

# **How Love Can Hurt** (part 2)

2 Corinthians 1: 23-24; 2: 1-11

# How Love Can Hurt

- “Benevolent” pain
- Occasions when love must inflict pain on the loved one, for love’s sake
- Whenever love causes pain, it does so reciprocally
- “This is going to hurt me more than it hurts you.”

# 2 Corinthians

- Most autobiographical of Paul's writings
- Under influence of false teachers, church has started a movement to discredit Paul

# Corinthian Correspondence

#1 1st letter (lost)

#2 1 Corinthians

*less than*

*one*

*year*



#3 3rd letter (lost) : “painful letter”

#4 2 Corinthians

# Paul changed his travel plans

- ... I wanted to visit you first so that you might benefit twice. I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. (2 Cor. 1: 15b-16)
- Was I fickle when I intended to do this? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say both “Yes, yes” and “No, no”? (1:17)

# **Paul defends his integrity 1:12 – 2:11**

- “I am sincere and honest in my words and reliable in my actions” (1:12)
- “I am faithful just as God is faithful” (1:18-22)

# Paul explains why he changed his plan

I call God as my witness—and I stake my life on it—that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm. (1: 23-24; NIV)

Now I call upon God as my witness that I am telling the truth. The reason I didn't return to Corinth was to spare you from a severe rebuke. But that does not mean we want to dominate you by telling you how to put your faith into practice. We want to work together with you so you will be full of joy, for it is by your own faith that you stand firm. (1: 23-24; NLT)

# Paul's motive for the change

So I decided that I would not bring you grief with another painful visit. <sup>2</sup> For if I cause you grief, who will make me glad? Certainly not someone I have grieved. <sup>3</sup> That is why I wrote to you as I did, so that when I do come, I won't be grieved by the very ones who ought to give me the greatest joy. Surely you all know that my joy comes from your being joyful. <sup>4</sup> I wrote that letter in great anguish, with a troubled heart and many tears. I didn't want to grieve you, but I wanted to let you know how much love I have for you. (2 Cor. 2: 1-4; NLT)

# Corinthian Correspondence

#1 1st letter (lost)

#2 1 Corinthians

*less than*

*one*

*year*



#4 2 Corinthians



#3 3rd letter (lost) : “painful letter”

# Why write a “painful” letter?

I wrote that letter in great anguish, with a troubled heart and many tears. I didn't want to grieve you, but I wanted to let you know how much love I have for you. (2 Cor. 2: 4; NLT)

I wrote to you as I did to test you and see if you would fully comply with my instructions. (2 Cor. 2: 9; NLT)

# How love can hurt

- “This has hurt me more than it has hurt you.”

# Good parental discipline

- Motivated by love
- Motivated by wanting what's best for our kids

# God's discipline for His children

- Motivated by love
- Motivated by wanting what's best for us
- Discipline has two steps: first teach; then correct
- Instruction and Correction
- Formative discipline and Corrective discipline

My child, don't reject the Lord's discipline,  
and don't be upset when he corrects you.  
For the Lord corrects those he loves,  
just as a father corrects a child in whom he  
delights. (Prov. 3: 11-12; NLT)

An open rebuke is better than hidden love!  
(Prov. 27:5; NLT)

# What makes this letter “painful”?

- Paul asked the Corinthians believers to discipline the “out of line” church member (cf. 2 Cor. 7: 8-12)
- Through this letter, Paul wanted to give them time and space to repent
- If he were to discipline them by another visit (rule over them), that would bring him grief
- Ideal context for growth in faith is joy, not punishment

# A case requiring church discipline

- Someone who resisted Paul's apostolic authority inappropriately ?
- The person who committed incest (1 Cor. 5) ?
- Whatever the situation, this person didn't just hurt Paul, but also the entire congregation

I am not overstating it when I say that the man who caused all the trouble hurt all of you more than he hurt me. (2 Cor. 2: 5; NLT)

# The “painful letter” did its job

6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

(2 Cor. 2: 6-8)

- “punishment” = “public rebuke”
- “reaffirm your love for him” = public act of reconciliation

# The purpose of “church discipline” ...

- expose sin
- warn; a “loving” warning
- save & protect
- present & preserve a good witness for Jesus Christ

# The goal of “church discipline” ...

- Repentance in the erring member
- Restoration into the fellowship

# The method of “church discipline” ...

- PUBLICLY REBUKE/CORRECT



Repentance in the erring member

- PUBLICLY FORGIVE/RE-AFFIRM LOVE



Restoration into the fellowship

# Once offender repents, must forgive

6 Most of you opposed him, and that was punishment enough. 7 Now, however, it is time to forgive and comfort him. Otherwise he may be overcome by discouragement. 8 So I urge you now to reaffirm your love for him. ... 10 When you forgive this man, I forgive him, too. And when I forgive whatever needs to be forgiven, I do so with Christ's authority for your benefit, 11 so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes. (2 Cor. 2: 6-8, 10-11; NLT)

# What are the schemes of Satan ?

- To keep us bound in bitterness
- Unforgiving child of God can't be forgiven by God

... and forgive us our sins,  
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

... “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.”  
(Matthew 6: 12, 14-15; NLT)

# What are the schemes of Satan ?

- Keep the hurt alive
- Keep brothers and sisters apart

# What are the schemes of Satan ?

- Ruin and destroy the Bride of Christ
- The best way to do this?
- UNFORGIVENESS!

# 3 Options when hurt by someone in church

- Forgive and keep moving forward
- Don't forgive and poison the church
- Don't forgive and leave the church

# What have we learned today ?

- What do we mean by “love can hurt” ?
- How does love hurt ?
- What is “church discipline” ?
- What is the purpose of this type of “loving hurt” ?
- What is the goal of “church discipline” ?
- How does Satan outsmart us when we don't forgive ?

**How will we apply  
what we have learned?**