

"Bold Love"

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- [0 : 00] I invite you to turn with me to 2nd Corinthians chapter 7 as we continue our study. We are officially halfway through the book of 2nd Corinthians.
- It's been quite a journey. I'm looking forward to see what the next half has to bring us. I've grown to love this book more and more as I've studied it.
- A lot of times when preachers are asked what book of the Bible is your favorite book, they'll usually say the one I'm preaching. Because you're just sitting so close to all the good truths that how could you love another book more when this is so close to your heart and your mind?
- Before we get into the text proper, I have a parable for you today. If our Lord used them, I should not be above using them myself.
- So there was a man who was having an affair. And as that affair continued on, he came to the decision that he should divorce his wife and be with this other woman.
- [1 : 20] In his life, there were three counselors who came to help him. The first was his mean father. His mean father came to him and said, You're always messing up your life.
- You're messing it up again just like you always do. You are a failure. Get your act together. The second counselor came to him.
- It was his sentimental mother. And she said sweetly to him. It's a hard situation. I'm sorry you have to go through it.
- You're just doing the best you can. If you had known in the first place, you wouldn't have married her. But now it's too late. You're just doing the best with what you have.
- It's okay. Then the third counselor steps forward. It's his faithful friend. Who had been there with him through thick and thin.
- [2 : 24] And he says, Man, I love you. But you're making a big mistake. You've already made a big mistake being involved with this other woman in the first place.
- But it's not too late. Cut this other woman off. Go back to your wife and beg forgiveness. If you don't, you will wreck your life.
- And I do not want to see that happen. Consider which of the three counselors best love the man. Read along with me.
- Second Corinthians chapter 7 verses 2 through 4. Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one. We have corrupted no one.
- We have cheated no one. I do not say this to condemn you. For I have said before that you are in our hearts.
- [3 : 23] To die together and to live together. Great is my boldness of speech toward you. Great is my boasting on your behalf.
- I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. The grass withers.
- The grass withers. The flower fades. But the word of the Lord endures forever. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. See in this section Paul is landing the plane.

This chapter is the end of Paul's long section. His long defense of his ministry.

All the way since chapter 2. Paul has been defending his ministry. So that the Corinthians would not discard him.

[4 : 25] In favor of more impressive worldly teachers. In the final closing arguments. Of his long defense.

He wants the Corinthians to know. That everything he has said up to this point. He has said boldly. Because he loves them.

He has said these things to them. Because he cares for them. Look at what verse 3 says. I do not say this to condemn.

For I have said before. That you are in our hearts. To die together. And to live together. Paul summarizes the whole defense he's been making.

For five chapters. Not as a condemning harsh word. For the word. Meant to snap at them for their foolishness.

[5 : 24] But as bold love. Meant to lead them in good paths. So bold love.

Verse 2. You see the boldness. Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one. We have corrupted no one. We have cheated no one.

See the boldness there. He's confident. He's confident. In what he has done. In what they need to do. And then verse 3 and 4. You get the love.

I do not say this to condemn. For I have said before. That you are in our hearts. To die together. And to live together. Great is my boldness of speech towards you.

Great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. Do you see it? The boldness and the love wed together.

[6 : 24] This is how Paul would close out his defense of his ministry. The whole point of Paul's bold love is stated at the very start of verse 2.

He says, open your hearts to us. It is as if Paul is saying in these verses. I have spoken boldly.

And I have made arguments to you. And I have done this because I love you. And I want you to receive this love for your own good.

And stop following people who will not care for you properly. So as we continue to try to understand the bold love in this passage.

I have three points for you to consider today. Point number one. Bold love and the Corinthian trouble. In this point we will look at exactly what bold love is.

[7 : 25] And why the Corinthians need to hear it. Point number two will be the story so far. Where we look at Paul's boldness. As he has worked it out through this defense.

And we will see all of the reasons that he did this. And then point number three will be the heart of the matter. Where we will see Paul's example of love.

From this I hope to gain with you all a deeper understanding of what biblical bold love looks like.

So that we can imitate the apostle and love each other better. So point number one. Bold love and the Corinthian trouble.

We have to answer the first question here. What exactly is bold love? Or what do I mean by saying this? I'm not speaking of tough love.

[8 : 26] The way we often use it in society. There really is a good form of tough love. But a lot of people will say. I'm giving you tough love.

When really all they're doing is being tough. There's no love that goes along with that. Like the father in the parable. He's tough.

But there wasn't actually love in his words. What I'm speaking of is saying things that are uncomfortable for the other person to hear.

But are good for them. Bold love is boldly, clearly saying things that people might not want to hear.

Because you love them and it is for their good. Like Ephesians 4.15 puts it. Speaking the truth in love. This is one of the ways churches are to behave.

[9 : 27] So bold love is to say things that people won't like for their own good. Examples of why this is such an important thing.

Consider a mechanic. Imagine if your mechanic was so concerned with making you upset. That he never told you what was wrong with your car. You know.

I mean no one likes getting. Hearing that they're going to have to pay \$1,200. To repair a who's a ma what's it in your vehicle. But you need to be told that.

Because you'll be worse off if you don't hear it. Mechanics need to speak the truth boldly. So too do we. Consider a doctor.

No one wants to hear that they have a serious illness. No one's walking out of a doctor's office and rejoicing that they're told that they need major surgery.

[10 : 34] And yet. No one wants a doctor. And yet. No one wants a doctor. Who is too afraid of hurting their feelings to tell them these things. Someone who is so concerned with love.

That they would never speak the truth boldly. We want people who are like that third counselor in the parable. The faithful friend who will speak the truth to us when we need to hear it.

And that's what Paul is claiming to be for the Corinthian people. A faithful friend who speaks the truth boldly in love. And this is hard for the Corinthians to receive.

Because they are very concerned with the world. And with an easy life. They don't like being downtrodden. They don't like feeling bad.

Following weak unsuccessful people. They don't like looking bad in any way shape or form. And so Paul's whole argument up to this point.

[11 : 46] Without chastising them for following after worldly ministry. They're going to be tempted to be upset at him for it. And so he wants to make clear.

I don't say this to hurt you. I say it for your good. Because I love you. That's what he wants to close the argument on. And that's a good example for us.

That bold love is often hard to receive. But it is often what we need the most. That's point number one. Bold love in the Corinthian trouble.

Point number two. The story so far. This is Paul's example of boldness. What does it look like to be bold when you are loving people?

Well, let's go back through 2 Corinthians. And see the various ways that Paul has been bold in his speech to the church. Chapter 1 verse 12.

[12 : 50] For our boasting is this. The testimony of our conscience. That we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity. In godly sincerity.

Not with fleshly wisdom. But by the grace of God. And more abundantly to you. It takes boldness sometimes. To use the way you have loved people.

To push them to avoid evil. The Corinthians are tempted to go after bad things. And Paul could sound like he's being prideful here.

And talking about how great he is. But he has the boldness to do whatever it takes. To turn them back onto the right path. Even if it's saying, look at how I've loved you.

Chapter 2 verse 17. For we are not as so many peddling the word of God. But as of sincerity. But as from God.

[13 : 52] We speak the truth in the sight of Christ. Paul is saying literally. We do a better job with the gospel. Than these people who are trying to manipulate it.

That's bold. But it's good. I mean. If at the church. We never explain.

Why we do things certain ways. And why those ways are better. Than the ways some other places do it. You're not going to know. What a healthy church looks like. You know.

If you can never point out. What other people do wrong. You'll never be able to teach people. How to follow good things. So it takes boldness and love.

To say no. The thing that that person did. Isn't right. And you shouldn't go after it. In chapter 3 verse 12.

[14 : 48] He literally says. Therefore since we have such hope. We use great boldness of speech. Chapter 4 verses 2 through 4.

But we have renounced the hidden things of shame. 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. But even if our gospel is veiled. It is veiled to those who are perishing. Whose minds the God of this age has blinded.

Who do not believe. Lest the light of the gospel of the glory of God. Who is the image of God. Should shine on them. It takes boldness to say.

That the Bible is the one true word. And people who reject it. Are blinded and in darkness. In this modern world.

[15 : 44] Where we don't like to claim. That we know what the truth is. In this modern world. Where we like for everything to be subjective.

It can be hard. To say with confidence. If you don't believe this word. You are going to hell. There is only one mediator.

Between God and man. The man Christ Jesus. And if you don't put your trust in him. If you put your trust in Muhammad. Or in Buddha. Or in science.

Or in any other thing. You will perish for it. We're nervous about speaking like that. But if you really love people.

You will be bold like that. Or. Like we read. In one of the previous weeks.

[16 : 40] Chapter 6 verses 3 through 13. I won't read the whole thing. But Paul once again commends his ministry. With bold speech. We give no offense in anything.

That our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves. As ministers of God. In patience and in tribulations. He goes on to continue in verse 6.

By kindness. By the Holy Spirit. By sincere love. By the word of truth. Paul is very confident here. What sort of person he is. And what sort of gospel he preaches.

And he boldly defends it. Why? Because he loves people. Or as we studied last week. He boldly commands them.

Not to go after evil. Verse 14. Do not be unequally yoked. Together with unbelievers. If you boldly love people.

[17 : 37] You will warn them away from disaster. And that's what Paul did. In verse 14. And Paul continues in this.

In the section we're studying today. His theme of bold speech. In love. Verse 2. Open your hearts to us. That is a direct command.

I mean. When was the last time you said to someone. You should love me. It's a weird thing to say. Right? But.

Consider. A wife. Who might be. Tempted to go astray. From the marriage. And the husband who says. Open your heart.

And love me. Let us be close. It's bold. But it's the loving thing to say. That's what Paul is doing here.

[18 : 39] He's saying. Open your heart. To me. Because I have loved you. And I am here for your good. He doesn't do it. Because he's concerned for himself.

But because he's concerned for them. And for their good. And so he's. He's willing to be confident. We should know. That there is a time and place.

To be bold. To be confident. When you say things. If you. Never speak the truth. With confidence. You will not properly.

Love other people. As we. We read. As Mary read for us. In Proverbs 27. Verse 6. Faithful. Are the wounds of a friend.

That means. When a friend. Is faithful to you. There are times. He will say things. That hurts you. But the kisses of an enemy. Are deceitful.

[19 : 35] That means. People who only tell you. Sweet things. Are at best. Liars and manipulators. Trying to get what they can. From you.

Don't trust them. Imagine a doctor. Who was so concerned. With not hurting his patient. That he refused to do.

Any sort of surgery. He's like. Okay. I'll put band-aids. On it. You know. It doesn't matter. That you have a. A.

Deep. Sickness. Inside your body. That needs to be addressed. I don't want to hurt you. So I'll just. I'll just put a band-aid on it. That's a terrible doctor.

I want a doctor. Who's willing to cut me open. And cut out a section of my body. If that's what it takes for me to live. And so Paul here is saying.

[20 : 37] Corinthians. Don't follow a doctor. Who only tells you sweet things. Even though I've cut you. I have done it because I love you.

The boldness that I have shown towards you. Is for your good. You'll hear out in the world sometimes. This argument about right and wrong.

That the right thing. Is something that doesn't hurt people. Like it's not wrong. As long as it doesn't hurt anyone. Well this is part of the way.

That that is a wrong thought. That's wrong. Because when you actually love people. There are times where you hurt them. For their own good. Where you go out into the world.

And someone is living in a crazy way. They are deluded. And you say to them. You are wrong. You are not actually.

[21 : 38] A man trapped in a woman's body. Believing this will hurt you. And I'm not going to affirm it. Drinking.

And partying. Is not actually the best way. For you to live. And because I'm your friend. I'm going to tell you that. I'm not going to affirm your every decision.

Because I actually love you. So look at Paul's. Bold love. Point three.

The heart of the matter. Paul's example. Of love. Let's walk through this piece by piece. And see Paul's love.

Verse two. Open your hearts. To us. Paul's desire. Is for them to be close. All of that boldness.

[22 : 34] Don't mistake what's going on. It's all there. Because he actually cares about them. He doesn't say. Open your pockets to us. You know.

Put a big banner. That says Paul is great up in the church. He's saying. Open your hearts to us. The loving person desires.

Closeness. With the people they love. And it's so important to remember too. You don't have freedom. To be bold like Paul is.

If you don't love like Paul does. Don't think you have any right. To go yelling at people. For what they do wrong. If you never.

If you never take the time. To love them. And care about them. In any other way. When someone comes to me. And they say. I'm saying this because I love you.

[23 : 31] You're stupid. Or you're wrong. Or you did a bad job. Preaching that sermon. And that's the only time. They ever talk to me. I don't believe that they actually love me.

When they say it. But I have a good friend. Who does sermon review for me. He'll listen to these sermons. And he'll go. You were a bit off there. You really missed the point on that one.

And I'm never hurt by it. Because he is constantly loving me. And pouring into my life. So to be bold. You also have to be loving.

Verse 2. Look further on. We have wronged no one. We have corrupted no one. We have cheated no one. See how good his conduct is?

The Paul who claims to love them. Has a guiltless conscience towards them. He hasn't wronged them. He hasn't mistreated them.

[24 : 33] Or manipulated them. For his own good. Of course you should trust people. Who treat you like that. Who love you like that. And we should strive to love others.

In that same way. We should try to be as blameless as possible. In our love towards each other. And to the world. And when we are.

That will give us great fuel. To be bold to them. If you conduct yourself well towards people. You have a lot more freedom to be bold with the truth.

Verse 3. I do not say this to condemn. Loving people. Don't love to condemn others.

They're not just trying to lob truth bombs. And show other people that they're wrong. If you love someone. Your goal in an argument. Is not to prove them wrong.

[25 : 34] But to help them. Loving people. Are not there to condemn. Verse 3. Continuing on.

For I have said before. That you are in our hearts. To die together. And to live together. Loving people.

Hold others in their heart. Close to their affections. They think about them. And are concerned for them. Often. This is Paul's love and example. No wonder.

He feels comfortable being so bold. Because he has done such a good job. Caring about them. And of course the Corinthians should receive. Someone who cares so genuinely for them.

Verse 3. Continuing on. You are in our hearts. To die together. And to live together. Paul's basically saying here. That good or bad.

[26 : 36] Whatever happens to you. We're here for it. If you're going to get killed. We'll be right beside you. And if you're going to live and thrive.

Guess who's going to be there with you. Us. That's what real love looks like. Unity. You join in it together. You know that saying like a fair weather friend.

Someone who's only there when the weather's nice. When everything's good. And as soon as the storm comes. They're gone. Paul's saying.

You can trust. That we're here for your good. And that we're not manipulating you. Because when things are hard. We're still here. The people who look so impressive.

They're just here when your pockets are full. And when you're ready to benefit them. They don't actually care for you. Paul will actually go to argue later on in this book.

[27 : 39] That when he was with them. He didn't take any money from them. But he worked extra hard to get by.

Even without financial help from them. He is united to them in love. And so he's free to be bold in speaking the truth.

Verse 4. He rejoices over them. Great is my boldness of speech towards you. Great is my boasting on your behalf.

I am filled. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all of our tribulation. Love rejoices over others.

It sees the good in them. And it fills you with comfort. It excites you. We should be people.

[28 : 37] Who are excited by the goodness. And the successes in each other's lives. So I see something good happen to Andy or to Elizabeth.

And that brings me joy. I see Sally walking faithfully with the Lord. Or Mary trusting in Christ. And that brings me comfort.

That's what love looks like. And when you do that. People can trust you when you speak the truth to them. Even if it's bold truth that is hard to hear.

Paul will go on in the rest of chapter 7. To cover more aspects of his love. And his rejoicing for them.

He'll talk about how a friend of his Titus visited them. And how he was so happy when Titus came back. And told him good news about how they were doing. In verses 8 through 12.

[29 : 40] He will rejoice that all of the hard things he said to them in previous letters. Caused them to change how they were acting. And then in verses 13 through 16.

He will again rejoice over the good things that they have done. This verse here is a gateway into his theme of love for the rest of this chapter.

And Paul's boldness to them is vindicated. Because it's not selfish.

It's not self-aggrandizing. It's not arrogant. It's loving. All of that boldness we read about in the previous chapters. It's well-founded love.

Because of his conduct. Because of his rejoicing. Because of his unity with them. Paul is not like the sentimental mom in the parable. Who always tells her son good things.

[30 : 45] And never points out his failures. Paul is a loving example. I love what one pastor says. He says, I hug hard so that I can hit hard.

Because sometimes we need to be hit. I don't know if you ever watched the TV show NCIS. But there's a character in it, Gibbs.

And he'll come up behind someone when they do something stupid. And smack the back of their head. You know, not meanly. But like, get your act together. Sometimes we need that.

And we need to have love in our midst. And truth in our midst. We need to be bold lovers. But I would be remiss if I didn't draw this past an example.

You need more than just how you're supposed to act. And how you're not supposed to act. We need Christ. Consider his bold love. And his example of speaking the truth.

[31 : 49] Even if it hurts. Matthew 15, 24, and 26. Then Jesus told his disciples. If anyone would come after me. Let him deny himself.

Take up his cross. That is his execution device. And follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake.

Will find it. For what will it profit a man. If he gains the whole world. And forfeits his soul. Or what shall a man give.

In return for his soul. Who wants to hear. That you're wasting your life. Or that you need to go. Down a really hard path.

That will likely end in your death. It's not. There's nothing sweet about hearing that. But Jesus is willing to say it. Because if he doesn't.

[32 : 45] And if they don't hear it. They will perish in hell. Matthew 5, 21 and 22. You have heard it said. To those of old.

You shall not murder. And whoever murders. Will be liable to judgment. But I say to you. Everyone who is angry with his brother. Will be liable to judgment.

Whoever insults his brother. Will be liable to the council. And whoever says you fool. Will be liable to the hell of fire. He says you are a guilty.

Wretched sinner. Who deserves hell. That if you have even thought. That someone was stupid. For something they did. You deserve to be in hell.

Every time you're driving. And someone turns without their blinker. And you're like what an idiot. Jesus is saying. You deserve to suffer for that.

[33 : 40] That's bold. But he says it because he loves you. And you know how he proves that love? When he climbs up on that cross.

And he dies. So that the hell you deserve. For your every sin. Would be paid for. By trusting in him. Jesus can love you boldly.

Can speak truth to you boldly. Because he has loved you. Like no one else ever has. Trust and receive this scripture. With all of its commands.

And all of its truth. Because no one has loved you like that. It may be bold. It may be hard to hear. But it is for your good. And he loves you.

I'll leave you with a few points of application. Be bold and loving. Speak the truth.

[34 : 35] In love to people. Love those. And be close with those. Who boldly love you. That means.

If someone. Is nice to you. But never tells you something. That's hard to hear. Don't trust them. Because they don't.

Love you enough. To speak boldly to you. Hard words. That you need to hear. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. But an enemy multiplies kisses. And reject.

Also the advice of people. Who are happy to tell you. Everything you do wrong. But never show love. In any other way. And finally.

Preach a gospel. Boldly loving the world. If you don't do this. They will perish in their sins. Do not be ashamed of it. But preach it readily.

[35 : 36] Let us close in prayer. Lord God. Your word is truth. Has made us alive. We thank you.

For your boldness. In coming to us. In calling us sinners. That we might hear. And repent. And believe. And live. Help us to preach.

The same things to a world. Help us to love well. Help us to speak the truth well. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Please rise.

For our closing song. And pray.