

# 2 Cor 2:5-3:18

## Corinthians, Session Twelve

### **Learning to Forgive and Restore (2:5-11)**

Instead of the parental line, “This hurts me more than it hurts you,” Paul says, “What you did hurt me some, but it really hurts all of you.”

What is the difference between discipline and punishment?

Apparently, the Corinthians have taken Paul’s advice in 1 Cor 5:5 “to hand this man over to Satan” because of the egregious nature of this particular sexual and public sin. And now, the man has repented. What does “punishment by the majority” (v. 6) look like? Not look like?

What would it look like to “reaffirm your love” in v. 8? How do we welcome back one who has been excommunicated?

“These words remind us that church discipline is not meant to be punitive but remedial. Its purpose is not to punish but to correct, not to drive out but to win back” (Valleskey, 36).

This may have been one reason why Paul delayed his arrival. “He did not want to visit the Corinthians while such a matter remained unsettled. In 1 Cor he had set the problem before the congregation. It was up to the church to do something about it, to “be obedient in everything” that God willed, even this difficult matter of dealing with an impenitent sinner in their midst. Then Paul would be able to come to Corinth on a glad, rather than a grievous visit” (Valleskey, 37).

We’ve seen at numerous points throughout this study that Paul follows in the way of Jesus. Compare verse 10 with Matthew 16:18, 18:18; John 20:22-23 that relate to the Office of the Keys. Paul is entrusting the authority of forgiveness to the \_\_\_\_\_ while acknowledging it comes from Christ.

Be aware of the schemes of Satan! The congregation could have said:

- a) It’s none of our business.
- b) He’s too far gone and beyond redemption.
- c) We don’t want him back.
- d) It’s just too hard to deal with this kind of stuff.

### **Learning to Live with a Sense of Winning (2:12-17)**

T / F Titus is mentioned in the book of Acts.

Find Troas on the map, upper NW corner of Asia Minor. It seems to have been the rendezvous point for Paul and Titus, but Titus is not there. Even though there is an “open door” for

ministry, Paul chooses to travel by land and hope to run into Titus on his way from Corinth. Its this idea of a bloodhound “picking up the scent” that may have prompted Paul to rejoice in “triumphal procession” and “aroma of Christ” (v. 14-15).

### **Cultural Context: Military Triumphal Procession**

Qualifications: successfully defeat/kill at least 5,000 opposition troops and incorporate land into the Roman Empire. Order of procession: senators/state officials, spoils from the land, pictures of the conquered land, a white bull (to be sacrificed), captive (to be imprisoned/executed), musicians and priests with incense, the conquering general in a chariot pulled by four horses, then his soldiers. The streets were lined with excited, shouting people! (Chafin, 218)

Does the gospel pass the sniff test?

### **Based on Superior Credentials (3:1-6)**

Evidently, the false “super-apostles” (11:5) came to Corinth with letters of recommendation from the previous place they visited and would ask for letters from Corinth before moving on.

“Like a grandparent ready to pull out pictures of grandkids, Paul was ready to display them at a moment’s notice. The Corinthian believers themselves were his credentials. He needed nothing more” (Valleskey, 49).

“When Paul wrote, ‘The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life,’ he was making an autobiographical statement” (Chafin, 221).

### **Based on a Superior Covenant (3:7-18)**

“There has always been something in legalism which causes people to miss the heart of things and become fascinated with the surface and the superficial (Chafin, 224).

“A minister of the new covenant can be very open and bold in his approach to people, unlike the way Moses, the law-giver, had to deal with the Israelites at Sinai (Exo 34:33). We are told why Moses did that: to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading. It was a symbolic way of demonstrating that the ministry of the old covenant, the law, as glorious as it was, was not as splendid as the ministry of the new covenant, the ministry of the gospel. Moses in his role as minister of the old covenant, could not be as bold as Paul and other ministers of the new covenant. He had to put a veil over his face because the splendor of the law was a fading splendor” (Valleskey, 55).

What connection can be made between Moses’ veil and the temple curtain?

Once the Spirit lifts the veil, what happens in the life of the believer?

For the nearest “glory to glory” (v. 18) reference, contrast these ministries (v. 7-11):

Ministry of the letter (Mosaic law)	Ministry of the Spirit (gospel)
--death	--life
--condemnation	--righteousness
--comes to an end (limited glory)	--permanent (unlimited glory)