

## 2 Corinthians: A Personal and Emotional Letter

2 Corinthians highlights the beauty and magnificence of \_\_\_\_\_. Paul travelled the dusty streets of Corinth preaching a message that changed lives and set people free. He joined hands with Aquila and Priscilla in the gospel ministry. He lived and worked with them. Paul preached in the city streets, in the marketplaces, and in the synagogue. God used this \_\_\_\_\_ preacher in great ways.

The church at Corinth was in \_\_\_\_\_. Paul's first letter sought to correct ungodly behaviors, doctrinal divisions, relational tensions, worship problems, and spiritual development issues. As God led His servant, Paul left Corinth and went to Ephesus. Many scholars and theologians say that a second letter was sent to the Corinthians. However, that letter was lost. What we have as 2 Corinthians really is Paul's third letter to a troubled church. Paul loved God's people in Corinth and suffered for them. At one point, Paul said, "For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself" (2 Cor. 1:8). In a tender moment, Paul stated, "For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you" (2 Cor. 2:4). An urgent spiritual need today is for \_\_\_\_\_ to love \_\_\_\_\_.

How does a \_\_\_\_\_ love God's church?

- \_\_\_\_\_ for them
- \_\_\_\_\_ them of his love
- \_\_\_\_\_ them with compassion
- \_\_\_\_\_ the truth to them
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus before them
- \_\_\_\_\_ with them through mountaintops and valleys
- \_\_\_\_\_ them to discover and obey God's vision

In times of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, many people want to know who God is and what He is like. Paul said this about God, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Cor. 1:3-4). What is Paul saying to us? In one sense, Paul says that we're not to \_\_\_\_\_ our hurts, pains, and struggles. As God comforts us, He wants to use us to comfort others. What does this look like for us?

- \_\_\_\_\_ may turn into \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ may become a \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ may end in \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ may result in a \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ may lead to \_\_\_\_\_

Paul challenged God's servants to proclaim the Word with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. In 2 Cor. 4:1-2, Paul stated, "Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God." Paul wanted to be clear that effectiveness in ministry rested in God's \_\_\_\_\_, not in a preacher's \_\_\_\_\_. In 2 Cor. 4:7, Paul said, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."

As the Holy Spirit led Paul, he revealed \_\_\_\_\_ that transformed the disciples in Corinth and words that may transform us, too.

- The redeemed are to walk by \_\_\_\_\_, not by \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 5:7)
- To be \_\_\_\_\_ from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8)
- Salvation is about \_\_\_\_\_ the dead, not \_\_\_\_\_ the sick (2 Cor. 5:17)
- God has called every believer to a ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 5:18)
- The \_\_\_\_\_ to receive Christ as Savior is urgent (2 Cor. 6:2)
- God calls believers to use sound judgment in entering \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 7:14)
- Believers need to grasp the magnificence of \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 8:7)
- God loves cheerful \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 9:6-7)
- Believers need to be aware of the \_\_\_\_\_ and how he works (2 Cor. 11:14)
- God doesn't shy away from calling His servants to difficult \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 11:16-29)
- God uses various means to keep His people \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 12: 7-10)
- A sign of spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ is contentment with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities (2 Cor. 12:10)
- A spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ is a worthwhile endeavor (2 Cor. 13:5)

Paul's ultimate word to the Corinthians was the \_\_\_\_\_ existence of life. In this life, we'll suffer, be persecuted, experience disappointments, and face spiritual trials. However, real \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ come when our eyes are fixed on the Lord and the life to come in eternity. As you and I travel the roads of this life, with all their twists, turns, holes, and bends, the \_\_\_\_\_ is found in 2 Cor. 5:9-10. In that verse Paul said, "So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what is done in the body, whether good or evil."

As a final comment on 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul made his point clear that two areas are critically important for God's church:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Corinthians 13:14** – "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

## 2 Corinthians: A Personal and Emotional Letter

2 Corinthians highlights the beauty and magnificence of **God's grace**. Paul travelled the dusty streets of Corinth preaching a message that changed lives and set people free. He joined hands with Aquila and Priscilla in the gospel ministry. He lived and worked with them. Paul preached in the city streets, in the marketplaces, and in the synagogue. God used this **bi-vocational** preacher in great ways.

The church at Corinth was in **trouble**. Paul's first letter sought to correct ungodly behaviors, doctrinal divisions, relational issues, worship problems, and spiritual development issues. As God led His servant, Paul left Corinth and went to Ephesus. Many scholars and theologians say that a second letter was sent to the Corinthians. However, that letter was lost. What we have as 2 Corinthians really is Paul's third letter to a troubled church. Paul loved God's people in Corinth and suffered for them. At one point, Paul said, "*For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself*" (2 Cor. 1:8). In a tender moment, Paul stated, "*For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you*" (2 Cor. 2:4). An urgent spiritual need today is for **God's servants** to love **God's church**.

How does a **pastor** love God's church?

- **Prays** for them
- **Tells** them of his love
- **Serves** them with compassion
- **Speaks** the truth to them
- **Models** Jesus before them
- **Walks** with them through mountaintops and valleys
- **Leads** them to discover and obey God's vision

In times of **suffering, pain, tragedy**, and **adversity**, many people want to know who God is and what He is like. Paul said this about God, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God*" (2 Cor. 1:3-4). What is Paul saying to us? In one sense, Paul says that we're not to **waste** our hurts, pains, and struggles. As God comforts us, He wants to use us to comfort others. What does this look like for us?

- **Worry** may turn into **worship**
- **Misery** may become a **ministry**
- **Panic** may end in **peace**
- **Tragedy** may result in a **testimony**
- **Stress** may lead to **support**

Paul challenged God's servants to proclaim the Word with **authority** and **accuracy**. In 2 Cor. 4:1-2, Paul stated, *"Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God."* Paul wanted to be clear that effectiveness in ministry rested in God's **power**, not in a preacher's **creativity**. In 2 Cor. 4:7, Paul said, *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."*

As the Holy Spirit led Paul, he revealed **principles** that transformed the disciples in Corinth and words that may transform us, too.

- The redeemed are to walk by **faith**, not by **sight** (2 Cor. 5:7)
- To be **absent** from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8)
- Salvation is about **raising** the dead, not **repairing** the sick (2 Cor. 5:17)
- God has called every believer to a ministry of **reconciliation** (2 Cor. 5:18)
- The **invitation** to receive Christ as Savior is urgent (2 Cor. 6:2)
- God calls believers to use sound judgment in entering **partnerships** (2 Cor. 7:14)
- Believers need to grasp the magnificence of **God's grace** (2 Cor. 8:7)
- God loves cheerful **givers** (2 Cor. 9:6-7)
- Believers need to be aware of the **enemy** and how he works (2 Cor. 11:14)
- God doesn't shy away from calling His servants to difficult **assignments** (2 Cor. 11:16-29)
- God uses various means to keep His people **humble** (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
- A sign of spiritual **maturity** is contentment with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities (2 Cor. 12:10)
- A spiritual **examination** is a worthwhile endeavor (2 Cor. 13:5)

Paul's ultimate word to the Corinthians was the **temporary** existence of life. In this life, we'll suffer, be persecuted, experience disappointments, and face spiritual trials. However, real **joy**, **peace**, and **victory** come when our eyes are fixed on the Lord and the life to come in eternity. As you and I travel the roads of this life, with all their twists, turns, holes, and bends, the **highest aim** is found in 2 Cor. 5:9-10. In that verse Paul said, *"So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what is done in the body, whether good or evil."*

As a final comment on 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul made his point clear that two areas are critically important for God's church:

1. **Beliefs**
2. **Behaviors**

**2 Corinthians 13:14** – *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."*