

Christ's Power Displayed in Our Weakness

2 Corinthians 1:12 – 2:4 -11

February 05, 2023

OVERVIEW Paul sent two letters, 1 Corinthians and another letter that was not preserved (see 1Cor. 5:9). Paul also had sent two messengers to check on and encourage the church in his absence: Timothy (see 1Cor. 4:17) and Titus (see 2Cor. 8:6). Despite all this, some dismissed him as of no account. He had managed to make a brief stop but it was “painful” (2Cor. 2:1). His detractors wondered if he was wishy-washy, flaky, perhaps even mentally or spiritually (or both) unstable. Paul defends himself without becoming defensive. He explains his absence and tells the Corinthian believers that he only acted in accordance with God’s will and for their good. The apostle Paul could’ve blasted them, but he doesn’t.

OUTLINE

1. Plea for understanding, grace, and mutuality (1:12-14)
2. Plans may change but God doesn’t (1:15-22)
 - Paul intended to double bless ‘em, coming and going
 - The gospel proclaimed is always “yes” and never expires
 - Great Trinitarian emphasis! God establishes “*us and you*” firmly in Christ **and** we’re anointed **and** we get His Spirit
3. Practicing love may mean postponing confrontation (1:23-2:4)

APPLICATIONS

- God’s gift of a clean conscience is relational **gold** .
- God’s grace writes and **rewrites** our story.
- Believers **brag** on each other like new grandparents.
- **Mean** what you say and say what you **mean** .
- Plans change. God doesn’t. Everyone said “ **Amen** .”
- God is heavily **invests** in His own. He’s all in.
- Faith without **joy** is not fellowship.
- Love is **deeper** than heartbreak, grief and tears.

On Your Own (better with others)

1. Which one of the eight suggested applications did you find eye-opening, helpful or troubling? Explain.
2. READ Acts 18:20-21; Romans 1:9-10; 1Cor. 4:19; Jam. 4:15
Should Christians make plans, especially plans that are intended to help fellow believers, if we might not be able to? Do we literally have to say, “If God wills?” Why or why not.
3. READ Matthew 5:33-37. Give an example of a time when you kept your word even though it cost you (see also Psalm 15:4).
4. *Agree/disagree*
No promise of God means more to me than the promise that Jesus is coming back for His own.
5. READ Romans 14:17. What is it about joy between believers that makes it an essential part of fellowship in the Holy Spirit?
6. Choose another person in your family or small group and brag about the work that you’ve observed Christ doing in & through them. You can either do this face to face in a conversation, or maybe write a short note.