

A Picture of a Loving Pastor

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfreda, Georgia. This is the next message in our series in the book of 2 Corinthians, entitled, We Faint Not.

Take your Bibles, if you would, and open them to 2 Corinthians. How many of you think that was a great song? Say amen. The great truth, peace, when I leave it in His hands. And that is a tremendous truth for all of us.

Just before I preach here, and I will get you out about on time, I'll just go quicker, but for the Talbys maybe, and for those of you that might be a little bit nervous. Every time somebody like Paul surrenders, or I talk to the young people about being missionaries, some of you might be a little nervous.

In 1985, I went to my dad, and I said, I've been pastoring for eight years at what was named that church, Liberty Baptist Church. And dad and mom were members of our church, and I went out to their house, and I wanted them to know before anybody else in the church found out that Betty and I would be resigning as the pastor of the church, and I would leave to go on deputation.

And this was in the month of like October that we would resign. So I went to dad's house, and I sat down in there, and just was talking to him. And daddy was a tough man, and daddy didn't know how to say he loved you.

[1 : 15] And daddy's a country guy. And so I said, dad, I want to tell you first that God has called Betty and me to go to the mission field, and I'll be resigning to church.

And so I wanted to go ahead and tell you that. And my dad said, might as well. You have never been a good son. You've definitely not been a good pastor. And you're not even that good a Christian.

So you might as well go somewhere else. And I was just like in shock that he said that. And so I just sat there, and I said, well, I'm sorry, dad. I said, the plan's made, and I'm leaving.

And I got up basically and left. Well, you know, the Lord allowed our family to be used a little bit on the mission field, and it wasn't long until my dad said, you know, I've always known he was going to be a missionary, and I have never doubted him, and I've always believed in him.

It's amazing when you let God have your kids, even the things like that that might scare you or hurt you. And there's a song I wish you'd hear that says, it's amazing the peace you feel when you leave it in his hand.

[2 : 21] Have you all ever heard that song? Only three people even realize that you just heard that song. Man, take your Bible, 2 Corinthians chapter 1. Zach thinks I can't tell a joke.

2 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 23, if you would. The Bible says, Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth, not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy, for by faith you stand.

But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is he that maketh me glad? But the same which is made sorry by me.

And I wrote the same unto you, lest when I come I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice, having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

But if any have caused grief, he had not grieved me, but in part, that I may not overcharge you all. Father, I pray that tonight you would help me to explain to our church here just a little bit about this picture of a loving pastor.

[3 : 40] I pray God that you'd help me to live up to a small part of that. I pray you'd help each of them. I pray every dad would live up to that with his family. I pray every Sunday school teacher would live up to that with their Sunday school class.

I pray that every discipler would live up to that that we're about to look at with the people that they disciple. God help us be with the moms as they pastor their children. And I pray God that your name would be honored and glorified and you would bring great glory to yourself tonight.

In Jesus name. Amen. I'd like to share several little things out of this passage. Now, you do realize that I'm the pastor of the church and that's easy for you to think, well, this is for Austin.

But if you're a husband, you're a pastor of a little congregation. You have a wife and you have children and you have spiritual leadership responsibility. You don't get the title pastor.

You get the title husband. You get the title dad. But you're pastoring. You're shepherding a little flock. Can you say amen right there? If you're a mother and you're teaching and raising your children, you are shepherding your children.

[4 : 41] If you're a Sunday school teacher, you're shepherding a group of people. If you are any of these things, you are in some way, if you're discipling another person, you're shepherding them. So as we look at this, I know you could easily sit there and say, I'm fixing to evaluate Austin.

Bring it on. Show me the picture of a loving pastor and we'll see how much you measure up to that. But just let me tell you, this also applies to all of you that are in any kind of spiritual leadership. So write this down. Number one, Paul, as a picture of a loving pastor, was confident of a sweet relationship.

He was confident of a sweet relationship. If you would go back to what you've already read with me this morning, chapter one and verse 14, he said, as also you have acknowledged us in part that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul believes that the church loves him and is loyal to him, even though some of the church members have been attacking him. There've been some letters being written. There's been some Facebook and done and some email and done and he's heard some stuff and all, but he believes that they love him.

He likes them. He loves them. And he likes to be with them. He mentions, he mentions, if you'll notice in verse 15, look at verse 15, he wants to come and give them a second benefit.

[5 : 57] Look at what it says. And in this confidence, I was minded to come into you before that you might have a second benefit. And I want to show you that pastoring, leading, shepherding, teaching ought to be mostly a very sweet relationship.

It ought to mostly be a very sweet relationship. As dads, often dad can be the gruff one in the house. He's a guy that has the stick. He's a guy that has the belt.

He's a guy that has the punishment, but it ought to be most of the time a sweet relationship. Paul said, you know what? I know you guys love me and I'm your joy and you're my joy.

And he said, and I want to come to you and I want to be a second benefit. Bring a second benefit to you. That word benefit speaks of causing joy, pleasure, gratification, and acceptance.

It's like doing them a favor without expecting anything in return. Paul was, I cannot wait to get there and teach you more wonderful truths about our great Savior, His great word, and all that He has done.

[6 : 59] Paul said, I can't wait to tell you about the greatness of the salvation that God has given you. A preaching ministry ought to be marked by graceful sweetness. Paul wanted to come for a second benefit.

not to rip their faces, skin their hides, call them out, step on their toes, but Paul wanted to bless them. That doesn't mean that on occasion there won't be some of the other, but it ought not be the way it is.

It ought to be we come to church and we come in here happy, we come in here rejoicing, and we leave happier and rejoicing more because we are children of the great God of heaven, saved by the grace of God, and the word of God is so beautiful and precious to our hearts that ought to be a blessing.

So number one, there's a loving relationship. Could I just stop real quick and say that in every one of you, as you disciple people, it's very easy for you to be critical of a person you're leading. It's very easy for you as a Sunday school teacher to get a harsh relationship and say, y'all aren't coming on time and why aren't you in your place and why aren't you doing your thing?

It's very easy for us sometimes as dads to be demanding and exacting, and the truth of the matter is it ought to be mostly a sweet relationship and a blessing and a benefit.

[8 : 10] The second thing Paul was, transparent. Write that word down. If we're going to be good spiritual leaders, transparency. Seeking to be transparent and honest with God's people. Verse 17.

When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness or the things that I purpose to do? Do I purpose according to the flesh that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?

Now you know, do you know who Paul is? Look this way. There's a lot to read here, but for time's sake I'm just going to let you read that. We've read it like two times already. Do you know Paul could have just simply said to the Corinthian Christians, I am an apostle.

Do you understand who I am? I am an apostle. I don't have to give you any accounting. I don't have to explain myself. There wasn't but 12 of them and then Judas died and they put Matthias in and then God picked me and I wasn't picked by Peter and I wasn't picked by the other guys.

He always starts his books off like that. I'm an apostle. Shut up and do what I say. But the apostle Paul said, excuse me, let me back up. Guys, I didn't talk to you.

[9 : 15] I didn't use lightness. I didn't lie to you. I did not tell you the truth. Paul was transparent. Paul was transparent. Paul was honest. He didn't make decisions lightly about the ministry or about the people.

He didn't do what was good for him and what he preached about Jesus was definitely true. So let me just say a second thing to you. As you leave your home, did you know, did you know that your family, your Sunday school class and other people need to know that you're real?

And if you're always plastic and fake, I have some pastor friends that are the best professionals I've ever met. I don't even enjoy being with them. A hair is never out of place.

They never say anything. They walk perfect. They talk perfect. And everything about them is so perfect, you know something ain't right. You're like, how could anybody be quite that perfect?

And I, so just let me say to you, as you lead people, don't try to act like the Pharisees. You know, they were kind of like that plastic preachers, people that never sinned and never did wrong.

[10 : 20] Dad, it wouldn't hurt you to say, I'm sorry on occasion. I made a mistake. It's easy for you to say, Austin, you made a mistake. It's easy for you to say that other Christian made a mistake, but most dads have a big problem saying I made a mistake.

Say amen. How about this? I'm sorry. I was wrong and I won't do it again. How about, could you practice that with me? I'm sorry. Come on, man. I want the man to say this. I'm sorry.

I was wrong. I won't do it again. I know what you're thinking. No, no, no, no. That's not what I say. That's what she's supposed to say. But you see, the leaders ought to be transparent and Paul easily could have said, no, I'm not going to get involved in a discussion.

Don't be asking me why I didn't show up after I wrote it in 1 Corinthians chapter 16. You have no right to call my hand. But instead of that, Paul was transparent and honest. Look at his attitude towards the people of God, if you would.

Verse 23. 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 23. He says, I call God for a record upon my soul that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

[11 : 26] Paul said, I'll be honest, one of the reasons I didn't come to Corinth to see you guys was I didn't want to have to rip hide. I've written some letters that were harsh.

I've said some harsh things and here I was ready to go see you and he says this and he says, I didn't want to make a painful trip. I didn't want it to be painful for you and painful for me.

I wanted it to be a sweet relationship. I didn't, I did it to spare you. Underline that. Then in verse 24, he says, and I don't have dominion over your faith. You ought to underline that.

I don't have dominion over your faith. Paul said, but our helpers of your joy. Notice Paul did not have dominion. He was not to lord it over them.

This is just a leadership thing here, but I've known pastors at Buddy. They rule the roost and own the place and make the decisions and kick backsides if people don't step up and do what they ought to do.

[12 : 22] You know, we're not to lord it over God's heritage. That's what God told pastors in first Peter chapter five. Say amen. He did. He said that. He said, don't lord it over them. Paul didn't feel like he was above them or greater than them.

He didn't feel like he had a right to harshly rule over God's people. Now, let me stop and say this. I don't want to be that guy. I don't want to be the guy that's ruling over you making decisions. I heard a preacher say, if you want my advice, you'll promise me you'll do whatever I say or I won't give you my advice.

That's not what's going on here. That's not what's going on here. Can I just say that that doesn't just apply to me? That applies to deacons and Sunday school teachers and other people. That applies even to dads.

It applies that I shouldn't lord it over. That didn't say I shouldn't lead. It said I shouldn't lord it over. I'm not some king that can chop off heads when I want to.

I'm not some guy who can run them through with a sword. That's what Paul said. I'm not going to lord it over them. You know what Paul's goal was? Did you read the verse? He said, I'm a helper of your joy. I'm a helper of your joy.

[13 : 24] Paul said, y'all come in here and I'm going to tell you some truths that are going to excite you and make you happier than you've ever been. It was Paul's goal to help them live in and enjoy the wonderful gift of salvation.

Can I just say some of you never have really learned what it means to be saved. You honestly think it's a whole list of rules and do's and don'ts and God and church and salvation is almost a drudgery and a dreary thing.

And when you find out that God loves you and saved you and it wasn't about you, when you found out this morning you were sealed and set for eternity. It was like, wow, I didn't know that. I've been hanging on and trying.

Do you understand? Paul said, I'm going to tell you stuff that's going to excite you and going to bless you and you're going to learn to enjoy the benefits of the salvation. Paul thrilled to see God's people enjoying what God had done for them.

They stand in their faith and Paul doesn't determine that. Just let me say this to you. Paul loved these people. Paul wanted to bless these people. Paul wanted to help these people. There are people in churches that can't wait until they can be a Sunday school teacher or a discipler or a deacon or whatever position it is because they really would like a little authority.

[14 : 35] I'd like to be able to tell people a little bit of what to do. I'd like to have a position and they want that position and they want it for the wrong reason because the truth of the matter is your goal in life ought to be I am here to be a blessing.

I am here to help you enjoy. Paul loved those people. Look at the fourth thing. He deeply loves them. Chapter 2 verse 1. Chapter 2 verse 1 if you would.

I determined this with myself that I would not come to you again in heaviness. For if I make you sorry who is he then that maketh me glad but the same which made me sorry.

You can go ahead and read all the way down to verse 4. Paul was uncomfortable even visiting while there was still sin among them. You know Paul wasn't going to go to the church at Corinth and walk in and find the guy who's sleeping with his daddy's wife.

Paul wasn't going to walk in there and act like nothing was going on. Paul said if I come bless God I'm going to let you know what's right and wrong. And by the way I know about how y'all are going around boasting and bragging.

[15 : 40] I know about how y'all are taking each other to court and lawsuits. That was all in 1 Corinthians. I know about how you're judging each other about food and how you got this critical hyper-pharisaical attitude among yourselves.

And he said I wrote you a letter and told you to get it fixed and I don't want to come until you fix it because I want to come when I can be happy and it won't be a painful meeting. He said I won't come to you again in heaviness.

Paul did speak to him sternly. Paul was looking to be happy and glad by the repentance of those he had rebuked. Look at verse 2. Look at verse 2. If I make you sorry who is he then that maketh me glad but the same which is made sorry by me.

Now next Sunday morning Lord willing we're going to get into forgiveness because apparently the guy who was sleeping with his daddy's wife repents and the church is told how to deal with him and how to help him.

And Paul said I know I made you sorry. I know I hurt your feelings. I know I said some things that were harsh but I didn't do it to hurt you. I only did it to help you and I can't I want to be happy when I get there and who's going to make me happy but that guy getting right with God.

[16 : 46] But that guy getting right with God. Verse 3. I wrote this same unto you lest when I come I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all.

Did you know when Paul wrote the letter he was crying? He says he was crying when he wrote the letter. Look if you would at verse 4. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears not that you should be grieved but that you might know love which I have more abundantly unto you.

Paul said now listen I want it to be happy and I want it to be joyful but I got to tell the truth and as a dad you know you're going to have to spank your kids every now and then. Say amen. You're going to have to spank your kids.

I mean it's just the way it goes. Bible book of Proverbs is pretty clear about this. There's going to have to be some discipline and as a leader sometimes you may have to call somebody's hand and you have to say but you know what it always ought to be with the tears in my eyes.

It always ought to be that I'm not disciplining you for my pleasure but for your profit like God does with us. And Paul said Paul said I want you to know I wrote a letter and 1 Corinthians is caustic.

[18 : 01] I mean it starts off and basically says hey all you saints there now hang on. You remember that? We went through there and even 1 Corinthians 13 it talked about love. If you recall when we were at 1 Corinthians chapter 12 when Paul threw the love chapter and what he was saying was you guys have gifts and no love.

And the chapter was really kind of a harsh chapter even though he talked about love he was saying it's because you don't know how to use your gifts. Paul said I want you to be happy but I will tell the truth.

Verse 5 Sin hurts us all. If any have caused grief he hath not grieved me but in part that I may not overcharge you all. Those that are living in open sin are not just hurting Paul but everyone in the church.

Everyone in the church. Paul doesn't want the church to have to deal with the problems by themselves so he's getting involved. He as a leader will face up to the responsibility. A good pastor will deal with sin.

He will not let love cause him to overlook open apparent sin. There's a basically two extremes many times in Christianity.

[19 : 08] You got the one guy who's a smiling guy over here and always happy and always preaching a positive message and doesn't ever talk about sin and doesn't ever talk about and then you got this other preacher and he just enjoys ripping high.

In fact, it's the only way you really know you've been preached to is you've been abused. Boy, you leave the service and you're like man, he beat the living slop out of me today. I need to go home and take a nap so I can get back in here and get beat up again. And you got these two extremes.

You got these two extremes going on. And the sad thing is we ought to be a church full of love. How are they going to know we're his disciples? John 13, 35 they know because of our love one for another.

Can you say amen right there? But that can't mean that love says you can do wrong. That can't mean that love says we'll cover it up. That can't mean that love says well adultery is okay because we love you and homosexuality is okay because we love you and drunkenness is okay because we love you and living in sin is okay because we love you.

No, we love you and so it's not okay. We love you and we will preach the truth. And that's what Paul's saying. He's going to deal with sin and he will lead the church in disciplining that sin and he did.

[20 : 13] Just let me give you some real quick things I think we ought to apply at our church out of this passage. number one we ought to develop a special love loyalty and sweetness among us as we serve as a church.

There ought to be this family thing here. There ought to be this sweetness here. There ought to be that you are loving and kind and sweet to everybody else in the church and that when people walk in here they say man you can feel love in this place.

Our God is a God of love. He teaches his people to be a people of love. He teaches that that ought to be the way we are. As a pastor I want to ask you to be sure as a pastor I want to be sure that the messages I preach are benefit in causing joy because they help you to understand who you are in Christ and how to live out what God has done in your life.

I want to work at preaching that. By the way if you're a Sunday school teacher you ought to go into that class with this is the most wonderful, fantastic, beautiful book in the world and I'm going to share truths with you today that's going to excite you and thrill you and motivate you and you're going to go home and say what a great God I have.

What a great Savior I have. I want to preach those kind of messages. Let's not be light in our talk about what God wants us to do in a church. Let's really seek his will. You know Christians can easily become flippant about what God's will is and we're going to this and we're going to that and whatever we need to be careful and seek God's will and I'll ask you to give me the benefit of a doubt when I make mistakes or don't do all I should and you can feel free to talk to me.

[21 : 41] Can I just tell you as pastor I know me better than I know you and if I had to tell you how bad I am we would both be embarrassed. The only good thing about me is how good the God who saved me is and God hasn't placed me above you and that's why you don't call me father and that's why you don't call me doctor and reverend.

That's why if you call me then you call me brother and if you call me pastor that's supposed to be a sweet and enduring term not a boss term. I don't want to be boss. You're welcome to come and tell me what's on your heart your concerns.

I have no dominion over your faith. I have no dominion. I can show you what the Bible says but I am not the truth setter around here. Let's make vision a place of joy because of what Jesus has done in our lives.

The sweet fellowship and family we have should never be a way to cover sin however. Understand when something needs to be addressed and you should help me help others. Can I just say this? Some of you are going to hear this and say that's what I like about vision.

Man we're just not a mean church and that's what I like. But sometimes that can mean to you that we're not going to take a stand about what's right and wrong. But we are going to take a stand. Say amen. When the Bible says it's wrong it's wrong.

[22 : 56] Period. Say amen. Is that right or not? Am I right or not? So we're going to take a stand about what's right and wrong and it will be preached and it will be taught. Joy can only come in holiness and obedience.

Paul takes the time to say let me tell you I love you all very much. I wrote you a letter and I ripped you pretty good but I cried the whole time I wrote it because I deeply love you and I believe in you and I'm looking to you and I want to see God do a work in your life.

So tonight can I ask you wherever you're leading whatever ministry God's given you could you look at this passage of scripture and say man I want to be that kind of dad. I want to be that kind of I want to be that kind of Sunday school teacher.

I want to be that kind of discipler. I want to be that kind of Christian. I want to be a blessing. I want to be of benefit. I want to help people. That doesn't mean I'm going to cover up sin. It doesn't mean I'm going to close my eyes when things are wrong but you know what it's a lot easier.

It's a lot easier to deal with sin when they know you love them isn't it? Love them. Paul said Paul said I wrote you a letter but I cried the whole time I wrote the letter.

[24 : 00] It was a big heavy heart of mine and the main reason I didn't come see you guys is because I didn't want to come when it was going to be fussing and fighting and me being mean. I didn't want to come with that.

I wanted to wait and see if you get right. Next passage next verse guess what he's going to say and sufficient to the guy was a punishment sufficient to the guy was a punishment he had.

Let's fix things. Father in heaven I love you and I praise you and I bless you and I magnify you and I just pray you'd be honored and glorified here in our church.

I pray you'd show your power. I pray that you would help us to love. I pray God that you'd help harsh leaders to ask for grace and sweetness. I pray you'd help lovers that never want to take a stand to get a backbone.

I pray dear God that you'd help us as a church to be that kind of group of people and to lead like that. I pray God that you would bless every ministry of every person that's your servant in this room and I'll give you glory.

[25 : 05] You have been listening to Austin Gardner Pastor of Vision Baptist Church. For contact information, location, service times or more audio and video recordings log on to www.visionbaptist.com www.visionbaptist.com Amen.