

The Comfort From Repentance

When Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians it contained a great many rebukes. They tolerated a fornicator in the congregation. They took one another to court. They were divided. They were carnal. They abused the Lord's Supper and their spiritual gifts. They required a great deal of correction, and so, 1 Corinthians was written.

Most of us do not take criticism well. Some get defensive. Some attack their critics. Some ignore the evaluation and stop any communication with the person who showed them their flaw. Such reactions would be anticipated from the Corinthians. Paul's rebukes were many, and their character was carnal.

Titus was the preacher who was selected to deliver the letter. Paul seemed to fear the church might kill the messenger. I wonder if Titus feared the same thing and wondered what he did wrong that caused Paul to give him this assignment. However, the church received the letter and the messenger in the spirit in which it was given. They repented of their sins and followed the teachings of the Apostle. They treated Titus well and sent him back to Paul. This was part of what influenced the second letter.

After discussing some of the troubles he faced in 2 Cor. 7, Paul begins to talk about the comforts he received. 6 *Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.*

Paul was sorry that the first letter needed to be written. He feared the response. But he was glad to see the letter led to sincere repentance in his brethren. 9 *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were*

made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Verse 12 is interesting. Paul did not write in an effort to take sides in any conflict. He was not saying one was right and one was wrong. I wonder if he was talking about those who were taking each other to court. In the verse he says, *"Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.*

Paul's love was communicated through correction of the flaws in the church. Those who want to please God should be able to see the love in such communications. *"Teach me what I need to change and how I can do better. Show me what is right, so that I can serve God and get to heaven."*

The repentance of the church brought comfort to Paul. It also was a relief to Titus. But it is also important to see that repentance gives comfort to the person who is repenting. We hear the truth and know we have done it. The inconsistency of our life has disappeared. 13 *Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.*

When correction is needed we need to give it. But we must make sure that it is given in love. The person who receives the admonition must learn to recognize that love. It is not a question of who is right and who is wrong. It is not taking sides with one party against another. It is a display of love for the erring. It is an effort to save the soul. It is done in obedience to God. It should produce repentance, and thereby bring comfort to all who are involved.

Ron Roberts

A Note From The Elders

For the summer months we discontinued the ladies' Bible class. This class met on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 3:45 at the building. We stopped the class because many had schedule conflicts during the summer months.

The class will resume beginning in September. It will again meet on the 3rd Sunday at 3:45. The book that will be used in the class is "A Worthy Woman" written by Darlene Craig. Many should have the book already. If you need a copy see Lori Allen. The first chapter should be completed before class. We hope more of the ladies will get involved in this effort.

The men had been meeting at the same time for lessons in song leading. Braden hopes to resume this class in September as well. We expect him to teach one more class and then get into practicing the things we have learned. Braden's schedule has become quite full with school, work, and preaching. We do not want to overburden him. We will plan to meet in September and make plans for future sessions at that class.

We could discuss leading prayers, preaching, offering invitations, making comments before the Lord's Supper, and other things as well after our song leading efforts are completed. The dual sessions of men's and women's classes aids some in transportation conflicts to the building.