



"THE CONTAGIOUS JOY OF TITUS"
... godly grief produced repentance.
August 9, 2023

2 Corinthians 7:4-16

2 Corinthians Series: Paul's defense of his **ministry** was rooted in God's **perfect power** working through human **weaknesses**. (2 Cor 12:9)

Problem: Paul had identified a serious problem was restricting the Corinthian's hearts from **reconciliation**: they were living according to the pattern of the **unbelieving** world (6:11-16). He sternly called them to respond to God's promises and repent from their **idolatrous** mindset.

Text: 7:4-16 Paul revealed the reason for his comfort and joy during his difficult mission. God had used all the **grief** and **weakness** associated with Paul's ministry to call the church at Corinth to **repentance**.

HFC Thesis: Only **"godly grief"** produces a **repentance** that leads to **salvation**. Therefore, we must **endure** the relational tension associated with preaching a **gospel of repentance**. (sternness and love)

Godly grief: a **sorrow** over sin that comes from **God** and leads to repentance. **Worldly grief:** a sorrow of the flesh that continues in sin.

2 Corinthians 7:4 *I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy.*

WHY WAS PAUL OVERFLOWING WITH JOY?

I. BECAUSE OF THE TWOFOLD COMFORT OF SEEING TITUS.

2 Cor 7:5 *For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 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.*

- A. **2 Corinthians 2:14 to 7:4** is one long theological **digression** in Paul's explanation for his change of travel plans (1:12-15). Think back:
1. God's **Providence** and Christ's Triumphant **Procession**. (2:14)
 2. The **Unveiled Glory** of the **New Covenant**. (3:18)
 3. The **Treasure** of God's Glory in **Jars of Clay**. (4:7)
 4. The **Hope** of Our Heavenly **Dwelling**. (5:1-10)
 5. The **Ministry of Reconciliation**. (5:11-6:13)
 6. The **Promises** of God for His **Separated** People. (7:1-4)
- B. **"But God who comforts the downcast:"** What a presupposition! **How?**
- C. As Paul resumed his explanation, notice how Titus **personified** the "working of God's **power** in human **weakness**."
1. **Titus' himself:** Paul's relief to be **reunited** with Titus.
 2. **Titus' own comfort:** relief over the Corinthian response.
- D. Notice the **effect** of the stern letter (2:3): their hearts were opened!

II. BECAUSE OF THE PROVEN NECESSITY OF GODLY GRIEF.

8 *For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. 9 As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.*

- A. Paul admitted that his letter was **necessary**. But emotionally, he admitted that it also **caused him grief**. (Spiritual parenting)
- B. Godly grief is not wasted, it is **necessary**. What is the difference between **legalism** and **godly grief**? Two different outcomes.

III. BECAUSE OF THE EARNEST RESULTS OF GODLY GRIEF.

10 *For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. 11 For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. 12 So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. 13 Therefore we are comforted.*

- A. What is **godly grief**? How is it part of the ministry of **reconciliation**? How is it different than mere sorrow? What **results** does it have?
- B. Any temporary "regret" from administering correction is assuaged by the **results** of godly grief: earnestness, eagerness, indignation, fear.
- C. Godly grief reveals the **"open-hearted"** relationships that are reconciled under the canopy of God's grace. What a comfort!

IV. BECAUSE OF TITUS' CONTAGIOUS JOY.

And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14 For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true. 15 And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.

- A. Here again, Paul focused upon **Titus' personal joy** and how it affected his ministry partners.
- B. Paul's confidence was **validated** in both **Titus** and the **Corinthians**.

Implications/Questions:

1. God uses Christians as a **means of comfort** to the ministry-afflicted.
2. How interested are you in other Christian's spiritual **welfare**? How are you investing in other Christian's pursuit of **holiness**?
3. Have you ever hurt someone's **feelings** because you loved them enough to tell them the **truth**? What did such grief produce?
4. Could HFC send you to help someone understand God's call to **holiness and repentance**? Are you confident to pursue godly grief?
5. Is your **joy** contagious? Have you seen God's **power** at work?