

**2Cor. 2:1 ¶ But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.**

As I noted previously, the chapter break here is unfortunate. Paul is explaining why he decided not to make another visit; he didn't want their experience with him to always be one of heaviness and confrontation. His desire is to give spiritual encouragement to this body of believers and to be able, in turn, to be spiritually encouraged himself.

**2Cor. 2:2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?**

**2Cor. 2:3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.**

Paul is stating that his happiness is directly impacted by the happiness of those in whom he has invested himself in ministry. Paul loved his spiritual family. As with any family, the happiness and/or sorrow of one directly impacts the happiness and/or sorrow of another. Paul states that he would rather send a letter than to come in person and have it result in a situation that would be painful for everyone rather than a time of rejoicing, which is what should be the result of fellowship with family.

**2Cor. 2:4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.**

As Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, it was with a heavy heart and through many tears. He knew his words were confrontational and meant to cause conviction, but it was from a heart of love and a desire for their spiritual wellbeing. He was in a position of showing what we would call today "tough love." I like the wording of the NLT for a verse from the Psalms that applies here.

**Psa. 141:5** Let the godly strike me! It will be a kindness! If they reprove me, it is soothing medicine. Don't let me refuse it.

**2Cor. 2:5 ¶ But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.**

In reading through this whole first section of verses, it is clear to me that Paul is making specific reference to one man. I believe that man must be the one referred to in 1Corinthians 5.

**1Cor. 5:1** It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

I like the CJB translation of this verse in 2Corinthians.

Now if someone has been a cause of pain, it is not I whom he has pained, but, in some measure — I don't want to overstate it — all of you.

The church is a family, and sin in the family always brings grief to the family. If that sin is allowed to continue without loving confrontation and correction, its corrupting influence will continue to filter through the family.

**Gal. 5:9** A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

**2Cor. 2:6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.**

It would seem that in this situation, many in this body of believers did confront the man involved in the sin in such a way that the man did repent, and Paul considered that he had suffered enough. It would seem from the following verses, that Paul felt they were carrying their punishment too far.

**2Cor. 2:7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.**

**2Cor. 2:8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.**

Paul is now encouraging those in the church to forgive this man and comfort him before he is overcome with depression. If allowed to stay so depressed, he will not be able to contribute to the body through his spiritual gifting; and the church as well as the individual is handicapped so to speak.

Paul is strongly encouraging those in the church at Corinth to make sure that this brother understands that he is still loved and embrace him in fellowship. He affirms this principle in his letter to the Galatians.

**Gal. 6:1 ¶ Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness....**

**2Cor. 2:9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.**

Paul now states that he had another purpose in writing; he wanted to know how they were doing spiritually. He wanted to know if they would be obedient to the teaching of God's word as He had instructed them. Paul is very aware of the truth that our actions prove our faith.

**2Cor. 2:10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;**

**2Cor. 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.**

In these verses Paul is aligning himself with the body of believers. He is saying that whoever and whatever they have forgiven, he forgives the same—in the same way that Christ responds to repentant sinners.

Verse 11 is basically stating that when we in the body of believers refuse to forgive the repentant sinner, we open the door for Satan to get an advantage and make gains toward his purposes. I got the idea from the Greek that the reference is to how Satan covets such opportunities. Paul is stating that the body of believers is well aware of Satan's devices, his way of thinking and his purposes. I couldn't help but think of the verse in Peter.

**1Pet. 5:8 ¶ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:**

And those in Revelation.

**Rev. 12:9-10** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into

the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Satan takes great delight in bringing Christians down and robbing them of their joy in Jesus and/or ability to be an effective witness of their faith.

**2Cor. 2:12 ¶ Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,**

**2Cor. 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.**

Paul goes on to share how his heart is connected with the Corinthians. When he came to Troas to preach the gospel, the Lord opened the door for ministry; and this would normally have resulted in a great time of rejoicing and peace in Paul's spirit. Paul's whole life was wrapped up in his mission of sharing the gospel to the Gentiles. This time, however, his spirit was distracted by his concern for the believers in Corinth. He was anxious to get a report from Titus as to his findings concerning the status of things in Corinth (cf 7:6-7). So evidently, Paul and his companions set out for Macedonia in hopes of intercepting him.

I couldn't help but relate to Paul the fellow believer instead of Paul the great apostle. Paul knew he was faithfully serving the Lord according to his calling, but he still sometimes reacted with normal human reactions such as worry. He also made some decisions based on those feelings. We aren't told that he sought the Lord for direction in every decision; scripture records that he often followed his heart. This is of great comfort to this weak child of faith. God obviously honored Paul's desire to honor Him even though he might have deviated from God's "first choice" regarding decisions he made along the way. Paul knew that God loved the believers in Corinth better than he, just as I know that God loves my loved ones better than I. I am continually asking the Lord to increase my faith to the point that I am at complete rest in that truth. I have to admit, however, that it continues to be an uphill struggle for this wife, mom, sister, aunt, and friend.

**2Cor. 2:14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.**

I really like the translation from the CJB for this verse:

But thanks be to God, who in the Messiah constantly leads us in a triumphal procession and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of what it means to know him!

What a beautiful word picture! Paul is declaring the blessed truth that in Christ God empowers the believer through the Holy Spirit to triumph over sin and the attack of the enemy and to show forth His love and truth as we declare the gospel by how we live as well as through the message we share.

**2Cor. 2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:**

**2Cor. 2:16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?**

As we live our lives in submission and obedience to the Lord, we provide a “sweet savour” to God; we please Him. The way that aroma is perceived by those here on earth, however, is dependent upon their response to the gospel message we share. Those who find salvation by faith respond to us as those with a sweet aroma that leads to everlasting life. Those who reject the gospel message respond to us as having the bad smell of death. I liked David Stern’s comment in his commentary, “If a sweet-smelling flower smells bad to someone, the fault is not with the flower. Rather, there must be some disorder in his smelling apparatus.”

“who is sufficient...” – Most of the translations relate the idea of being “equal to” or “adequate for” such a task. The word that stood out to me from the Greek was *worthy*. Truth is that we are only worthy and/or adequate or equal to any service to God in Jesus. I couldn’t help but think of the words of John:

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: **for without me ye can do nothing.**

Paul will actually address this sufficiency in the next chapter.

2Cor. 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God....

**2Cor. 2:17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.**

According to the Greek, the word *corrupt* makes reference to those who would “retail” or “huckster” the word of God as is used by some translators. It seems that from the very earliest days of the church there were those who saw opportunity for financial gain through the pretence of serving God. Today’s charlatans in ministry give credence to the truth that there is nothing new under the sun.

Paul is saying that he and his team minister the word of God from a sincere desire to serve God and with the authority of God as commissioned by Christ. I thought it was interesting to see the Greek for *sincerity*; it makes reference to clearness and purity, from a root that references “judged by sunlight, tested as genuine.” In other words, Paul’s motives were pure and transparent before God and the people to whom he ministered.

Paul had been careful not to be a financial burden to the Corinthians as will be noted in chapter 11.