

2 Corinthians 7

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Tape 8158
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Second Corinthians, chapter seven.

We should really say Second Corinthians, chapter six, verse seventeen, because that is where verse one of chapter seven begins, actually. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. God's call to the church to live a life of separation from the world. The "them" would be the world. Come ye out from among them, that is the world. Be ye separate saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing.

And I will receive you. That is the first promise. And I will be a Father unto you. That is the second promise. And you shall be My sons and daughters, the third promise. So these three promises: I will receive you, I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.

That leads you then to verse one of chapter seven, *Having therefore these promises*, The promises that God will receive us, be our Father, and we would be His sons and daughters.

Having these promises, *dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit*, We are called to live a life separate from the world, from the defilement of the things in the world. The world being defined by John (1 John 2:16), "all that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is of the world and is not of God." We are to separate ourselves from living after the lust of our flesh. We are not to be controlled or governed by our fleshly desires. Following after your fleshly desires, trying to fulfill the lust of your flesh, is a one way road. You can't retreat. Your flesh is always demanding more and more and more.

Today it is an epidemic in America and around the world. People have given themselves over to try to satisfy the lust of their flesh. It is destroying marriages. There are many men according to a recent report who are no longer desiring intimate relationships with their wives, because they are so caught up in pornography. They are getting their excitement and their thrills from the pornography on the Internet and are no longer really desiring their wives. The reason being, of course, the marriages are breaking up because of this. It is, of course, an insult to the wife. It's an affront to her that a man would be excited over seeing the nude body of another woman. It is destroying marriages because when you get into that realm, you're into the realm of fantasy. Reality can never live up to fantasy. And that's one of the problems. People live in this fantasy world and then the reality is never as great as the fantasy. It only promises. But there is no substance. It's like cotton candy. It looks so delicious but when you bite there is nothing there. It's just empty! And so the fantasies of the world. We are told to cleanse ourselves from all the filth of the flesh and of the spirit. Why? Because I am a child of God! He is my Father! I am His son. And thus, as a son of God, I need to walk as my Father in holiness and in purity, in righteousness.

John said (1 John 3:3), he that hath this hope, that is the hope of the appearing of Jesus Christ and are being changed into His likeness. He who has this hope in him, purifies himself even as He is pure! God said, be ye holy for I am holy. So it's important for us to live a life of holiness, a life of separation, separation from the world. Touch not the unclean thing, God said, and I will be a Father unto you and you will be my sons and daughters. But that is conditional upon us separating ourselves from the filth and the defilement of the world.

perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Or in the awe of God. I think that one of the problems in the Christian world today is that we don't have a proper respect for God, who He is. The awesomeness of God! It is and it's a lot on man elevating himself, lifting himself up and bringing God down, trying to bring God down to his level.

I heard a man who is in the ministry make a statement the other day, that God is, you know, about as big as we are. Now this guy is a little short guy, he said I think He is probably a little bigger than I am. And he said because it tells us that God measured out the heavens with His span. And the span is the distance between the thumb and the little finger. So God's hand is only nine inches wide. Of all of the ridiculous things! When Isaiah said (Isaiah 40:12) He measured out the heavens with His span, he is telling you how big God is! He is telling you that with His span, He can measure the whole universe. How big is the universe? It's this big as far as God is concerned. But you see they bring God down to man's level, rather than stand in awe of the greatness of God! He is so vast that He measures the waters in the palms of His hand. That goes along with His meting out the heavens with His span. He weighs the waters in the palm of His hand. Now you can't put all of the oceans in the palm of your hand. He is a much bigger God than we are. We're not God. But they try to make man, God and bring God down to man's level. And because people do not have this proper understanding of God, they do not have the proper respect for God. They make references to God like, the "man upstairs", and the "big daddy in the sky". Things of this nature, these are careless references to the God who created the whole universe and everything that is in it. We should stand in holy awe of God and in holiness, as we stand in the awe of Him!

Now Paul is saying, *²Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.* Paul was a true minister of God. He is sort of in a league with few others. There was Moses in the Old Testament. And he was one of those kinds of men, like Paul. When there was this rebellion led by Korah against Moses (Numbers 16) and there were many who joined in this rebellion against his leadership, Moses ordered the people to be gathered together before the Lord that they might resolve the issues. When they gathered together, two of the leaders of the rebellion didn't show up, Dathan and Abiram, so Moses said to tell them to get over here. A messenger came back and said, hey, they said they don't have to obey you. Who do you think you are? So Moses said (Numbers 16:15), I have not taken one thing from them. I've only been here to serve, to lead. I haven't taken a thing from them.

When Samuel anointed Saul before the people as the king over Israel, Samuel said (1 Samuel 12:3) to the people, I want you to bear record of me this day that I have not taken anything from any man. I've not used my position to enrich myself. I've served.

Paul said, I have not wronged any man. I have not corrupted any man, nor have I defrauded any man. Earlier in this epistle, chapter four, Paul said, but we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. I haven't been deceitful. I haven't twisted or wrested the Scriptures or the meanings of the Scriptures. I haven't handled God's Word deceitfully.

In the eleventh chapter, where we will be arriving in a few weeks, he said, and when I was present with you, and I was in need, I was chargeable to no man. So that which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Macedonia, supplied and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome to you and so I will keep myself. I didn't take anything from you. I was there to minister to you, to serve you.

One of the things that I try to emphasize in the pastor's conferences where I am teaching, is to realize that the word "minister" means servant. And you are there to serve the people, to minister to the people. You are God's minister to them. So God will take care of you if you will take care of God's business. You don't have to fleece or try to fleece the flock of God. Feed the flock of God. Minister to them. Give yourself for them. God will take care of you. God will never be a debtor to you. He will take care of you. You are serving the Lord, knowing that of the Lord you will receive

the reward.

In verse sixteen of chapter eleven, Paul said, I say again, let no man think me a fool. If otherwise, yet as a fool, receive me that I may boast myself a little.

And then in chapter twelve, verse fourteen, he said, behold the third time I am ready to come to you. I will not be burdensome to you. He is planning to go back to Corinth, but I am not going to be a burden to you, he said, for I seek not yours, but you! I don't seek your possession or your money. I'm seeking you! For the children ought not to lay up for the parents but the parents for the children. So Paul said, you're my children. You are not to lay up. You're not to support me. I'm to support you. I'm to take care of you.

So the ministry, the true ministry is not looking for trying to enrich yourself off of the flock, but the true ministry is giving yourself for the flock. It's sad today that there are so many ministries that exist in order to be ministered to. You hear them. We need your support desperately. If we don't get your support this month, then we're going to have to cut back this great ministry that God has given to us. It's as though God is begging for your support to keep them out of bankruptcy. It's tragic. That's a misrepresentation of God. God isn't broke. God isn't poor! You need God's support! He doesn't need yours. So it's a privilege to invest in the kingdom of God, but the giving should never be by constraint, never by pressure. God loves a cheerful giver. So receive us, Paul said. We haven't wronged anybody. We haven't corrupted anybody. We haven't defrauded anybody. We have been pure in our ministry.

³*I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.* I'm not putting you down. I didn't take anything from you. I gave to you. And I'm not saying that to put you down, because I'm ready to live with you or I'm ready to die with you. My heart is with you! My heart is for you! I will live for you. I'll die for you!

⁴*Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you:* I've been bragging about you. I love you. You are wonderful people.

I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. Though I go through a lot of problems, I have a lot of trials. I am exceedingly joyful because of the fruit of the ministry that I see in your lives, Paul is saying to the Corinthians. I love you. I love to tell people about what God is doing there in Corinth, what God is doing in the church. I've been boasting of what God has been doing. And I am so comforted. When I'm in tribulation, I find comfort in the fact that God is working in your lives.

⁵*For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.* Paul had written the first letter to the church in Corinth. It was a heavy-duty letter. There were a lot of problems that Paul had been apprised of in the church. So it was a letter that rebuked them for many of the things that they were doing. It had its harsh side to it because these things needed to be corrected. As Paul was apprehensive after he wrote it, (he had one of those kind of second thoughts—oh, he says, was I too heavy on them?) It's sort of a melancholy type of personality, you know, where you do something, then you worry for weeks that maybe you have said the wrong thing or maybe you didn't say it just as you should have. Then you go back, you sort of are miserable because you think, oh my! Did I make a mistake in that? Why didn't I say it this way? Maybe I should have said it that way, you know. So he was worried because he didn't know how they were going to receive it. He loved them. What he wrote was out of a heart of love. But many times, love is not understood. But the Scripture says, faithful are the wounds of friend, deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. Better that you be wounded by a friend. Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

So Paul as a friend wrote to them. The things that he had to deal with were hard. And he wasn't

sure how they took it. So after he said it he was worried. He sent Titus with the letter. He said Titus, give them the letter. Read it to them and all and share it with them. Then come back and tell me how they accepted it. So Titus has been gone. Paul left Ephesus from which he had written the letter. He had gone up to Troas. And God was working there in Troas, as he tells them in chapter two. There was really an open door of ministry and God was working but yet, Paul was so troubled in his spirit because Titus didn't come back.

Now they didn't have communications in those days, the ability to pick up the phone and say, Titus, how did it go, man? And thus you would go weeks or months in this kind of apprehension. And so Paul was there in Troas. He was so troubled in his spirit because Titus didn't show up. He was so anxious to get the report from Corinth that he headed over to Macedonia. He crossed over into Macedonia. There he was, as he says here, for when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest. I was just in turmoil because we were troubled on every side. Without, there was disputing and fighting, within there was fear. I just was torn. I didn't know how you received or how you responded to the things that I needed to say to you.

But then he said, *⁶Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down,* You know, there are those in the Bible that we always sort of elevate to the super saint status. Yet all of these men, so mightily used of God, were no different from us.

It's a trick of the enemy, I think, to disqualify ourselves because of certain character flaws that we might have, certain characteristics in our life. And I say, well, God can't use me. Oh man, I wish I were like Paul. If I were like Paul then God could use me, or like Elijah or you know, these super saints, oh man. And we are always disqualifying ourselves.

Moses tried to disqualify himself. God, I'm slow of speech. I stutter. They are not going to listen to me. God said, who made man's mouth?

As Jeremiah tried to disqualify himself, Lord, I'm just a child. They will never listen to me! And it's interesting how that so often we find ourselves disqualifying ourselves from what God wants to do through our lives because we are looking at our inefficiencies, instead of His all sufficiency. Not realizing that God's callings are God's enabling! If God has called you to do a task, even as with Moses, He will enable you for that task.

So Paul had fears. Paul had discouragement. Paul experienced depression. Here he talks about the depression that he had, there in Macedonia. There were fears. There were these outward struggles. There was this depression. I was cast down. But, nevertheless, God that comforts those that are cast down. He is the God of all comfort. He comforts those that mourn! He comforts those that are cast down, discouraged, those that are depressed. He is the God of all comfort!

The God that comforts those that are cast down, *comforted us by the coming of Titus*; While Paul was there in Macedonia, Titus finally showed up. And oh, good report! Paul is just elated over the report that Titus brings.

So God comforted us with the coming of Titus; *⁷And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you,* He told me of how you received him. He told me of how you treated him so wonderfully. And the bond that was created between you and Titus, oh, it thrilled my heart, Paul is saying!

Wherewith he was comforted in you, *when he told us your earnest desire,* That is, your earnest desire to obey the first epistle, to correct the problems that existed. Your earnest desire to really seek the Lord, and to seek the things of the Lord. Your earnest desire to be obedient to the Word of the Lord.

And of *your mourning,* Your mourning over the problems that did exist and that you allowed to develop within the church. Jesus said, blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

The mourning that Jesus is talking about is the mourning that comes when I realize how I have failed! I've failed to be what God would have me to be. I've come short of God's program and plan for my life. I mourn over my sin. I mourn over the weaknesses of my flesh.

So they were mourning when they received Paul's letter. And rather than rebelling, of course, there are two ways to take correction. One is to rebel against it. And that is very common. We don't like to be told we're wrong. We so often bristle and seek then to defend ourselves. Or there is the mourning over my mistakes and over my wrongs, the receiving of the correction. The fool hateth instruction.

So he told us how you were mourning, *your fervent mind toward me*; I was comforted to know that you still loved me in spite of the fact that I had to send you that letter of rebuke.

so that I rejoiced the more. ⁸*For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent* (The word repent, there, is not a good translation. It should be regret. I don't regret it.), *though I did repent*: That is, after I said it. I regretted it! Unto I got the news from Titus that you received it and all is well. And so I don't regret it now. You have things like that and you regret it and then it turned out all right and then you say, oh well, praise the Lord, fine, you know! It all worked out okay.

So Paul said that I made you sorry with a letter, I do not regret, though I did regret: *for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season*. In other words, you were mourning over the wrongs, but you corrected them. So it was only a temporary mourning and you got things straightened out.

⁹*Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance*: And that's an important thing! Not that you are just sorry for your sin. Sorry for the things that you did that were wrong. But that your sorrow leads you to make changes! Now there are a lot of people who say, I'm sorry! Oh, I'm so sorry! But then they do the same thing right over again, and again and again.

I believe that if you would take a poll of those that are in San Quentin, you would find that probably ninety-nine per cent of them, would say, oh yes, I'm very sorry. But then if you would probe a bit, you would find they're not sorry that they did it, they are sorry that they got caught. There is a big difference.

So I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance, that the sorrow brought changes! *for ye were made sorry after a godly manner*, Now there is a sorrow that is an ungodly manner.

That you were made sorry in a godly manner, *that ye might receive damage by us in nothing*. ¹⁰*For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation* So, there is a real value to Godly sorrow. Now the conviction of the Holy Spirit, brings you to Godly sorrow and that leads you to repentance to salvation. I realize that I have sinned against God. I realize that I have done the wrong things. I've hurt people. I've been living selfishly. I've not been considerate of the needs of others at all. And I begin to look at myself honestly. I begin to sorrow over how violent, wicked and evil are the things that I was doing. That is when God's Spirit begins to work in your heart and to reveal the truth to you about your self. As Socrates used to say to his student, know thyself. But how few people really do.

Jeremiah said the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it?

David said, Lord, Thou has known me and searched me. You know my downittings and my uprisings. You understand my thoughts afar off. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. I cannot attain it. What knowledge? Self knowledge. David said, I don't know myself. God, you know me. You have searched me, you know me. But, I don't know myself. He acknowledged that. But when God began to reveal to David, what God knew about him, David then cried out, have mercy upon me, oh God! According to the multitude of your tender mercies, blot out my

transgressions for against Thee and Thee only, have I sinned and done this great evil in Your sight. He was crying out for mercy because he saw himself as God saw him.

So when God begins to convict you by His Holy Spirit, you begin to see the truth about your life. It brings sorrow, Godly sorrow, which leads you to repent. God, I am sorry! And it brings you to salvation, the forgiveness of it, then the new life then in Jesus, the changes! If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things are passed away. Everything becomes new! And you begin to live this new life.

So Godly sorrow works repentance to salvation, *not to be repented of* (regretted): *but the sorrow of the world worketh death.* The world is sorry but there is no change, that is not Godly sorrow. You do some foolish thing and it has calamitous results. People are injured. People are hurt.

I was reading of a man this week, who had several drunk driving convictions. He was in an accident and some people were killed. I'm sure if we could bring that man in here tonight and say, are you sorry that you drank and then you went out to drive your car? I'm sure he would say, I'm so sorry! Oh, I killed some people, oh. I'm sure that he is just going through hell and misery and torment over the contemplation of what he did. But unless there are changes, you see he has had several previous arrests on drunk driving. I suppose on every time he gets arrested, he has to pay \$500 and lose his license for a while, that he is probably sorry. But then you go back to it. That's not Godly sorrow. That's the sorrow of the world. That leads to death.

¹¹*For behold (he said) 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.* The issues that I wrote you about. It brought, first of all, a clearing of the issue in your own mind, in your own life. And then it brought indignation, to realize that we had allowed such sin within the body of Christ. We had tolerated such evil! And you became indignant against the evil that was there. And then it brought fear! Oh, God! How could we have done that? And that fear, Lord, we're sorry. And then the vehement desire, Lord, I want to please You! I want to do what is right in Your eyes! We want to be a church that is pleasing, Lord, to You. And then what zeal! You took action on it. You just didn't sit back but actually took action on it. And revenge. That is against the evil. You took the action; thus, you proved yourselves to be clear. You did the right things.

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.* I wrote it because I wanted you to know how much I cared for you, how much I loved you, how much that I am concerned for the Spiritual welfare for the church there in Corinth. Because I know that if you are going to have the continued work of God's Spirit there in your midst, there has to be that purity, there has to be that cleansing of the church, the purging from the leaven. As He said, a little leaven, leavens the whole lump. And so there has got to be that purging of the leaven, when He wrote about what they should do to this fellow who was living just a sinful life.

¹³*Therefore (Paul said) we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus,* We were comforted in your comfort. And exceedingly the more so we joyed for the joy of Titus, *because his spirit was refreshed by you all.* It was so great to see Titus and to see how excited he was, and all! I was just comforted by the way Titus came, the way he views you and the way he responded to you!

¹⁴*For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed;* In other words, you lived up to it! I was telling him how wonderful people you were and how great the church was and all, and you lived up to it! I'm proud of you, Paul is saying. If I boasted anything of him to you, I am not

ashamed. You came through!

but as we spake all things to you in truth, The things that I wrote, I wrote in truth to you.

even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. ¹⁵*And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, (His love is more abundant toward you.) whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.* So Titus' whole trip in his mind is a positive thing. The way you received him. The fear and the trembling before the Word of the Lord.

¹⁶*I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.* So this is sort of the salve. The wounds were created. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. You responded in the right way. You took care of the issue and now things are again going well. Our hearts are encouraged and comforted. We rejoice in the way you responded to our first letter. You took care of those things that needed to be taken care of.

So next week, chapter eight. Read ahead. It's important to do so. We'll continue our journey through the Bible next Sunday night.

Father, again how grateful we are for the Word of God, for the comfort of the Holy Spirit. For the health and the strength that He gives to us to do the things that You want us to do. To be the person You would have us to be. Help us Lord, to walk in Your love. Help us to walk in the Spirit. Help us, Lord, that we might receive instruction and correction in fear and in love so that we might respond, Lord, with zeal to do the right thing. And Lord, bring to us the Godly sorrow over the sinful issues in our lives, the kind of sorrow that will affect changes. Not just to say I'm sorry and go right back to it again. But, Lord, I'm sorry and I forsake it. I renounce it. So, Lord, may we renounce the life of the flesh that we might live after the Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.