & Will Continue To Work In Our Lives / In Our Church Through His Word!
 - We Can & Also Need To Have:
- A Streaming Commendation About Each Other!
 - Even As Paul Did - "Great Is My Glorifying Of You!"
 - Paul Would Frequently Glory & Even Boast In What God Was Doing In & Through The Corinthians!
 - Imagine The Sheer Delight It Gave Paul To Say What He Did In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, / Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. / **And such were some of you:** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God!"
 - We Need To Think In Positive Terms:
 - About Each Other - And Lift Each Other Up With Praise & Pride In What God Is Doing In Our Lives!
 - And These Outward Expressions Ought To Reflect:
- The Genuine Experience Of Our Delight:
 - In Each Other!
 - We See:
 - A Heart Of Encouragement!
 - When Paul Writes - "I Am Filled With Comfort!"
 - In Spite Of All Their Issues:
 - Paul Was Encouraged By The Corinthian Church!
 - And We'll See This More Later On In This Chapter!
 - But He Wanted To Encourage Them:
 - As He Had Been Encouraged!
 - Is This Our Desire & Goal As A Church? What Have You Done Or Said Lately To Edify & Encourage Someone In Our Church?
 - So Often It Is True:
 - The More We Try To Encourage Others:
 - The More We Ourselves Will Be Encouraged!
 - Because Our Focus Is On The Positive Things! The Things That God I Doing In Our Midst!
 - Also See:
 - A Heart Of Elation!
 - Paul Finishes - 7:4 - "I Am Exceeding Joyful In All Our Tribulation!"
 - The Cup Of Paul's Heart:
 - Was Full Of Comfort & Encouragement!
 - But It Was Overflowing With Joy & Elation!
- Because The Cup Of His Heart:
 - Was Full Of The Lord:
 - And His People!
 - And This Can Be True For Us As A Church As Well!
 - We Need To Be A Source:
 - Of God's Comfort & Joy:
 - In Each Other's Lives!
 - Not Focusing On The Negative, But On The Positive!
 - We Need To Be Filled With:
 - Faith & Hope & Love!
 - In The Lord!
 - And For Each Other!

Conclusion:

1. Because This Is What The Heart Of Our Church:
 - Should Look Like!
 - A Heart Of Desire:
 - For Each Other!

- A Heart Of Diligence!
 - Toward Each Other!
 - A Heart Of Devotion:
 - For Each Other!
 - A Deep & Abiding Love!
 - “Ye Are In Our Hearts!”
 - A Heart Of Delight:
 - In Each Other!
 - And This Kind Of Heart:
 - Can Only Come From A Heart:
 - That Is Full Of The Comfort & Joy:
 - That Comes From The Lord!
2. Is This What Your Heart Looks Like Today?

***Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
4245 North 200 West
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com***