

Series: 2 Corinthians

Title: Christ's Heart in Rebuke & Forgiveness

Text: 2 Corinthians 2: 1-11

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The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the law and the prophets. One such prophecy Christ fulfills is "*I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*" (Jer 3: 15) The apostle Paul was one of those pastors. So the Spirit of Christ was in Paul. Paul's heart was Christ's heart. He felt the way he did toward his brethren because of the new spirit God put in Paul. He wrote by the Holy Spirit of God

So as we see the spirit Paul had toward erring brethren, we behold Christ's heart toward his believing people; here we see it concerning rebuke and forgiveness. So our focus is not Paul, but Christ and his spirit toward his believing people when it comes to rebuking and forgiving us. I hope the Spirit of God will teach us what our spirit should be toward one another in these areas.

CONCERNING REBUKE

2 Corinthians 2: 4: For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

Christ's rebuke is not to cause his erring child worldly sorrow. It is to show his abundant love for his child.

Paul said, "*out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.*" Paul had this heart because of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him.

If Christ was "*grieved with the hardness of heart*" of the Pharisee's who were not his elect, how much more with us who are? If Christ looked upon Jerusalem that rejected him and "*wept over it*", how much more toward his elect for whom he shed his precious blood! (Mk 3: 5; Lu 19: 51)

God hates sin so that he gave his only begotten Son to satisfy divine justice and put away the sin of his people. The Son of God hated sin so that he presented himself in place of his people to bear our sin and bear our curse. After God gave his only begotten Son to be propitiation for our sins, after our Substitute endured the agonizing cross, despising the shame of our sin, after he by himself purged our sins by his own precious blood by separation from God, how could the LORD our Righteousness look upon our unrighteousness and base ingratitude with complacency!

Yet, due to Christ shedding his precious blood by which he redeemed his people from the curse of the law, due to God's everlasting, unchangeable love for his people in Christ, our gracious Redeemer never rebukes or chasten us simply to cause us sorrow. Christ worked in the apostle Paul rebuking his saints at Corinth for this reason:

2 Corinthians 7:9: 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 [or from us] in nothing.
10: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

If a brother or sister falls into sin or error, though it may wound them, it is love and faithfulness toward them to give them a word of correction.

Proverbs 27:5: Open rebuke *is* better than secret love. 6: Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.

But to rebuke in anger, harshly or spitefully simply to cause them sorrow is not loving or faithfulness. It is devilish! How could I dare cause damage to one for whom Christ died! That is rebuke that needs rebuking because it is fleshly and devilish. Our faithful, heavenly Father never rebukes us to cause the sorrow of this world or to cause us damage. He only causes enough sorrow to bring us to repent and cast our care on him.

When Christ rebukes, his purpose is to bring us to know this about himself “*that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.*” God first loved us; we did not love God. He loved us without a cause in us. The reason God sent his Son into the world is because God had a chosen people who he everlasting, unchangeably loved. The reason Christ laid down his life for us to justify us from our sins is because he loved us. The reason Christ sent the Holy Spirit to rebuke and convince us to cast our care on him is because he loved us. And the reason he continues to rebuke us and turn us to him is that we might know the love Christ has more abundantly unto us!

Brethren, with one another or in our home, if we have to rebuke a dear brother or sister then do it in a way, not to cause sorrow, but that they might know Christ’s abundant love for them through your love for them. Or else we have not rebuked after a godly manner.

CONCERNING FORGIVENESS

2 Corinthians 2: 5: But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

When Christ has brought us to repentance then he makes certain we know he has forgiven us. Our all-knowing God does not overburden his child by making us think we cannot be forgiven for our offenses.

Paul is probably speaking about the incestuous man. His case was a rare exception, not the rule. His sin was causing distraction and division so that the brethren could not worship Christ. He was bringing reproach on the doctrine of Christ. This is the only time when a man must be told he cannot continue assembling with the saints. So this man forced the church to have to tell him he had to go until he repented and corrected this behavior. This is a rare exception not the rule. It is the only place we find it in the early church.

He and others involved had cause great sorrow to Paul. But now that they had repented, Paul made light of it. He said they have not grieved me. With Paul the offense is forgotten. Why? That he might not over-burden his brother.

We all have enough burden. Mothers keep the home, children and some even work outside of the home. Fathers are the head of home, working long hours, trying to provide for your families, trying to teach your children the gospel and have them under the sound of the gospel. Children have school and are trying to obey everyone. We all as believers have the burden of our sins. When it comes to how someone has grieved me, when he is so sorry for it, when he has repented, do I really want to put more burden on him? If I’m tempted to overburden-overcharge my brother, let me remember what a burden my Lord could put on me concerning my sin, yet let me remember this:

Psalm 103: 10: He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
11: For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 13:

Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14: For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.

So what should I do?

Galatians 6: 1: Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Not only does Christ not over-burdened us, when he has brought us to repentance, our Lord makes us know, he has taken all our burden and put it away before God and forgiven us and he comforts us and confirms his loves to us. God moved Paul to write,

2 Corinthians 2: 6: Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7: So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8: Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 9: For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. [this is obedience to our Lord] 10: To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; [for the sake of Christ]

How fully has God forgiven us for the sake of Christ? He says, "*And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*" (Heb 10:17)

How fully does he comfort us? He says, "*Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.*" (Isa 40:2)

How fully does he confirm his love to us? "*The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*" (Rom 5:5) He makes known to his child, "*I have loved thee with an everlasting love therefore in lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*" (Jer 31: 3)

If my holy God has done this to me, if he has done this to my offending brother for the sake of Christ, how can I do anything less to my brother?

FOR OUR SAFETY

2 Corinthians 2: 11: Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Love and forgiveness in Christ and for the sake of Christ is best for my own safety and the safety of the whole church. If I speak harshly to cause grief, if I will not forget, if I overburden my brother, if I will not forgive, if I will not comfort him, if I will not confirm my love to him then Satan has and will certainly take advantage of me and him and my brethren who make up Christ's church.

The devil would love to drive the convicted sinner to despair and persuade him that there is no more forgiveness with God. I do not want to be the instrument Satan uses to get this advantage.

If Satan can prompt those who love little because they know little of God's love to show themselves rigid, unloving and irreconcilable to the repentant brother then the old serpent has taken advantage of us.

If he can deform the likeness of Christ into a morose Pharisee, oh what a gain it is to Satan!

If he can make us look on our repentant brother with cold suspicion there will be joy over it, not in heaven, but in hell.

Satan loves for tempers to be on edge and every movement to be full of friction and every word to arouse suspicion!

Christ prayed for His Church that they might all be one. When brethren all believe on Christ and are all one in Christ, in Christ our Refuge for we find security against the devices of Satan.

1 Peter 5: 9: Whom resist stedfast in the faith,...

If Christ has forgiven you much...forgive much! If Christ has loved you much...love much! If Christ has comforted you much...comfort much!

If you find yourself growing cold remember Christ's broken body broken for you. Remember his shed blood shed for you. Then according to the love and grace and forgiveness Christ has bestowed so freely upon us treat that offending brother or sister as Christ has treated you

Amen!