

Paul had previously written a harsh letter to the Corinthians in which he reprimanded them of the sins that was occurring in the church. He knew that writing this letter risked alienating the Corinthians but in this chapter Paul states that he did not regret writing the letter because of the results that it produced in the Corinthians, including repentance and a new zeal for the things of God.

Verses 1-5: In light of God's promises to bless us when we separate ourselves from the world and it's uncleanness, Paul urges us to live holy lives for the Lord. Paul then appeals to the Corinthians to accept him and his companions because they had not wronged the Corinthians. Rather, they were willing to die if it would benefit the Corinthians. When he and his companions came to Macedonia (the region north of Corinth), they had no rest because of the persecutions they faced for the sake of the gospel and because of their fears for the spiritual well-being of the Corinthians.

6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

Paul's concern for the Corinthians moved him to send Titus to check on them. The God of all comfort that Paul spoke of in the first chapter (2 Cor. 1:3-5) encouraged Paul by allowing Titus to return with good news. Paul's worry over the Corinthians was turned into great joy.

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.

"And not by his coming only" – No doubt Paul was concerned for Titus' safety since in that day anyone involved in the ministry of the gospel had a target on their back for persecution and even death. Paul rejoiced and was comforted when Titus returned safe and sound.

"but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you" – Beyond the joy of Titus' safe return, Paul also rejoiced because Titus had been encouraged by what he saw while in Corinth.

"when he told us your earnest desire" – Paul's previous strict letter of rebuke could have caused the Corinthians to stubbornly reject Paul and his teaching. However, Titus could report that the Corinthians had an "earnest desire" to see Paul again and renew their fellowship with him.

"your mourning" – Titus also reported that the Corinthians were mourning over the sin that had been the reason for the previous letter of rebuke. That was a sign of repentance rather than stubborn rebellion. Our sin should always cause us to mourn and grieve because godly sorrow leads us to repentance (v. 10).

"your fervent mind [excitement; zeal] toward me" – Rather than being against Paul or even neutral toward him, the Corinthians were zealous for him. This implies that they were defending him when the false apostles and teachers were criticizing him.

"so that I rejoiced the more" – The favorable report of the Corinthians added to the joy that Paul was already experiencing because of Titus' safe arrival. It gave him joy to hear that they were not rejecting his teaching, but had instead repented and were looking forward to his next visit.

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

"For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent" – Paul did not regret the letter of rebuke that he had sent to Corinth because it was necessary. Allowing the sin to continue would not have benefited the Corinthians.

"though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season" – Though Paul did not regret sending the letter, he did regret that it needed to be sent and that it caused sorrow for the Corinthians, even if only for a short time. Paul loved the Corinthians and it brought him no joy to have to rebuke them.

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.

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance" – The joy Paul was now enjoying was not because the letter had brought sorrow to the Corinthians, but because the letter had produced the intended result. The letter had caused them to become sorrowful over their sin and that sorrow led them to repentance. Their repentance was what made Paul rejoice.

"for ye were made sorry after a godly manner" – Their sorrow came from the Holy Spirit, Who convicted them of their sins so that they would repent and begin obeying the Lord. This is in contrast to the "sorrow of the world" that Paul talks about in v. 10.

"that ye might receive damage [to suffer loss or injury] by us in nothing" – Paul knew there was a risk that his rebukes might have had the opposite of the intended effect. The Corinthians could have reacted with their flesh and rebelled against the things of God. Paul's rebuke might have resulted in pushing the Corinthians farther from God but he was rejoicing because they had instead repented and were now seeking to please God.

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" – There is no need to regret the sorrow that leads to repentance because it is this godly sorrow that leads us to salvation. Christians have been accused of being manipulative and using "guilt trips" on people. The world promotes freedom from guilt so that they can engage in their sin without their conscience bothering them. However, godly sorrow is not a guilt trip but one of the tools that God uses to lead us to Him.

"but the sorrow of the world worketh death" – The sorrow of the world includes being sorry for being caught and the shame that it produces. Such sorrow does not lead to repentance and eternal life through Christ. People have committed suicide and/or murder because they could not escape the guilt of their sin since they did not seek forgiveness through Christ.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

“For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort” – Paul now wants the Corinthians to consider what “this selfsame thing” (the godly sorrow that he’s been talking about) has produced in them. He lists a series of good things that this godly sorrow has produced in them.

“*what carefulness* [*diligence*] *it wrought in you*” – Instead of being careless about their Christian lives and ignoring sin in the church, godly sorrow caused them to become diligent in not only purging the sin from their ranks but preventing it in the future by pursuing righteousness.

“*yea, what clearing* [*a defense*] *of yourselves*” – Sin has a stigma and the Corinthians apparently did not want to be known as a church that tolerated sin. Godly sorrow caused them to take steps to vindicate themselves.

“*yea, what indignation* [*irritation; vexation*]” – Godly sorrow gave them the righteous indignation that motivated them to deal with sin and purge it from the church. They no longer could sit still while sin was present but had to do something about it.

“*yea, what fear* [*terror; reverence*]” – Godly sorrow stirred up their fear and reverence of God, motivating them to want to please Him.

“*yea, what vehement desire* [*longing*]” – Godly sorrow also gave them a longing to be right with God.

“*yea, what zeal* [*excitement; enthusiasm*]” – Godly sorrow stirred up an excitement and enthusiasm in the Corinthians for the things of God.

“*yea, what revenge* [*vengeance; punishment*]” – Godly sorrow gave them a desire to see God’s justice done. It motivated the Corinthians to stand up for those who were done wrong and to punish the perpetrator.

“In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be *clear* [*clean; pure*] in this matter” – Rather than being accomplices or protectors of the sin, the Corinthians had vindicated themselves, proving that they were not complicit or complacent about sin.

12 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 admits that the primary reason he wrote to the Corinthians was not to cause the perpetrator of the sin to repent, nor that justice would be done for the victim of the sin (although these goals were no doubt in Paul’s mind when he wrote to them). Paul truly wanted the Corinthians to see how much he loved and cared for them and was concerned for their spiritual well being. He loved them enough to risk offending them.

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.

“Therefore we were *comforted* [*encouraged*] in your comfort” – After he had written the previous letter, Paul was worried until he heard of their encouragement, which encouraged him.

“*yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all*” – It brought joy to Paul when Titus, the man that Paul had sent to Corinth to discover how his letter had been received, returned with joy. Titus, who understood and shared Paul’s concerns, was encouraged and joyful at the positive response the Corinthians made after reading Paul’s letter.

14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth.

“For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed” – Paul had apparently believed that the Corinthians would have a righteous response to the calls for repentance in Paul’s letter, and had said so to Titus. Thus, he was not embarrassed when Titus returned with good news.

“but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth” – Just as the gospel that Paul preached was true, so also was his confident statements that he made to Titus about the Corinthians.

15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

Titus’ love for the Corinthians had grown because of the respect that was given to him while he was at Corinth as well as his observation of their obedience to Paul’s letter.

16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all *things*.

Paul rejoiced in the fact that Titus’ report had strengthened his confidence in the Corinthians. He became even more confident that the Corinthians would choose to pursue Christ’s righteousness rather than attempt to protect their pride by not dealing with the sin in the church.