



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Bible, Part 234”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



Our text for today is **2Corinthians 2:4**:

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

Thank you for listening and thinking with me as we study God's Word to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

As we begin, let me communicate to you that my preaching is based upon the fact that every episode recorded in the Bible is literally true.

We live in a culture in which fantasy and fiction dominate, but we need to resist the allure of made-up stories and intellectually concocted arguments as we develop faith in the meticulously recorded factual history of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ by the eyewitnesses who were present on the scene.

We must do whatever we need to do to develop the personal faith needed to believe that the Bible is the absolute truth, and recognize that every fiction put forth by man or by the devil to contradict or minimize the impact of Biblical accounts is a lie.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was a highly doctrinal letter, designed to correct the sin that the Corinthian church was in danger of falling into. To some degree it was a harsh letter, as he instructed the Corinthians, in **1Corinthians 5:9–13**:

9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”

Paul called for the judging and then the purging of sin from the Corinthian church. Paul found this necessary so that the Corinthians, surrounded as they were by idolatry and prostitution, would not lapse back into their old idolatrous ways.



But the real reason for the harshness of the punishment for which Paul called was to produce repentance in the one who was involved in the sinful behavior. For the saints of God have always committed sin, which is why the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary's Cross that sins might be forgiven. And even Jesus Himself did not preach perfection, but restoration. **John 21:15–19** gives us the example:

15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” [Peter] said to [Jesus], “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” [Jesus] said to [Peter], “Feed My lambs.”

16 [Jesus] said to [Peter] again a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” [Peter] said to [Jesus], “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” [Jesus] said to [Peter], “Tend My sheep.”

17 [Jesus] said to [Peter] the third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because [Jesus] said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And [Peter] said to [Jesus], “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to [Peter], “Feed My sheep.

18 Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.”

19 This [Jesus] spoke, signifying by what death [Peter] would glorify God. And when [Jesus had spoken this, He said to [Peter], “Follow Me.”

So, just as Jesus restored Peter, Paul sought to restore the one that had committed the public sin against the Lord in the Corinthian church. Paul wrote them, in **2 Corinthians 2:1–4**:

1 But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.

2 For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?

3 And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all.

4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

If a Christian pastor does not love the flock over which the Lord has put him, his ministry will be ineffective. And when the pastor has to provide discipline to the flock, he should follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ and speak of the love that they have for one another. Paul desires that the Corinthians straighten up their act, but while maintaining their loving relationship. Pastor Paul



recognizes that he is not a taskmaster, but a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord Jesus Christ loves every sinner that He saves.

But just as Peter was grieved as the Lord Jesus Christ brought the treachery of Peter's denial to Peter's consciousness, Paul recognized that the repentant sinner in Corinth was grieved as well. It is a terrible thing for a Christian, even one who is living in sin, to be ostracized from the fellowship. And we see that in our churches, when people chafe under church discipline.

But church discipline is necessary. Although Jesus Christ died that sin might be forgiven, Jesus Christ did not die that sin might be tolerated or celebrated. The Lord Jesus Christ will accept us if we are weak, but He will not allow us to be wicked. **Matthew 4:17** informs us that the Lord Jesus Christ began his ministry preaching:

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

So, perfection is not required, but repentance is required. And, in the majority of cases, part of repentance is sorrowful. We have to be sorry for our sins, and the remembrance of our sin must be grievous to us.

But we have all sinned. We all have the sorrow that comes from remembering our sinfulness when it is pointed out, and although we repent, as Peter repented when he went out from his sin of denying the Lord and wept bitterly, he still had to deal with the chastisement from the Lord.

Paul heard of the repentance of the man who sinned, and admonished the church to restore him. Paul informs the Corinthians, in **2 Corinthians 2:5–8**:

5 But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe.

6 This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man,

7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.

8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.

The objective of church discipline is never to crush the sinner, but to bring the sinner to repentance. Once the sinner repents, forgiveness is the only appropriate response. Jesus tells us, in **Luke 17:1–4**:

1 Then [Jesus] said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!

2 It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

3 Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."



Saints, the main reason that the Lord Jesus Christ tells us this is that while our brother may sin against us, is also may be that we sin against our brother.

Jesus instructs us, in **Matthew 7:12**:

12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

So, we are duty bound to recognize repentance in others and restore them, just as we wish to be restored when we repent from our sin. And Paul tells us to reaffirm our love to the sinner, because we all need that love from the church to not be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Paul instructs us, in **2Corinthians 2:9–11**:

9 For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ,

11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Satan wishes to create schisms in the church. Were it up to Satan, no one would be able to repent of their sin, meaning that all would end up being rejected. All would end up on his side rather than on the Lord's side, since we all commit sin. Satan loves the conflict that arises in the church when discipline is imposed on a member, and hopes to use that discipline to tear the church apart.

But Paul preaches the same repentance that the Lord Jesus Christ preached. We, as Christians, cannot stand on a high horse because the sinner being chastised has committed a sin that we may have not. We may not have done that which he has done, but we have done something sinful for which we need repentance and restoration. And just as we want the loving guidance of the church to be restored, we should provide that loving guidance when we are in the position to do so. As Paul tells us, the church is the place of comfort, not sorrow.

Paul continues, in **2 Corinthians 2:14–15**:

14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

The place of comfort is also the place of triumph, as the hell-bound sinner can find a place of refuge in the church of Christ as can the Christian. Instruction and discipline bring the sinner out of his sin into the glorious fragrance of Christ. There is no better activity for the Christian church to perform than to lead men, women, boys and girls to Christ, and not just to an intellectual knowledge of Christ, but to a functional knowledge of how we should behave in Christ on a daily basis.



To those who are perishing, we are Christ. To those who are being saved, we are Christ. Paul tells us, in **2Corinthians 2:16–17**:

16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

The grace gift of the Lord Jesus Christ is free. We receive salvation without charge. We receive the direction of church discipline without charge. And where the Lord God approves of the outgo, He will supply the income. So, we have no need to charge for the preaching that leads to salvation. **Acts 2:44–45** informs us:

44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

Those that sold their possessions had no lack. **Proverbs 19:17** informs us:

17 He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and [the LORD] will pay back what he has given.

Paul further informs the Corinthians that his letters are written as authoritative, and that they should recognize his apostolic authority from his previous work among them. Paul writes, in **2Corinthians 3:1–3**:

1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?

2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

3 clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

It is the Holy Spirit that inspires the Apostle Paul to write these words, and it is the Holy Spirit that inspires the Corinthians to receive them. Our relationship to the Holy Spirit allows us to believe and spread the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and even before the New Testament Canon was formalized, the church was able to understand and conform to the inspired writing of the apostles, including these writings by Paul. Paul affirms this, as he tells the Corinthians, in **2 Corinthians 3:4–6**:

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God.

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.



The Apostles were able to preach and teach the life-giving Holy Spirit inspired lessons even without the New Testament, for the Holy Spirit wrote the words of the New Testament in their hearts. Jesus told the disciples, in **Acts 1:8: 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ because of his Damascus Road experience, similarly had the preaching and teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in his life. Paul preached and wrote the oracles of the Lord Jesus Christ because of His access to the Holy Spirit.

And, in our day, we pray for the ability to understand and teach that which the New Testament transmits to us, praying that we not only have the ability to read and comprehend, but that we have access to the Holy Spirit to understand that which the Spirit gives, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Paul refers us back to the ministry of Moses, as he informs us, in **2 Corinthians 3:7–8:**

7 But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away,

8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

The Jews leaving Egypt, had this singular experience with the Lord God through Moses, as Moses received the Ten Commandments from the Lord God, as recorded in **Exodus 34:29–35:**

29 Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him.

30 So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

31 Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them.

32 Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai.

33 And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.

34 But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded.

35 And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.



The shining face of Moses allowed the Israelites to recognize that Moses had been with the Lord God, and the words that Moses spoke to the people were the words of the Lord God. Similarly, the apostolic ministry was reserved to those that had been with and received instruction from the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us, in **1 Corinthians 15:3–8**:

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

The Apostle Paul verifies his bona fides as one who saw and spoke to the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection, and received the gift of the Holy Spirit as did the original Apostles with whom Jesus met in the Upper Room. Paul did not consider his ministry inferior to that of the original Apostles, as He was not instructed by them, but by the Holy Spirit as he spent those three days without sight in Damascus and then immediately began preaching Jesus as the Christ.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament dispensation was superior to the teaching of Moses, just as the righteousness of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ was superior to the sacrifices of the Old Testament to take away sin. But the Jews were stuck in the sacrifices of condemnation given in the Old Testament. The Lord clarifies, in **Isaiah 1:10–11**:

10 Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the law of our God, You people of Gomorrah:

11 “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?” Says the LORD. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats.

Yes, the Lord dictated the Old Testament sacrifices to Moses, but they were futile to bring the Israelites into godliness. Those sacrifices turned into empty rituals, as they did not affect the hearts of the people of Israel. All of the animal sacrifices did not bring the Jews any closer to the Lord God because when the Lord God came, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Jews rejected Him.

The ministry of Moses was glorious, however, the people did not embrace Moses' glory, but rather rejected that which Moses gave them. Oh, they kept the letter of the law, but they did not accept the spirit of the law. Jesus condemned them, in **Matthew 23:23–36**:

23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of



the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.

28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,

30 and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’

31 “Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt.

33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,

35 that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Neglecting the weightier matters of the law brings condemnation. Understanding that the sacrifices are only symbolic and actually require repentance and the acceptance of the weightier matters of the law is that which the Holy Spirit brings to the church, because the sacrifice that we have for our sins is not a repeatable sacrifice, but is the once for all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Thus, it is ours to accept the Lord Jesus Christ. It is ours to emulate His ministry. It is ours to follow His New commandment, as John records in **John 13:34–35**:

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”



And Paul describes our transformation, in **2 Corinthians 3:9–18**:

9 For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

10 For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels.

11 For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

12 Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—

13 unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.

14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The bottom line is that we understand that which the Jews never chose to embrace. We understand that which the Jews never chose to understand the point of the writing of the prophets, preferring to simply repeat animal sacrifices. We understand that the Lord does not seek animal sacrifices, but our personal, human sacrifices of repentance and love that cause us to emulate the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is ours to walk in the footsteps of Christ. Not just to emulate the rituals, but to actually change our lives to be like Him through the power of the Holy Spirit working through us. As we understand the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is ours to emulate it. For, as the Lord Jesus Christ asks us, what profit is it to a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

It is ours to love one another. It is ours to give the gospel to those who are perishing. Oh, they may not receive the gospel; their hearts may be hardened beyond repair, but it is ours to both preach the word and provide the example that we hope will cause them to consider their wicked ways and come crying, “What shall I do to be saved?”

It is ours to do all that we can to lift the veil that is over the hearts of men, women, boys and girls and turn them to the Lord. And even if it requires sacrifice on our part, that is that which the Lord Jesus Christ is calling for us to do, through His Holy Spirit.

For the Lord Jesus Christ died. Oh, the Lord Jesus Christ did not have to die. The Lord Jesus Christ had the power to call for twelve legions of angels to



protect Himself, but He chose to give Himself on that Old Rugged Cross of Calvary for your sins and for my sins. And when the Lord Jesus Christ said, “It is finished”, and hung His head in the locks on His shoulder and died, He liberated you and He liberated me from the power of sin and death. As Paul tells us, in **1Corinthians 15:55–58:**

55 “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

So, even as the Lord Jesus Christ died for us, let us live for Him, and emulate His example in the earth, that the church might be restored from sin and the members might live lives of repentance and restoration. Let us not react negatively to discipline, but let us recognize and realize that repentance is the grace gift from the Lord, and let us seek it on a daily basis.

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