

II CORINTHIANS 7:8-16
A GODLY SORROW!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to II Corinthians chapter 7 as we continue our in-depth study of Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth.

In our last study we saw that Paul was overwhelmed. They were overworked, had no real time to rest. There was trouble wherever they went. And all that trouble, all that conflict brought them a lot of fear.

And then, in II Corinthians 7:6 Paul wrote, **“Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus.”**

Not only did Paul receive the comfort of God, but God brought to Paul Titus who also brought comfort into his life as Titus tells Paul how much some of the brethren in Corinth loved Paul.

Paul was so comforted by this that he says, **“... so I rejoiced even more.”**

As Paul continues on here in II Corinthians chapter 7, he is going to focus on – ***A GODLY SORROW!***

Why is this so important, this – ***GODLY SORROW?***

Because Godly sorrow leads a person to repentance, to salvation, to getting right with God, to returning to God!

Let me share this with you about true repentance and false repentance, what they are all about.

We are told,

Two kinds of repentance are possible in human experience.

One is ***“the sorrow of the world,”*** a feeling induced by the fear of getting caught.

Many people recognize the unpleasant consequences of their sin and are persuaded that they are guilty. This results in a superficial sorrow that may lead to a temporary reformation but not to a genuine turning to Christ for forgiveness.

Godly sorrow, on the other hand, is accompanied by conviction of sin, the work of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:37).

This stems from the realization of offending a holy God. It leads to genuine repentance.

An unknown author wrote, ***“There is a radical distinction between natural regret and God-given repentance. The flesh can feel remorse, acknowledge its evil deeds, and be ashamed of itself. However, this sort of disgust with past actions can be quickly shrugged off, and the individual can soon go back to his old wicked ways. None of the marks of true repentance described in 2 Corinthians 7:11 are found in his behavior. Out of a list of 10 men in the Bible who said, ‘I have sinned,’ we believe only five actually repented. They were David (2 Sam. 12:13), Nehemiah (Neh. 1:6), Job (Job 42:5, 6), Micah (Micah 7:9), and the prodigal son (Luke 15:18).”*** - H. G. B.

- Our Daily Bread, Monday, July 16

In other words, this is a matter of life and death or spending eternity with the Lord or apart from the Lord!

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

SORROW TO REPENTANCE – II CORINTHIANS 7:8-10

THE EFFECTS OF GODLY SORROW – II CORINTHIANS 7:11-12

COMFORT AND JOY – II CORINTHIANS 7:13-16

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in II Corinthians chapter 7, beginning in verse 8 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic – ***A GODLY SORROW!***

II CORINTHIANS 7

VERSES 8-10

If Paul is speaking of his first letter to the Corinthians, full of corrections, it was difficult for him to send this letter to them, and yet, Paul knew it had to be sent.

Some feel that this is a letter that Paul wrote and we don't have. It could be, but in either case, it was a hard letter for Paul to write and send to them.

And as they read it, they were hurt, they felt sorry, but that sorrow then led them to repent of their sin and get right with God.

It is as Trapp tells us, ***“In sin, the pleasure passeth, the sorrow remaineth; but in repentance, the sorrow passeth, the pleasure abideth forever. God soon poureth the oil of gladness into broken hearts.”***

Remember what David said in Psalm 30:5, **“For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.”**

True repentance will free us from the guilt of our sin and yet, for some, they can't let it go. They beat themselves up. They are never good enough for God.

Let me give you this if you struggle in this area. I pray that it helps you.

If God has forgiven you, why can't you let it go, forgive yourself. You have repented and thus, let it go!

May we not forget that, and may we give Him those things in our life that only brings hurt and pain so that we can have that joy that is fresh every morning!

I like the way that one writer summed it up for us regarding the pain of correction and what it does in our life.

This is what he wrote,

The whole process which the apostle is describing here may be likened to the work of a surgeon.

In order for him to remove a dangerously infected part from the human body, it is necessary for him to cut deep into the flesh.

He does not rejoice in thus causing pain to the patient, though he knows it must be done if the patient is to regain his health.

Especially if the patient is a close friend, the surgeon is keenly aware of the suffering that will be necessary.

But he realizes that this suffering is only temporary, and he is willing that it should be so in order that the final outcome might be favorable.

- William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary, p. 1847

As hard as it was for Paul to write that letter, we see now that Paul is rejoicing over the good that came from that letter, how they responded to it, at least some of them.

You see, for the Corinthians, their sorrow led to repentance; it led to a change in the direction that they were going.

We need to understand that repentance is more than a feeling, it is an action word, and it speaks of turning around.

They were moving away from God by their actions, they repented and came back to God that led to salvation or ***SOTERIA***, (so-tay-ree'-ah) in the Greek, and it speaks of more than just being born again, it encompasses all that God has for us. That our walk is not hindering God from pouring out His blessings upon us!

One writer summed it up like this. He wrote,

Sometimes confronting sin requires going beyond what love and compassion might be comfortable with. But it is necessary to do so, because sin is a deadly killer.

Paul was not an abusive, harsh disciplinarian but a reluctant one, and he took no joy in causing even temporary sorrow to the Corinthians.

He was like a father who has mixed feelings about disciplining a beloved child.

But what motivated him to write the severe letter was his love for them and the truth, and his fear of the consequences of their sin. Despite his temporary regret, Paul knew that rebuking the Corinthians' sin had to be done.

There are times in the ministry when strong, confrontational words are necessary.

Sin crouches at the door; false teachers are everywhere, and Satan constantly seeks to destroy the work of God.

The faithful pastor must not shrink from calling his people to obedience to Scripture.

That obedience presupposes true repentance, which can only come about when there is sorrow over sin.

Therefore, Paul could **rejoice, not that the Corinthians were made sorrowful, but that they were made sorrowful to the point of repentance.**

His regret vanished when he saw the results of the sorrow.

- John F. MacArthur Jr., 2 Corinthians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, p. 265

Over the years I have exposed false teachers, false programs and some have received them, others just got mad and left.

I have had to be corrected at times and had to repent.

It is not easy but are we concerned about the welfare of others or are we more concerned about ourselves?

Paul, as hard as it was for him to write this letter, because he loved them, he wrote it and now he could rejoice because of what it brought into their lives, they went from – ***SORROW TO REPENTANCE!***

Now here's the big question. How can you tell if a person is truly repenting or if it is just a worldly regret, a sorry that they got caught?

Let me show you what true repentance is not.

We are told,

“Katherine Power was a fugitive for more than twenty-three years. In 1970, during the heyday of student radicalism, she participated in a Boston bank robbery in which a city policeman, the father of nine children, was shot in the back and killed.

Pursued by federal authorities for murder, Ms. Power went into hiding.

For fourteen years she was one of the FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives.

Finally, in late 1993, she surrendered to authorities.

In a statement she read to the press, Katherine Power characterized her actions in the bank robbery as ***“naive and unthinking.”***

What motivated her to surrender?

“I know that I must answer this accusation from the past, in order to live with full authenticity in the present.”

Power's husband explained further: ***“She did not return out of guilt. She wanted her life back. She wants to be whole.”***

Now, let me ask you this. Is that true repentance?

No, it is not. She wanted to ease her conscience, to get her life back, but no true repentance!

In a sense, she wanted that guilt of what she did to go away so she could continue on living.

In a perceptive piece about Katherine Power's surrender, commentator Charles Krauthammer wrote, ***“Her surrender - for the sake of ‘full authenticity’- was a form of therapy, indeed the final therapeutic step toward regaining her sense of self.”***

Let me put this into perspective for you and show you where we are today and what we have done.

This is what the world is all about, removing the guilt so they can continue on living with no true repentance, no true change, no turning to God!

Allan Bloom once described a man who had just gotten out of prison, where he had undergone *“therapy.”*

“He said that he had found his identity and learned to like himself,” writes Bloom. *“A generation ago he would have found God and learned to despise himself as a sinner.”*

That is the problem. We are trying to ease our conscience and make ourselves feel good without repenting and turning to God and in the end, we will lose everything if that is what our repentance is all about.

One author said, *“In an age where the word sin has become quaint, surrendering to the authorities for armed robbery and manslaughter is not an act of repentance but of personal growth.”*

And listen to this perspective on this issue.

We are told,

That kind of thinking has all but driven words like sin, repentance, contrition, atonement, restitution, and redemption out of public discourse.

If no one is supposed to feel guilty, how could anyone be a sinner?

Modern culture has the answer: people are victims. Victims are not responsible for what they do; they are casualties of what happens to them.

So every human failing must be described in terms of how the perpetrator has been victimized. We are all supposed to be *“sensitive”* and *“compassionate”* enough to see that the very behaviors we used to label *“sin”* are actually evidence of victimization.

Victimism has gained so much influence that as far as society is concerned, there is practically no such thing as sin anymore.

Anyone can escape responsibility for his or her wrongdoing simply by claiming the status of a victim.

It has radically changed the way our society looks at human behavior.

- John MacArthur, *The Vanishing Conscience*

If there is no sin, then why did Jesus come?

Why did God become flesh and dwell among us?

Why in the world would Jesus suffer if there was nothing to cleanse us from?

Many believe that Jesus came to make us happy, to make us feel good!

“Extensive theological surveys from Ligonier Ministries and Lifeway Research indicate that the most pervasive heresy believed by many self-identified Christians regarding sin is **Pelagianism** (or semi-Pelagianism).

This belief holds that humans are essentially born innocent and good by nature, rather than inheriting original sin.

Approximately 64% of self-identified evangelicals agreed that *“Everyone is born innocent in the eyes of God,”* a belief that directly contradicts the doctrine of original sin.

50% of respondents agreed with the statement, *“Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature,”* denying the biblical view of humanity’s total depravity.

Among some modern progressive communities and fringe evangelical sects, there is also a noted drift toward **Antinomianism** - the belief that believers are entirely free from God’s moral law.

This sometimes manifests as the view that certain actions (such as sexual immorality) are not genuine sins, but merely societal taboos or constructs meant to be challenged.”

Without sin there is no need for repentance and thus, without repentance, there is no salvation for that person!

Do you see how important this issue is! And Paul is showing that to us.

Then what is true repentance?

First of all, it involves an awareness and understanding of our ***SIN!***

That is why the Devil has brought forth his doctrines of demons to move people away from saying that there is sin and thus, without sin there is no need for a Savior!

Secondly, our emotions are involved.

In other words, we need to feel bad about what we have done. We need to realize that it was wrong!

We don't need to make excuses for what we have done but admit we were wrong!

But again, we see all kinds of reasons for our sin, trying to justify it.

For instance, homosexuality, to justify it some will say, "***I was born this way!***"

No, sin is a choice!

And the third point is simple. We must do the right thing, make a change in our behavior and follow what God has said in His Word!

We were moving 180 degrees away from God and now we have repented and we have turned around 180 degrees and are moving towards God, we are following our Good Shepherd!

That is true repentance.

But think about people who are sorry, prisons are full of them, sorry for getting caught.

That is worldly sorrow and it does not lead to life, but to death. It does not cause a person to change but they continue to move in the same direction away from God. That kind of sorrow produces death, spiritual death in a person!

It is as Redpath tells us, ***“How sorry do you thank you have to be? What is the purpose of your sorrow for sin? It is to bring you to trust in the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not your sorrow that cleanses you from sin, but His blood. It is the goodness of God that leads a man to repentance. Has your sorrow for sin led you at one time or another fling all the burden of it at the feet of a crucified, risen Savior? If it hasn’t, anything short of that is what Paul here calls sorrow that leads to death.”***

Remember what Paul said, **“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”** II Corinthians 7:10.

Again, this is so important for people to understand. If there is no ***REAL REPENTANCE***, then there can be no ***REAL FORGIVENESS!***

Let me give you a few examples in the Scriptures to show you what I mean.

First of all, look at what is says of Esau in Hebrews 12:16-17, **“lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.”**

Esau didn’t get this birthright back even though he cried out to God, why?

First of all, because it wasn’t his in the first place. God gave it to his brother Jacob even before he was born.

But the focus here is that his cry was based on what he lost and he was not willing to repent.

Esau wanted the blessing of God, but he didn’t want the God who blesses! It doesn’t work like that!

And it is interesting because we are not told that Esau was into fornication or even that he was godless, but Paul does and it does support extra-biblical sources as well.

Philo of Alexandria in his *Questions and Answers* on Genesis made the following observation about Esau, ***“The hairy one is the unrestrained, lecherous [lustful], impure and unholy man.”***

Yes, with tears he cried out and sought it diligently, but not with a heart of repentance. Thus, no repentance, no forgiveness of sin!

Then there is Judas and some like to say that he repented and was saved. Doesn't it say in Matthew 27:3, **“Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’”**

Listen to how *The Amplified Bible* puts this verse, **“When Judas, His betrayer, saw that [Jesus] was condemned, [Judas was afflicted in mind and troubled for his former folly; and] with remorse [with little more than a selfish dread of the consequences] he brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, [Exod. 21:32.] Saying, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. They replied, What is that to us? See to that yourself.”**

I am not saying that Judas was not sorry he'd betrayed Jesus, he was! But it was not a sorrow that caused him to face up to what he did. It was not a sorrow that led Judas to repentance!

Rather than seek God's forgiveness and restoration, Judas pouted in his sorrow and tried to avoid the consequences of his actions by committing suicide.

In John 15:6 Jesus said, **“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”**

Please understand that Jesus is speaking of the unsaved who are not, of course, abiding in Christ.

That word **“cast out”** in the Greek is *BALLO* and it means *“to throw.”*

And notice the progression here.

Not abiding – cast out – withered – gathered – thrown into the fire – burned!

I think that is pretty clear, it speaks of judgment for those who reject Christ.

Yes, they may look like Christians, but they are not.

John tells us in I John 2:19, **“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”**

And please understand that this is not speaking of leaving a church. They had cut off their relationship with Christ, the One they said they loved but now they do not. They were never saved in the first place.

And keep in mind in those days there were not many churches, maybe just one in an area, and thus, they were at first, part of it. Maybe even served in it. But then, after a while, for whatever reason they left.

And the key here is **“that none of them were of us.”** They left the church and that was the evidence that they were not part of the body of Christ.

These people we might call *the Judas branch*.

What does that mean?

It means that they were a professor of Jesus but not a possessor of Jesus!

How can I say that?

Because there is no abiding in Christ, they never knew Him, they had a form of righteousness but denied its power. They were religious but there was no relationship with Jesus!

In other words, they were just like Judas, the appearance of being saved but that is all it was, an appearance!

And as you read through the Scriptures, it is all about our repentance, turning from sin and turning to the Savior and it is not just a New Testament idea.

One writer summed it up like this. He wrote,

From Genesis through Revelation, God's men came on the scene and consistently said, ***"Here's the key: Repent."***

- From the steps of the ark, Noah didn't look out at the crowd and say, ***"Something good is going to happen to you!"*** No, he said, ***"Repent"*** (Genesis 6).
- It wasn't for saying, ***"I'm okay, you're okay,"*** that Joel was confronted by the high priest. It was because he said, ***"Rend your heart. Get right. Repent"*** (see Joel 2:13).
- Daniel was in the lions' den not because he said, ***"Inch by inch, anything's a cinch,"*** but because his message was, ***"You have been weighed in the balance and found lacking"*** (see Daniel 5:27).
- Jeremiah was in the pit not for preaching, ***"The me I see is the me I'll be,"*** but for calling a nation to repentance.

- John the Baptist lost his head not because he preached, ***“Smile, God loves you,”*** but because he told people to turn from wickedness and repent (Matthew 3:2).
- When Jesus Himself came on the scene, the first message He would bring would not be, ***“God loves you and so do I,”*** but, ***“Repent, the kingdom of God is among you”*** (see Mark 1:15).
- In the Book of Revelation, we read that the two witnesses will be killed and left lying in the streets of Jerusalem not because their message is, ***“God’s in His heaven and all’s right with the world,”*** but because, dressed in sackcloth, they will call people to repent (Revelation 11).

We need to understand that the key to unlocking the full blessing of salvation is found in repentance.

What is repentance?

It’s a word that simply means ***“to change direction.”***

In other words, if you were going to the left, you go right; if you were going down, you go up.

Contrary to popular belief, repentance is not an emotion. It’s an action. Most people think repentance means feeling bad. But to repent simply means to change direction - not a quarter turn, but a total about-face.

“Godly sorrow works repentance,” Paul says, ***“but the sorrow of the world leads to death.”***

If you go to Pelican Bay penitentiary, you'll see people who are really sorry - sorry they robbed that bank, sorry they murdered that man.

But have they repented?

Not necessarily, for theirs is primarily the sorrow of the world - sorrow about being caught.

That is why the lower house of one state legislature passed a bill forbidding weight-lifting in its penitentiaries.

Innately realizing the lack of true repentance, legislators concluded that weight-lifting in jail produces nothing more than super criminals.

Praise God, in the hearts of many inmates, there is true repentance - but in the majority of instances, such is not the case.

Paul identifies two kinds of sorrow - worldly sorrow that leads one to be hung up with guilt, and godly sorrow that leads to repentance.

I believe these two types of sorrow can best be illustrated by looking at the stories of two men remarkably similar in many ways - both having left everything to follow the Rabbi from Galilee, both having walked with Him for three years.

After failing on the same exact day, however, one experienced worldly sorrow that led to death; the other godly sorrow that led to repentance and salvation . . .

Godly sorrow works repentance. And repentance brings salvation.

Judas went down to hell.

Peter went on to greatness.

Both repented.

One felt bad because of the mess he was in. But the other turned his back on that which held him previously, determined to walk in a totally new direction.

Oh, that's not to say Peter's life was easy. In fact, he, too, ended up on a tree - not hung up by guilt, but crucified upside down on a cross for the sake of the One who not only hung on a tree for him, but rose and lived within him, empowering him to live a life of incredible impact and ministry.

Godly sorrow works repentance, which brings salvation never to be regretted. Paul knew this. Peter knew this.

And so can you.

- Jon Courson, Jon Courson's Application Commentary, pp. 1126-1128, 1130

So, as we have seen, there is – ***A SORROW THAT LEADS TO REPENTANCE!***

But, as we have seen, there is a – ***SORROW THAT DOES NOT LEAD TO REPENTANCE!***

As we read on, we are going to be looking at – ***THE EFFECTS OF GODLY SORROW!***

Paul is now going to speak about what he saw in them, this true repentance and it brought Paul great joy!

You see, when we come to Christ there should be a change in our lives. We should be living differently.

And what we are seeing today is that sin is a problem in the church, and many don't really care or think it is a problem.

Listen carefully to what George Gallup tells us regarding the difference between those that are saved and those that are not saved.

This is what he has to say,

There's little difference in ethical behavior between the church and the unchurched.

There's as much pilferage and dishonesty among the church as the unchurched.

And I'm afraid that applies pretty much across the board: religion, per se, is not really life changing. People cite it as important, for instance, in overcoming depression – but it doesn't have primacy in determining behavior.

- George H. Gallup, Vital Signs, Leadership, Fall 1987, p. 17

How can that be when Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come!”**

There should be a change, and Paul is going to deal with that, the change he saw in the Corinthian believers as, once again, we look at – ***THE EFFECTS OF GODLY SORROW!***

VERSES 11-12

Here in these verses that we have read through this morning Paul gives to us seven things that show a person has repented, that their lives have changed.

If there is no change, then it is just empty words on their part!

Regarding this, Redpath tell us, ***“Godly sorrow that leads to repentance, therefore, is a sorrow that leads to a change of purpose, of intention, and of action. It is not the sorrow of idle tears, it is not crying by your bedside because once again you have failed, nor is it vain regret, wishing things had never happened, wishing you could live the moment again. No, it is not that. It is a change of purpose and intentions, a change of direction and action.”***

And here in II Corinthians 7:11 Paul lists seven things that are seen in a person’s life who has repented. These are the effects of godly sorrow, what it produces in a person’s life, and what our repentance shows.

First Paul says that we have **“diligence”** or we keep moving forward, we don’t give up easily.

If you repent for one minute and then the next minute you are doing the very thing you just repented of, you really are not walking in repentance because you are not diligent in your sorrow, in your repentance!

Now I am not saying we don’t struggle, we do, but if that is the pattern of your life, something is wrong!

In fact, John tells us in I John 1:8-9, **“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

First our confession is for our salvation, but then it is to keep our hearts soft before God, that we are aware of our sin. That is important.

Next Paul speaks of **“clearing yourselves”** and it speaks of the freedom as we release that burden that we were carrying around with us as we have repented and given it to the Lord.

The idea here is the freedom from guilt we have as we give the sin to God, and we are following Him instead of the sin.

Remember the story of the woman caught in the act of Adultery and in John 8:10-11 we are told, **“When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.’”**

You see, as she repented, she had a clearing of her sins and Jesus tells her not to sin anymore, don’t go down that path again, that path that held you in bondage because you will feel that guilt once again!

Next Paul speaks of **“indignation”** and it speaks of us being aware of our foolishness of walking in sin and this too will help keep us walking in the right direction.

What are we to be mad about?

First of all - ***SIN!***

That we were foolish enough to go down that path, and it should make us angry!

Secondly, that we let the Devil trick us with his schemes, with his lies.

We should be indignant about sin, we should hate sin and we should hate the Devil for how he has ripped us off, how he causes us to stumble, the lives he destroys!

Hating sin is a good indication that godly sorrow has led to repentance!

If you love sin, then I would be concerned!

Redpath tells us regarding this, ***“I am glad that the Bible allows me to get mad, mad with the devil! To think he had the audacity to pull me down and make me do that! What indignation, what fury at sin and all the agencies of Satan!”***

Keep in mind, the Devil may tempt us, but we take that step. Thus, don't take that step, be aware, be mad that the Devil has tripped you up before and don't go down that same path!

Next Paul speaks of “**fear**” and this is a fear that would cause us not to fall into that same sin again. A fear that does not want to go down that same path because we know the problems it caused us in our relationship with God.

Let the fear of God guide you and don't let the fear of man drive you. We need to have that kind of perspective; this is a good fear because it causes us to follow the Lord!

Then Paul speaks of “**vehement desire**” or a longing for purity, a longing to live a life that is pleasing to God!

Paul put it this way in I Thessalonians 4:3-8, “**For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.**”

In other words, there is a passion to live for God and love what God loves and hate what God hates!

Of this holy life, Peter tells us, “**Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’**” I Peter 1:13-16.

Again, it is our choice in what path we go down, the things we end up doing. Don't put yourself in a situation that will defile your mind, don't let your eyes gaze upon sin – have a vehement desire to live a holy and pure life!

Paul then speaks of “**zeal**” and it speaks of heat. There are two ways to look at this, and I think both do apply.

First, are you hot for God, on fire for Him?

Also, are you hot against sin; you don't want to go down that path again?

You see, I think both do apply here and they will keep us moving in the right direction!

I love the Lord so much and I hate sin so much that I will follow the Lord all the days of my life and not be hooked by the traps that Satan is setting to catch me and cause me to sin, to move away from God!

It is as Peter warns us in I Peter 2:11-12, “**Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**”

May we have that kind of zeal for God and against sin!

Lastly, Paul speaks of “**vindication**” and God has vindicated us of our sins as we repent of our sins before Him!

Truly that is the key, not that we sin or don't sin, but that we repent when we do!

And here is the wonderful conclusion of all of this. When repentance is marked by the preceding characteristics, we are *clear* of guilt and sin. The stain of sin is gone! We can feel it, and others can see it.

Spurgeon put it like this, *“Happy is that man who has had enough of the smart of sin to make it sour and bitter to him all the rest of his days; so that now, with changed heart, and renewed spirit, he perseveres in the ways of God, never thinking of going back, but resolved ‘through floods or flames’ to force his way to heaven, to be, by divine grace, master over every sin that assails him.”*

We need to deal with sin seriously or it will consume our lives!

What we see here with the Corinthian believers is that they repented of their sin as the evidence is seen by the characteristics we just went through.

It is as David said in Psalm 32:1-2, **“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.”**

How happy we are to have our sins forgiven!

Let me show you someone who knows that they are guilty and does not try to make excuses for what they have done or try to say they did no wrong.

We are told,

Lloyd H. Steffen wrote in *The Christian Century* how when King Frederick II, an eighteenth-century King of Prussia, was visiting a prison in Berlin, the inmates tried to prove to him how they had been unjustly imprisoned. All except one.

That one sat quietly in a corner, while all the rest protested their innocence.

Seeing him sitting there oblivious to the commotion, the king asked him what he was there for.

“Armed robbery, Your Honor.”

The king asked, ***“Were you guilty?”***

“Yes, Sir,” he answered. **“I entirely deserve my punishment.”**

The king then gave an order to the guard: ***“Release this guilty man. I don’t want him corrupting all these innocent people.”***

I like that and the reality is, if he did not recognize his sin, he would never have been set free and the same is true for us!

Now we also see here that Paul speaks of someone who did wrong and someone that was wronged but he doesn’t mention names or go into the details, they were fully aware of the situation and there was no use in rehashing the event or events that brought this about.

Paul didn’t take sides either, which tells me that they both needed to repent and get right with God and the matter would be resolved!

Make no mistake about it, people should see – ***THE EFFECTS OF GODLY SORROW*** in our lives!

As we finish up, we will be looking at how these changed lives, transformed lives in Corinth, brought Paul – ***COMFORT AND JOY!***

VERSES 13-16

As Paul sent Titus to Corinth, he boasted about Titus to them with the hope that they would receive him.

And as Titus went to Corinth, he may have been a little unsure of how they would respond. He was probably a little nervous.

And then Paul found out that Titus was refreshed when he saw them and that was a blessing to Paul and I am sure it put Titus at ease as well.

Yes, they had problems, but they also were brethren in the Lord, and it was seen in their life. Many had obeyed what the Lord told them through Paul in his first letter to them.

And now Paul is just encouraging these believers to continue on in the faith.

As you can see, Paul wasn't interested in ministry, in the general sense, he was interested in people and his ministry was thus, people!

How important that is for us to remember, we just don't serve, we serve the Lord and as we do, we serve people!

Remember that we opened up this chapter talking about Paul being discouraged, depressed and we see here that he is refreshed.

Of this we are told,

Deep, mutually appreciative friendships developed between Titus and the Corinthians.

They came to revere him, treating him *“with fear and trembling”* as a messenger of God himself. It was a refreshed, energized, buoyant Titus who embraced this mentor, Paul in Macedonia.

Thus we see how Paul was comforted and elevated to joy.

First, there was the *“Titus Touch”* as Paul so eloquently explained: *“But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more”* (vv. 6, 7).

Secondly, he was encouraged by news of the Corinthians' repentance, and, thirdly, by Titus' joy.

As we reflect on this, we see that Paul's threefold comfort was all of God. God arranged the coming of Titus just at the right time.

God effected the Corinthians' godly grief and repentance.

God refreshed Titus.

And Paul's great apostolic, other-directed heart was lifted from gloom precisely because he so cared for others. God's comfort was effectual because Paul had the kind of heart that could receive it.

We also see from this account that God's comfort very often comes through the instrumentality of others . . .

Depression sometimes visits the most godly believers, and often it is because they have willingly followed God into the fray so that their bodies have had no rest, and pressures have squeezed them as they are surrounded by fighting's without and fears within. They need a loving touch.

Is there someone whom God is laying on your heart to encourage?
Then be his instrument now.

- R. Kent Hughes, 2 Corinthians – Power in Weakness, pp. 153-159

Titus and the news of the Corinthian believers brought – ***COMFORT AND JOY*** to Paul!

As we have seen – ***SORROW LEADS TO REPENTANCE!***

When we realize that we are sinners separated from God and there is nothing we can do to change that, that sorrow brings us to the Savior, to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins!

That is a Godly sorrow and, sadly, there is a worldly sorrow that does not lead to life but to eternal separation from God!

Then Paul spoke of – ***THE EFFECTS OF GODLY SORROW!***

And we saw that a true repentance, a true relationship with Jesus Christ will change our lives. We were doing things opposed to God and now that we have come to Him, our actions have changed as well.

And lastly, we saw that Titus and the report of how the Corinthian believers changed their lives, they got right with God, it brought Paul great – ***COMFORT AND JOY!***

As I begin to close our study this morning, I can't close without saying this.

If you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, may you come to the point in your life where you sorrow over sin and you come to Jesus!

Repentance or turning away from where you were going and turning to the Lord by asking Him to forgive you for your sins and be Lord and Savior of your life.

Is that all there is to it?

What do I have to do?

Yes, the work has been done by Jesus, there is nothing you can add to this gift of salvation. It is a grace gift, and grace is something given to us not because we deserve it or have worked for it, it is a free gift we receive by faith.

I pray that if you don't know Jesus, that you come to him today!

For those of you who are saved, don't harden your heart to what God is showing you this morning. Don't receive worldly sorrow in your life, that is a sorrow for what you did, that you got caught, which is meaningless, it does not change you.

Have a godly sorrow that leads to repentance and that is then evident by what is produced in your life!

As I close this morning, let me leave you with these words from Proverbs 4:23-27,

“Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil.”

May we desire to live that kind of life and as we do the Holy Spirit will empower us to walk accordingly.

Keep your heart pure before God, soft for Him to mold and shape and let godly sorrow produce repentance in your life!