

2 Corinthians Ch1v23-Ch2v11 - Love You Can Trust

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[0 : 00] So if you turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 1, starting in verse 23 through to chapter 2, verse 11.

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. So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you.

For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? I wrote as I did, so that when I came I would not be distressed by those who should have made me rejoice.

I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. For I wrote to you out of great distress and anguish of heart, and with many tears, not to grieve you, but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

[1 : 26] If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent, not to put it too severely.

The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. Another reason I wrote to you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything.

Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven, if there was anything to forgive, I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us, for we are not unaware of his schemes.

Thank you, Kirsty.

[2 : 35] Let's keep our Bibles open. Last week, we were looking at how we can comfort one another. Today, we're going to be thinking about how we can love one another well.

So let's pray and ask for God's help. Father, would you pour out your spirit upon us generously for our good, that we may focus upon you today, and that we may be attuned to your voice.

Father, do a work amongst us for our good and for your glory. Amen. Do you love me?

Thanks, Connor. Good man. Yes, I'm talking about me. Do you care about me? If I was ill, would you come and visit me? If I was discouraged, would you support me?

If I was in financial trouble, would you try to help? And I'm glad, at least some of you are nodding your heads. That's encouraging. Of course you would, because I have already experienced much love from you, and I know you have experienced the same.

[4 : 14] That's what it means to be a member of a local church. You see, the church is a family, an identifiable, committed family of brothers and sisters who love the Lord Jesus and love each other.

Now here's the big question. Do you love me enough to correct me when I'm out of line? Do you love me enough to discipline me if I am unrepentant?

Do you love me enough to forgive my wrongs and restore me? You see, true love, genuine church family love will do everything to ensure that we are in a joy-filled, right relationship with Christ.

We will do everything to ensure that one another are in a joy-filled, right relationship with Christ.

Look at Paul's desire for the church in chapter 1, verse 24. There we go.

[5 : 48] Verse 24. Not that we lord it over your faith. He says we're not being pushy or being superior.

But we work with you for your joy. Because it is by faith you stand firm. Paul's heart's desire is to do all that he possibly can to ensure they have a joy-filled life by being secure in the faith.

Or we could summarize it like this. our goal, the motto of this church and what a great motto it would be is that the church would be full of joy as you stand firm in Christ.

That's what we long for one another. You see, the greatest love that we can have for each other is to ensure that we're standing in Christ, not falling from Christ.

And if you love me, you will do whatever it takes, even if that means showing me my sin.

[7 : 12] You see, the absence of correction and restoration is not loving. To ignore things is unloving.

It's unkind for a brother or sister to ignore one another if we're drifting from Christ. You could imagine a father out for a walk with his toddler and the toddler goes to run across the road.

The father grabs him because the father loves his child. A doctor warning a patient to change his diet, otherwise they'll have a heart attack, is a loving intervention.

It would be unloving to do or to say nothing, right? Now, standing firm in Christ means that we get alongside each other, support one another, encourage one another, but sometimes it's going to require hard conversations.

We can call it tough love. You see, Paul was concerned that some of the church were drifting.

[8 : 40] Instead of standing firm in Christ, they were falling from Christ and he was grieving. There was no joy. They needed love.

Out of deep concern, Paul had made a painful visit to the church. Chapter 2, verse 1.

Can you see there the reference he makes there at the end where he talks about a painful visit that he had made? And as a follow-up to this painful visit, he had to write a tearful letter.

Chapter 2, verse 4. For I wrote to you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears.

Paul had to make some, say some difficult things while he made this painful visit. And he had to say difficult things as he wrote his tearful letter.

[9 : 46] In fact, Paul made another plan to come back and visit the church to see if they had put everything in order to make sure that they were all standing in Christ.

We read about that in chapter 1, verse 16. Have a look there. Chapter 1, verse 16. He says, I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia and then to let you send me on my way to Judea.

So during his travels, he was going to take a detour and go and visit the church in Corinth. But he changed his mind. He decided not to visit them.

And here's why. Chapter 1, verse 23. I call God as my witness and I stake my life on it.

I am telling you the absolute truth that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. Chapter 2, verse 1.

[11 : 00] So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. You see, he loved them so much that he didn't want to have to visit and have to go over old ground again and rebuke them and say, guys, you shouldn't be doing this.

He said, I hope that you would have listened and done the right thing and turned back to Christ. Despite what they thought of Paul, he was for them, not against them.

Yes, he had many hard things to say, but it was for their joy. It was to see them built up in their faith and encouraged. And that's what loving relationships are all about.

It's a commitment to do all that we can to make sure we are firm in the faith. faith. As our motto said, our goal is that we would be full of joy as we stand firm in Christ.

how joyful it is to know that our brothers and sisters are walking with Christ, to stand with them on that day when the risen Lord Jesus comes again.

[12 : 23] What joy it will be to know that you're there and I'm there. Well, how can we ensure that we keep on and have a joy-filled life?

Well, two things we're going to look at. First, loving correction. Loving correction. Look at chapter 2, verse 3.

He says, I wrote as I did so that when I came I would not be distressed by those who should make me rejoice.

He said, look, I had to write difficult things but it was all for the hope that you would have listened and changed and brought me great joy. In fact, end of verse 3, I had confidence in all of you that you all would share my joy.

I was confident that you would listen and that you would be standing firm in Christ. Now, we don't know what Paul said in his letter but we do know that it was very difficult for him to write.

[13:47] Look at verse 4. For I wrote to you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

My father used to remind us of kids as when we were little of an experience that he had when he was a child. One day his two pals came to the door knocked on the door asking him to come out and play.

They were going to go down to the river and all excited my dad ran to his mum Michael, I'm sorry you can't go. It's not safe.

My dad was upset and my mum was even upset for my dad because he was upset. Please can I go?

I'm sorry Michael you can't go you've got to stay at home. Later on that day there was another knock on the door a neighbour to say that one of his friends had fallen in the river and drowned.

[15:10] You see my dad's mum could have ignored the danger. she could have turned a blind eye and said sure Michael off you go enjoy yourself and hoped for the best.

But she did the right thing didn't she? Though it caused her some distress it was the most loving thing to do. Even though it hurt my dad in that very moment that he couldn't go it was the most loving thing he needed.

You see Paul knew that his correction would be painful. He knew it would hurt them but it caused him greater pain having to be the one to confront them.

It wasn't easy. Look at verse 4 I wrote out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears things.

Why did he put him through so much anguish? Why not just turn to blind eye and hope for the best? Well look at the rest of verse 4 it wasn't to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

[16:35] My goal is that you would be full of joy as you stand firm in Christ. If you're a member of this church or any church if you're visiting do you love the church?

Do I love you enough to correct any spiritual drift? Do you love me enough to rebuke me over some sinful behaviour or attitude?

You see such action isn't pushy or superior or judgmental it's an expression of our love. The easiest thing would be to ignore it and say sure it's just the way they are.

That's unloving. Loving correction comes from a heart of deep concern for a brother or sister who is drifting away.

Our goal is that we would together be full of joy as we stand firm in Christ.

[18:00] With loving correction comes loving restoration. So far as we've studied in this section we haven't been told what the issue was that needed corrected.

But I think in verses 5 following we're given a clue. Let's read verse 5. He's talking about a particular person. If anyone has caused grief through their sin that is he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent not to put it too severely.

The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead you ought to forgive and comfort him so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

It seems that there is a member of the church who was not walking with Christ and was unrepentant. Despite being told nothing seemed to change.

It could be that the issue being referred to is what we read about in 1 Corinthians. So you can put a finger in 2 Corinthians and go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 5.

[19:34] 1 Corinthians chapter 5. It could be the issue here that we're about to read. If it's not, it's certainly a good example and helps explain what might be going on.

1 Corinthians 5 verses 1 to 2 Paul says to the same church, it's actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you and of a kind that even pagans, that is those who are not yet Christians, do not tolerate.

A man is sleeping with his father's wife or a man is sleeping with his mother-in-law. Verse 2, 6.

And you are so proud. Shouldn't you have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? Verse 6, your boasting is not good.

Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Just as yeast goes and works in the whole loaf of bread, so he's saying undealt with sin will affect the whole church family.

[21:07] Let's go back to 2 Corinthians. So the concern is that a member of the church has been having an affair and despite the seriousness of it, despite the warnings and the encouragements,

has remained unrepentant.

And not only that, the church is turning a blind eye to it as well. They're ignoring it. The church has become desensitized to the issue.

So what harm are they doing? It doesn't matter. It's just the way they are. Let them be. Well, thankfully, the church had listened to Paul's correction, even though it was painful and tearful. He was disciplined by the church and treated as someone, well, who was not yet a Christian. They needed the gospel. Look at verse 6.

This is 2 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 6. He says, the punishment inflicted on him by the majority, that is, the members of the church, is sufficient.

[22 : 26] Now, we must think about this and wonder, well, if I sin, is that going to happen to me? Well, I think what's being talked about here is something serious.

It's about persistent sin, rejecting correction, and remaining unreplaced. unrepentant, persisting in a particular behavior or attitude, rejecting correction, and remaining unrepentant.

That is why the church had to act in such a way to say, you are no longer a part of this fellowship. You are not living as a Christian.

Now, again, this is hard for us maybe to hear, but it's not being judgmental. This is driven by a heart of love and concern for their brother and sister, in the hope that they would turn back to Christ.

It's not a case of the religious police coming along and kicking people out left, right, and center. It's about the restoration of the church family. it's about that they may know a joy-filled life of being firm in Christ.

[23 : 51] One author put it like this, a critical test of genuine love is whether we are willing to confront and discipline those we care for.

Nothing is more difficult than disciplining a brother or sister in Christ who is trapped in sin. That's why Paul was of great anguish and great distress.

Or as Jesus himself says to the church in Revelation, those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest to repent.

You see, the purpose is that they might be restored in their relationship with Christ, standing firm.

The goal is that they would have a joy-filled life and that the church together would be filled with joy as together they stand firm in Christ.

Thankfully, the correction had the desired effect. Look at verse 7. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comforted him so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

[25 : 14] I urge you therefore, reaffirm your love for him. Isn't it wonderful? It would be unloving to leave the brother or sister who had been unrepent and had now turned back to the Lord outside.

That would be judgmental. Instead, they are now to embrace them and welcome them to celebrate their return.

Verse 8, I urge you therefore, reaffirm your love for him. Make it your goal that they have a joy-filled life.

They are right with Christ and right with each other. are you a member of this church? Do you love the church?

Do you love your brothers and sisters so much that you will do whatever it takes to restore them if they have drifted from Christ?

[26 : 24] Will I forgive them just as God has forgiven them? Will I comfort them and embrace them and welcome them home? You see, to withhold forgiveness is a serious matter.

Instead, we embrace and reaffirm our love. Loving restoration comes from a heart that cares deeply for the spiritual health of our brothers and sisters.

Our goal, our motto is that we would have a joy-filled life as we stand firm in Christ. You see, what this text is really getting at is that we would have a Christ-like love.

love. The members of the church are to love one another just as Christ loved us. And how did he love us? Well, God loved the world.

He loved his church so much that he gave his one and only son into the world for us. And Christ coming into the world, it was a most painful visit.

[27 : 45] a life filled with tears as he longed for people to return to him, as he wept over the city. He came to take my sin and your sin on himself.

On the cross, Jesus Christ was corrected for us. There he faced the greatest discipline as he was punished by God for the wrong things you and I have done.

In love he took our sin. But that wasn't the end, was it? Three days after his death, Jesus was raised to life again.

He was lovingly restored, crowned with honour and glory. That's the love of Christ for us today. Christ was corrected so that by faith in him we are corrected.

And just as Christ has been restored, so by faith in him we are restored. What's that going to look like for us tomorrow as we go to our college, our school, our work, at home?

[29 : 07] Well, it causes us to gaze at Christ. Because as we look to the cross, we see on the one hand the seriousness of our sin, but also we see the greatness of God's grace.

True love will both correct us and restore us. The love of Christ leads us daily in repentance before him and receiving his freeing forgiveness.

Not least does it affect our relationships with each other. Look at verse 10. He says, anyone you forgive, I also forgive.

And what I have forgiven, if there was anything to forgive, I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake. just as we have been forgiven, we need to forgive one another and show grace to one another, not to do so.

To withhold that forgiveness and grace is so, so dangerous. And here's why. Look at verse 11. We forgive in order that Satan might not outwit us, for we are not unaware of his schemes.

[30 : 37] Satan would love nothing more than for us to turn a blind eye to each other and say it doesn't matter. But not to repent will mean sin is ignored and that will lead to greater hardness of heart.

And not to forgive will mean grace is withheld and will result in deeper bitterness amongst one another. So together we fix our eyes on Christ.

We remember his great embracing love for us and we love each other. Our goal is that we would have a joy filled life as together we encourage and support one another to stand firm in Christ.

So let me ask us all do you love the church? Do you love one another? Do you love and care for your brother and sister so much that you will do all that it takes to ensure they are standing firm in Christ?

Let's pray. pray. Father, your word is good.

[32 : 20] yes it is difficult sometimes it's hard to take in but it is good it is wonderfully good.

Would you please help us that we may increase our love for one another just as you loved us that there would be no bounds to the extent of our love to support build up and encourage correct and restore that we would do all that we possibly can to walk beside our brothers and sisters that we would stand firm in Christ filled with confidence assurance and rejoicing together as we stand before Christ on the last day.

What joy that we would be there together because you helped me and I helped you.

Thank you for your church. Thank you for your people. Amen. We're going to sing together.

There is an everlasting kindness you lavished on us. With the radiance of heaven you came to rescue the lost. Here is the love of God.

[34 : 08] Let's stand together, worship and praise him and give thanks for his love. happy! happy Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[36 : 53] Thank you. Thank you. Amen.

Amen. Please take your seats.

We continue in our worship as we remember our Saviour, Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper, or Communion, well it's a family gathering, isn't it?

It's a family meal where we remember God's love to us and our love for one another.

A meal where we are reminded of God's commitment to us and our commitment to each other.

[38 : 58] Together, we remember Jesus. We look at the cross afresh and we remind ourselves that he was corrected for us.

Disciplined for us. Punished, shut out from the Father for you and I. So that we could be restored.

So that we could be forgiven. So that we could be comforted afresh in the love of God. As we eat and as we drink, we are reaffirmed of God's love for us.

And we reaffirm our love for one another. Who can share in this meal, simple as it is, of bread and juice?

The bread speaking of Christ's body. The juice speaking of the blood shed on the cross for our sins. Who gets to eat and drink? It's for the repentant.

[40 : 19] Not the unrepentant. It's for those who know their need of Jesus. To see the seriousness of sin and the greatness of God's grace.

If you have your Bibles, please turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Before we eat the bread and drink the juice, we're going to remind us of the words Paul spoke to the church, which are written and recorded for us today, as we remember Jesus.

1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 23. Remember this is written to people just like us, messy and broken, hidden sins and public ones.

We come afresh that we might know God's grace and know his love. Verse 23. For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body, which is for you.

[42 : 07] Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper, he took the cup saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me. for when you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

So if you are trusting in Christ today, if you come with your repentance, needing grace afresh, reminded of his love, then come and share in this meal together.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you so much for your death on the cross on our behalf.

Thank you that you were disciplined for us. that through faith, we might be restored in right relationship with you, never to face condemnation again, forgiven, freed, comforted, and loved.

[43 : 33] thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, for dying for us. Thank you for your commitment that nothing in all this world, not even our sin, can ever separate us from your love.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. It's our practice as a church to receive the bread, hold on to it, and then as a family, we will eat together as brothers and sisters.

Please take a piece and then we will wait until we're all served. Please use this time in the quietness to bring your own confession to the Lord.

And there's no idea of holy holy Thank you.

Thank you.

[45 : 40] Thank you.

Thank you. We remember God's love to us, shown to us through his Son, Jesus Christ.

And we remember our love for one another. As a family, let us eat together in thanksgiving.

And as we drink as you receive. Nick and Tricia are going to serve the juice and as we do, please drink as you receive and as it's being passed around, let us celebrate God's forgiveness of us the comfort that we have in his love and our commitment to love one another.

Amen. As you are served or wait to be served, I encourage you just in the quietness of your heart to pray for the person beside you or in front of you.

[47 : 59] Pray that they would know God's love afresh and that God would strengthen the bonds of our love for one another. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[50 : 32] Thank you.

Please feel free to talk to me afterwards or give me a ring. Two things. We're going to have tea and coffee, so invite everybody to stay and chat and catch up.

It would be great to talk with you further. And there's a big, big card on the table as you came in for Amy, Amy Patterson, who's serving in Sheffield. Nick and Trish are going to be heading there next weekend to say hi and encourage and support her.

So if you'd like to write a message, it's a nice big one so you can do all kinds of pictures and squiggles and all sorts of things. Something that Amy would appreciate. So please do that on your way out.

Let's pray. Father, may we know the blessing of your grace and your peace upon each one of us this coming week. Thank you for your love.

[51 : 53] Thank you for your love. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[54 : 32] Thank you.