



Reading through the New Testament—Week 31

August 6-12

Becoming more like Jesus—growing in His Word

2 Corinthians is one of the most personal letters of the apostle Paul. In this letter we can see how he dealt with difficult situations, conflicts, and even attacks on his apostleship from false teachers who wanted to influence the Corinthian congregation. He had a deep love for the Corinthian Christians, and he wrote this letter out of his strong hope that they would keep the gospel he preached to them when he founded the congregation. Paul solves many “down-to-earth” problems by leading the Corinthian Christians back to the heart of their faith: Christ has died for their sins and has saved them for eternal life. From this letter we can learn how our faith in Christ will help us solve problems in our everyday life.

The background of the writing of this letter may have been a previous visit of the apostle to the Corinthians, when he rebuked a sinning member of the congregation. That person did not repent at that time, and it is likely that he even turned against the apostle. In that situation the congregation did not support the apostle and did not rebuke the sinner, so Paul left Corinth with sadness. The majority of the congregation members later changed their minds. They even punished the person who turned against the apostle, and this sinning person (whose name we do not know) repented. Paul received the good news about these developments and wrote this letter, in which he asks the congregation to surround the repenting sinner with love (see esp. ch. 2).

On the basis of the restored, healthy relationship between the congregation and the apostle, Paul returns to a theme he had mentioned to them earlier: he asks them again to help financially the poor Christian congregation in Jerusalem (chapters 8 and 9). Then he returns once again to the matter of the false apostles who had attacked and questioned the apostolic ministry of Paul. He boldly defends his apostleship, and in this way, restores the relationship between himself and the congregation at Corinth. (Taken from The Gospel Coalition, article by Peter Balla “Invitation to 2 Corinthians.”)

As with the other books we have been reading, you may want to check out the introduction to 2 Corinthians on The Bible Project:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/2-corinthians/>.

THIS WEEKEND'S SERMON OUTLINE

"Why Are We Here?"

2 Corinthians 5:11-18

Why am I here?

To see other people the way _____ sees them

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

For Jesus to _____ my life

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

So I can _____ the interests of the King

²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.






To live _____ and with _____

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Why am I here?

New Testament in a Year—August 6-12

2 Corinthians

Chapter 3  4  5  6  7 

Additional Reflections from this week's reading

2 Corinthians 3 What are the practical results of the new covenant Paul speaks about in this chapter (see vv. 16-18)?

2 Corinthians 4 What encouragement do you find in vv. 7-12?

2 Corinthians 5 How does Paul's "home" affect his daily living (see vv. 6-10)? What is this "heavenly dwelling" like?

2 Corinthians 6 What do you think of what Paul describes in vv. 3-10? What affect did that have on Paul? Can you relate to any of what he has experienced?

2 Corinthians 7 Is it more loving to confront someone with their sin, or ignore it? What attitudes are needed so that we demonstrate a loving approach rather than a judgmental one? How do you see those attitudes in Paul in this chapter?

Blessing the World

"Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold."
2 Corinthians 3:12

So... how can we be bold? One of the ways is to listen as Jesus tells His people that two key elements of being a disciple is loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves. (Mark 12:30-31) This week, find small ways to bless your neighbor: showing them that they are loved. Some ideas:

Mow a neighbor's lawn

Wash someone's windows

Pay for a meal for the person behind you

Grab an extra coffee to give away

Send an encouraging note to a friend

Or... choose your adventure in serving your neighbor!

Belonging in Community

Connect Groups are a group of Christians who meet together regularly where we intentionally share in our faith walk. Connection is created through commitment and presence in fellowship, discussion, and prayer.

- Begin your time together by following up on anything that was shared during your last time together; and
- Take some time to share any reflections of aha's you had from your reading.

This week, we challenge ourselves to live into the calling of The Church and to carry out the reconciling ministry of Christ. This is no small task, and if we are honest with ourselves, we mess it up all the time. Large in part because we allow ourselves the type of thinking that causes us to put ourselves in the righteous position and others in the place of needing to meet us where we are.

The thing is Jesus never did that. This is one of the "I'm gonna turn your world upside down" things that He did. Instead of insisting that we become good enough to be with Him he made the humble choice to be with us. Wow!...and that is our task..."Help!"

- Have you ever experienced a time where you felt you were expected to admit your wrongs and move to the other person's position? What was that like?
- Have you ever been in the position where you were expecting others to come to you? What was that like?

As Jesus followers, we believe and know that it is important to follow His teachings. Yet when we take a posture that insists that someone move to our side we are not living in the example of Jesus. He listened, He walked with them (literally and figuratively), He chose words and actions that showed His awareness of their humanity. We see this even in the Old Testament as God dwelt in the Tabernacle with a wandering (literally and figuratively) people. And we see this in Jesus' interactions and even in the words, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

- Take some time to individually share actions or beliefs of others that make it hard for you to take a posture of humility?

As people share, be sure to practice kindness and 1 Corinthians 13 love with each other. Then once everyone has shared, take some time to discuss what it could look like to approach others in a way that honors the ministry of Jesus that we have been given. Finally, discuss how you can hold each other accountable to making these changes and then close in prayer.