

“A Matter Of The Heart”
2 Corinthians 6:11-13

Introduction:

1. This Morning - I Would Like For Us To Return:
 - To Our Study Of God’s “Precious Word” - And:
 - Head Back To 2 Corinthians 6:
 - Where The Apostle Paul Has Been Explaining:
 - And Defending His Role:
 - As An Apostle & As A Preacher Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
 - If You Remember - Back In:
 - 5:20 - He Described Himself As:
 - An “Ambassador For Christ!”
 - And His Message Was:
 - “Be Ye Reconciled To God!”
 - Then In:
 - 6:1 - He Described Himself As:
 - A “Worker Together” – And Even A Partner – With God!
 - And His Message Was:
 - “Receive Not The Grace Of God In Vain!”
 - And Then In:
 - 6:4 - He Described Himself As:
 - A “Minister Of God!”
 - And He Backed Up His Message With A Lifestyle Of:
 - “Approving Himself As The Minister Of God!”
 - No Matter What!
 - He Sought To Live His Life:
 - As A Living “Advertisement” Of The Grace Of God!
 - Is This How You Are Seeking To Live Your Life?
2. As We Come To The Next 3 Verses:
 - In Chapter 6 - Paul Takes A Little Bit Of A Breath:
 - To Share The Reason Why:
 - He Labored So Diligently & So Devotedly:
 - For The Lord & For Them!
 - It Was A Matter Of The Heart!
 - Which We Find As We Read 6:11-13 - “O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. / Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. / Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged!”
 - In These Verses - We See:

1. *A Revelation Of Love!*

- From Paul To His Beloved Corinthian Church!
 - He Writes Again - In 6:11 - “O Ye Corinthians, Our Mouth Is Open Unto You, Our Heart Is Enlarged!”
 - This Is One Of The Most Expressive Verses:
 - In All Of The New Testament:
 - That Reveals A Pastor’s Love For His People - His Church!
 - The Apostle Paul:
 - Loved The Corinthian Church!
 - We See:
- The Great Empathy:
 - He Had For Them - As He Calls Out To Them:
 - Personally!
 - “O Ye Corinthians!”
 - Ever Since Paul Met Them:
 - On His Second Missionary Journey In Acts 18:
 - His Heart Was ***Moved*** For Them!
 - He Was There When The Church Began!
 - 18:8 - When - “Many Of The Corinthians Hearing Believed, And Were Baptized!”

- He Was There As The Church Grew!
 - 18:11 - “And He Continued There A Year And Six Months, Teaching The Word Of God Among Them!”
- And So - Paul ***Knew*** The Corinthian Church!
 - He Knew Them Personally & Intimately!
 - He Knew Who They Were, Where They Lived, What Kinds Of Challenges & Trials & Temptations They Would Face!
- And His Personal Empathy & Love:
 - Was Behind Every Prayer For Them!
 - His Personal Empathy & Love:
 - Was Behind Every Word To Them!
 - Which Is Why He Reveals To Them:
- The Great Expression:
 - Of His Love!
 - “Our Mouth Is Open Unto You!”
 - This Meant That From The Very Beginning, The Best Way For Him To Show & Express His Love:
 - Was To Share God’s Word With Them! The Word Of God’s Grace & Love!
 - And So - Because He Loved Them:
 - He Could Not Shut His Mouth:
 - With What They Needed Most!
 - The Truth Of The Word Of God!
 - This Is One Of The Key Ways For A Pastor To Show His Love For His Church!
 - “Speaking The Truth In Love!” (Ephesians 4:15)
 - And To Share The Word Of God:
 - ***Freely, Faithfully, Fully, & Fervently!***
 - This Is How Paul Shared God’s Word With The Corinthians!
 - ***Freely!*** (With Courage & Conviction! Ephesians 6:19 - “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel!”)
 - ***Faithfully!***
 - ***Fully!*** (Acts 20:27 - “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God!”)
 - ***Fervently!*** (Jeremiah 20:9 - “But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay!”)
 - As Paul Shared The Word Of God With Them:
 - He Showed His Love For Them!
 - But Then He Reveals:
- The Great Expansion:
 - Of His Love!
 - “Our Heart Is Enlarged!”
 - Paul Was Not Describing:
 - A Medical Condition - But A Spiritual Condition!
 - A Condition Of Deep & Abiding Love & Affection For Them!
 - Which Is Even More Surprising When:
 - You Think Of How The Corinthian Church:
 - Treated The Apostle Paul!
 - He Pointed This Out Explicitly In 2 Corinthians 12:15 - “Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved!”
 - ***IE:*** Have You Ever Experienced This?
 - “Though The More Abundantly” You Love Someone – “The Less” You Feel Loved In Return!
 - And This Can Hurt!
 - In Fact - Many Times - The Reason You Are Hurt So Deeply By Someone:
 - Is Because You Love Them So Deeply!
 - From Your Heart!
 - This Is What Happened To Paul! But:

- This Shows Us The Kind Of Love:
 - Paul Had For The Corinthian Church!
 - It Was A Pure Love, A Personal Love, A Passionate Love!
 - Even The Kind Of Christian Love Peter Describes In 1 Peter 1:22 - “See That Ye Love One Another With A Pure Heart Fervently!”
- His Enlarged Heart Of Love Was The Basis:
 - Of Everything He Said To Them:
 - And Everything He Did For Them!
- What An Amazing Display Of Love:
 - Between A Pastor And His People!
 - Between The Apostle And This Church!
 - You Would Think That With This Kind Of Heart – And With This Kind Of Love & Affection:
 - The People He Loved Would Respond In Kind!
 - But Is This What Happened?
- Unfortunately, No! Because In 6:12, Paul Had To Deal With:

2. *A Rejection Of Love!*

- A Rejection Of His Love By The Church!
 - 6:12 - “Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels!”
 - At First Glance - This Can Be A Difficult Verse To Understand!
 - But In This Verse - We See:
- The Concern For Their Condition!
 - Paul Is Like A Doctor Disclosing To His Patients The Diagnosis Of Their Condition!
 - Their Spiritual Condition!
 - What Was Their Condition?
 - “Ye Are Straitened In Your Bowels!”
 - The Word “Straitened” Can Also Be Translated Compressed Or Restricted!
 - Now - If This *Were* A Medical Condition:
 - It Would Be Pretty Bad!
 - But Since This Describes A Spiritual Condition:
 - It’s Even Worse:
 - It Meant That Their Own Heart - Which Is What Paul Means By Their “Bowels” - Was Being Squeezed & Compressed So That Nothing Else Could Get In!
 - **IE:** Last Year - We Had The Opportunity To Go To The Big Island Of Hawaii For Our Family Vacation - And We Stayed Just A Few Miles Away From Where The Lava Flows From The Kilauea Volcano Has Destroyed Nearly 90 Homes! The Lava Is Flowing Over Some Of The Major Roads Both In & Out Of The Region - Closing Off & Eventually Keeping Out Everything Else But Lava!
 - This Is What Was Happening To The Corinthian Church! In Their Relationship With Paul, In Their Relationship With Each Other, And Even In Their Relationship With The Lord!
 - Their Own Heart & Affection & Love For Paul Was Closing – Even Though His Heart & His Affection & His Love For Them Was Enlarging!
 - Even Though There Was Plenty Of Room In His Heart For Them, There Was No Room In Their Heart For Him!
 - And That Was A Problem!
 - And So, Paul Continues To Describe:
- The Cause For Their Condition!
 - Again - 6:12 - “Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels!”
 - Their Condition Was Not:
 - Caused By Paul Or Any Other:
 - External Influence!
 - It Was An Internal Problem! A Problem With Their Own Hearts!
 - Now - We’re Not Sure:
 - What Was Causing Their Hearts:
 - To Close Toward Paul!
 - But - From Our Own Experience - We Can Probably Identify Some Causes!

Like:

- The Cause Of Sin!
 - Sin Will Always Interfere:
 - In Your Relationship With Someone Who Genuinely Loves You:
 - And Will Always Tell You The Truth! Or Perhaps:
- The Cause Of Selfishness!
 - Selfishness Will Crowd Out Any Room:
 - That You May Have In Your Heart:
 - For Someone Who Loves You! Or Perhaps:
- The Cause Of Suspicion!
 - Suspicion & Jealousy Will Cause You:
 - To Question & Doubt The Love:
 - That Someone Has For You!
- Even Though Paul Does Not Explain The Cause Directly:
 - It Was Something That Was:
 - Constricting & Closing Their Hearts:
 - To Someone Who Genuinely Loved Them & Wanted God's Best For Them!
 - They Were Not **Moved** By His Love For Them!
- This Condition:
 - Is A Very Sad Condition!
 - It Will Squeeze Out The Joy & The Peace:
 - The Harmony & The Contentment:
 - That Can Be In Your Own Heart As A Christian!
 - And This Is Why, In The Very Next Verse, Paul Makes Another Appeal To Them! An Appeal For:

3. ***A Response Of Love!***

- 6:13 - "Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged!"
 - "Be Ye Also Enlarged!"
 - This Is Paul's Appeal To Them! And It Is An Appeal For:
- A Return Of His Love!
 - A "Recompense!"
 - As John Gill Explains This Word:
 - "Let Love Be Returned For Love!"
 - This Is All Paul Wanted & Desired From Them!
 - This Was An Opportunity:
 - For Full Reconciliation & Full Restoration:
 - In Their Relationship With Paul:
 - And Even With The Lord!
 - And Isn't This What Genuine Love Always Pursues?
 - There Was Still An Opportunity:
 - For The Forgiveness, The Friendship, And The Fellowship That Reconciliation Can Bring!
 - "Let Love Be Returned For Love!"
 - This Was Also An Appeal For:
- A Reflection Of His Love!
 - This Is What He Means When He Says:
 - "Be Ye Also Enlarged!"
 - Instead Of Having A Closed Heart:
 - To Him – Have An Open Heart!
 - Instead Of Having A Shrinking Heart:
 - Toward Him – Have An Expanding Heart!
 - Let His Heart Of Love Move You:
 - To Have A Heart Of Love For Him!
 - Don't Let Your Own Heart:
 - Become Hardened & Calloused & Constricted Any Longer!
 - Especially As They Remember:
- The Reason For His Love!

- "I Speak As Unto My Children!"
 - Paul Was Speaking & Writing To Them:
 - As A Father To His Own Children!
 - He Reminded Them Of This Special Bond & Relationship Back In 1 Corinthians As Well!
 - 1 Corinthians 4:14-16 - "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. / For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. / Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me!"
- Even Though They May Have:
 - Forgotten Him & His Love:
 - He Would Not Forget Them!
- Even Though They May Have:
 - Forsaken Him & His Love:
 - He Would Not Forsake Them!
- The Door Of His Heart:
 - Was Always Open To Them!
 - Even As The Door To The Home:
 - Was Always Open To The Prodigal Son In Luke 15!

Conclusion:

1. What An Example Of The Kind Of Heart & Love:
 - There Ought To Be Within The Family Of God!
 - And Within Our Church!
 - Hearts That Are Open Toward Each Other:
 - Instead Of Closed!
 - Hearts That Are Expanding & Enlarging Toward Each Other:
 - Instead Of Shrinking!
 - Is There This Kind Of Desire In Your Own Heart?
 - Is There This Kind Of Pursuit In Your Own Life?
 - John 15:12 - "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you!"
2. But I Think There Is Even More To Paul's Heart Of Love:
 - Than Meets The Eye Here!
 - Because - Remember - As Paul Is Speaking:
 - He Is Doing So As:
 - The Ambassador Of Christ! (5:20)
 - The Partner Of God! (6:1)
 - And The Servant Of The Lord! (6:4)
 - Paul Is Serving As The Representative Of Jesus Christ:
 - To His Church!
 - And So - Paul's Heart & Love:
 - For The Corinthian Church:
 - Is A **Reflection** Of The Heart & Love:
 - That Jesus Christ Has For You!
 - So As You Meditate On These Verses, Think About:
 - First - The Revelation Of Christ's Love:
 - Toward You!
 - And Just How "Enlarged" His Heart Is:
 - Toward You!
 - "Oh, The Deep, Deep Love Of Jesus! Vast, Unmeasured, Boundless, Free!"
 - The Love Of Christ – Is Unsearchable!
 - Ephesians 3:19 Tells Us That The Love Of Christ - "Passeth Knowledge!"
 - The Love Of Christ – Is Inseparable!
 - Romans 8:35 Asks Us - "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"
 - Think About All The Ways God Has Revealed:
 - His Love For You!
 - He Has Spoken To You:
 - Through His Word!
 - He Has Shared Himself With You:

- Through His Only Begotten Son!
 - He Has Sacrificed Himself For You!
 - Romans 5:8 - "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!"
 - His Love Is Great & Gracious To You!
 - His Love Is Good & Gentle To You!
 - His Love Is Giving & Generous To You!
 - "O Love Of God, How Rich And Pure! How Measureless And Strong!"
(Frederick Lehman)
 - And Yet - How Many Times Could Jesus Say:
 - 2 Corinthians 12:15 - "Though The More Abundantly I Love You, The Less I Be Loved!"
 - So - Think About:
 - Your Response To Christ's Love!
 - Is Your Heart Open To The Love Of Christ?
 - Is It Truly Open?
 - Or Is It "Straitened" & Constricted!
 - Like The Heart Of The Corinthian Church! Closing In Upon Itself More & More!
 - **IE:** It's As If You Are Closing All The Blinds To The Windows Of Your Heart:
 - As The Sun-Rays Of Christ's Love For You:
 - Are Pouring In!
 - "Though The More Abundantly I Love You" – Jesus Says – "The Less I Be Loved!"
 - What Could Be The Cause Of This:
 - In Your Heart & Life?
 - What Sin?
 - What Selfishness?
 - What Suspicion & Doubt?
3. Jesus Once Again Calls Out To You!
- Through The Words Of Paul:
 - 6:13 - "I Speak As Unto My Children – Be Ye Also Enlarged!"
 - Won't You Let The Heart Of Jesus:
 - Take Over Your Own Heart?
 - Won't You Let The Love Of Jesus:
 - Move You To An Even Greater, Ever-Expanding Love Toward Him & His People?
 - "Open Your Heart!"
 - Jesus Is Saying To You This Morning!
 - "Open Your Heart" To Me!
 - Because The Door Of My Heart:
 - Is Always Open & Enlarged For You!

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