



**FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH**

# **“The Bible, Part 238”**

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***Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.***



Our text for today is **2Corinthians 7:9**:

**9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.**

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.

There are some that think that the Christian life should involve nothing but positive situations, and that Christians should nothing but bubbles and perfume with which to deal. To them, negative situations in the life of a Christian should be dealt with my naming and claiming the positive situation that they rightfully deserve because of the promises of the Lord Jesus Christ, who tells us, in **John 16:33**:

**33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."**

Yes, we should have peace in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, we should be of good cheer in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Apostle Paul makes it clear that having peace in the Lord Jesus Christ does not mean avoiding the problems and pitfalls of this world. Paul tells us, in **Philippians 4:11–13**:

**11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:**

**12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.**

**13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**



As we understand the phrase, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” we recognize that in plain English, it does not mean that we are supermen who can change bad situations into good ones by sheer force of will. As a matter of fact, the Lord Jesus Christ did not change all of the negative situations with which He came into contact simply by naming and claiming them.

The Lord Jesus Christ went through the most painful of circumstances on His way to Joseph’s new tomb. The Lord Jesus Christ did so in order to provide us with salvation, to pay the penalty that we owe for the sins that we have committed. And when Paul says that he knows how to be abased and how to abound, Paul is simply recognizing that in his ministry, his will have to endure some painful situations as well as some pleasant situations as he spreads the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world.

Oh, we are blessed to live in a Christian country. We can preach the gospel without must fear of negative repercussions. In fact, we can live inside the Christian cocoon, participate in church activities on a constant basis, and not really have to face the persecution that goes along with the spread of the gospel to a hostile people. We can, as Jesus told His disciples, tell unbelievers what thus saith the Lord, and if they refuse to accept it, effortlessly just shake the dust off of this household our feet as a testimony against them. And if the unsaved remain unsaved, what is it to us? We can always remind ourselves that Judas was apparently not saved, and when the Lord Jesus Christ saved the criminal on the cross next to Him, the criminal on the cross on other side apparently was not saved.

So yes, the painful situations concerning the salvation of those whom we come into contact are not really that painful for us. Yes, we wish that everyone to whom we present the gospel would be saved, but if the Lord Jesus Christ could not convince Judas to remain in the fellowship, or one of the thieves on the Cross to join the Christian band, we will certainly not be held account for those to whom we preach that do not decide to become Christians.

But Paul wants his children in the ministry to not be lost because of the painfulness of his gospel, a gospel that demands that the Corinthians not only believe in the history of the Lord Jesus Christ, but a gospel that demands that the Corinthians conforms their lives to the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul tells the Corinthians, in **2 Corinthians 7:2–7**:

**2 Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one.**

**3 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.**

**4 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.**

**5 For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.**



**6 Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,  
7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.**

Paul hoped that the Corinthians' response to his first letter would be that the Corinthians would mourn upon receiving it, and then after mourning, decide to straighten up their act and operate their church in a proper manner. And then Paul was comforted by the report that he received from Titus, who informed Paul that the Corinthians were making the necessary adjustments to their lifestyles that would put them back in line with Christian principles. For it is one thing to confess belief in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, but quite another to live according to the principles that the Lord Jesus Christ laid down during his sojourn on planet earth.

Corinth was a town that was much like our society. Although the Corinthians had a large church presence, the larger Corinthian society was involved, to a large degree, in sexual immorality, and the immorality of the society was creeping into the church. Paul admonishes the Corinthians, in **1Corinthians 5:1–2**:

**1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!**

**2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.**

When a son gets off track, no one rejoices more than a father that can admonish his son and then watch as his son get back on track, for none of us is immune to errors. So, Paul wrote to 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.”**

When Titus came to Paul to report on the manner in which the Corinthians received this disciplinary missive from Paul, Titus informed Paul that the



Corinthians took Paul's writing to heart and provided church discipline for the one that brought immorality into the church in such a blatant manner.

Once found out that the Corinthians responded appropriately to his letter, Paul wrote them, in **2Corinthians 7:8–10**:

**8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while.**

**9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.**

**10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.**

Oh, that we might be sorry every day for the sins that we have committed. Oh, that we might recognize when the man of God calls us to repentance, and use the opportunity to renounce the shameful things of this world, to put them behind us, and to move away from them without regret, but with the joy that comes from having been abased but now abounding, and changing our behavior to do that which we do through the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ, who strengthens us.

The man who sinned in such an egregious manner was chastened by the teaching of the Apostle Paul and the reaction of the Corinthian church, so much so that he got back on track. After all, the purpose of discipline is not excommunication, but repentance and restoration. Paul tells the Corinthians, in **2 Corinthians 7:11–12**:

**11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.**

**12 Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.**

There is nothing better for a father than to see that his son is following in his footsteps by providing for his family, training his children in the way that they should go, and providing a good Christian example for them to follow. The only one more proud than a father when his son decides to go in the Christian way is a grandfather that sees his son train his grandson in the Christian way. Titus' report blessed Paul's soul, as Paul was able to see that the Corinthians listened carefully to his instructions and followed them. Paul communicated his approval to the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 7:13–16**:

**13 Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.**



**14 For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true.**

**15 And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.**

**16 Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.**

Paul rejoiced as he saw the Corinthian church grow in grace, as the Corinthians listened to Paul's teaching and followed Paul's instructions. Every Christian has the responsibility to grow in grace, because none of us are perfect. But we all have the Scripture as a guidepost, and the daily opportunity to walk more closely with the Lord Jesus Christ by following the instruction and examples that are set before us. Every day, we have the opportunity to be more loving, more obedient, more devout and more dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ through our personal evangelism, our time, our talent and our tithe.

There is always someone we can exhort to grow by our own growth and in so doing, we bring joy to those who teach us, because they can see that their teaching is productive, being heeded rather than falling on deaf ears.

Paul is so comforted by the obedience of the Corinthians that he gives them another assignment, to replicate the generosity of the churches of Macedonia. **2Corinthians 8:1–5** informs us:

**1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:**

**2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.**

**3 For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing,**

**4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.**

**5 And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.**

Paul, being imprisoned, is being cared for financially by the Macedonian church, and Paul exhorts the Corinthian church, in **2 Corinthians 8:6–7**:

**6 So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well.**

**7 But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.**

Titus is one of Paul's sons in the ministry, travelling the circuit preaching the Word, founding churches and providing Paul's letters to the various congregations to which he travels. And Paul has already instructed the Corinthians, in his first letter to them, in **1Corinthians 9:3–14**:

**3 My defense to those who examine me is this:**

**4 Do we have no right to eat and drink?**



5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?

7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

8 Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also?

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” Is it oxen God is concerned about?

10 Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?

12 If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?

14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

It is a sensitive subject, but one that Paul feels confident in broaching with the Corinthians. Since the Corinthians showed themselves obedient to Paul’s moral teaching, Paul is confident that the Corinthians will take on the support of the missionaries that Paul designates. Paul writes, in **2Corinthians 8:8–9**:

**8 I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.**

**9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.**

Jesus references a widow as an example of generosity, in **Mark 12:41–**

**44:**

**41 Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much.**

**42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans.**

**43 So [Jesus] called His disciples to Himself and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury;**



**44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.”**

And the Word of God makes it clear that the widow will not lack from her generous contribution. **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 wants the Corinthians to understand the investment that they make when they support the missionaries doing the work of spreading the gospel. Those of us that spend our worship time in comfortable church pews in large churches have the responsibility to support those on the mission fields, who provide for the needs of those that have not heard the gospel, and otherwise would not hear the gospel if those needs were not met. The various mission churches around the city, country and even the world that provide food, clothing and infrastructure for the less fortunate as well as the gospel need financial sustenance, as the financial resources that keep them going are not going to come out of thin air.

Paul exhorts the Corinthian church to prepare to resume their missionary giving program to support the church under great persecution at Jerusalem, as **2Corinthians 8:10–12** informs us:

**10 And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago;**

**11 but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have.**

**12 For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.**

And just as there is plenty of need to go around, there is plenty of abundance to go around. The Lord is watching our investment in His kingdom so that it will both supply those on the front lines and bring us that which we need. **2Corinthians 8:13–15** informs the Corinthians:

**13 For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; 14 but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack—that there may be equality.**

**15 As it is written, “He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.”**

The Jerusalem church, although the original church, is under great financial duress, as it constantly supports the Apostles that go out as missionaries. Not only that, but the church is under persecution from the Jews and the Romans, which saps their financial strength as, just as Paul is imprisoned in Caesarea, there are many in prison in Jerusalem. Paul is well aware of the burden on the Jerusalem church, as during his days persecuting the





church, he himself was responsible for dragging many men and women off to prison.

Paul reassures the Corinthians that their funds are not going to be being misused, but that the need in Jerusalem is real and the men by whom their gift going to be carried to Jerusalem are honest. Paul informs the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 8:16–24**:

**16 But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus.**

**17 For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord.**

**18 And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches,**

**19 and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind,**

**20 avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us—**

**21 providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.**

**22 And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which we have in you.**

**23 If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.**

**24 Therefore show to them, and before the churches the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.**

Paul vouches for Titus and for the unnamed diligent brother, and requests that the Corinthians trust them, even as the Corinthians trusted in the moral instruction that Paul sent in his first letter. The lesson is that trustworthiness is required in missionaries that both handle the Word of God and the contributions of the church. Paul previously told the Corinthians, in **1Corinthians 4:1–2**:

**1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.**

**2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.**

The first stewards in the conversation are the Corinthians, whom the Lord has blessed with the wherewithal to support the Jerusalem church, which is under persecution. The second stewards are Titus and the unnamed diligent brother, who will carry the collection to Jerusalem and certify that it will be used for the care of the saints. The point for us as contemporary Christians is that we must find a church to support, and the church that we support must find or be a



frontline Christian organization supporting the spread of the gospel and meeting the needs of those to whom the gospel is spread.

It is a wonderful thing to be a missionary to the lost and hurting. The Lord Jesus Christ was a missionary among the Israelite people for three and a half years, healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons, cleansing lepers, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and mobility to the lame. The miracles that the Lord Jesus Christ performed, however, were done to let the people know that the Lord God of Israel sent His only begotten Son to them to give them salvation, so that at the conclusion of this life, they would be able to go with Him to that other land, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

And that is our legacy. But while we are here, we are to use the resources that the Lord gives us even as He used the resources that the Father gave Him to improve the conditions on planet earth. Not the environmental conditions, or the political conditions, or the social conditions, but the religious conditions, for only what we do for Christ will be counted in the end; only what we do for Christ will last.

You may build great cathedrals large or small,  
you can build skyscrapers grand and tall,  
you may conquer all the failures of the past,  
but only what you do for Christ will last.

You may seek earthly power and fame,  
the world might be impressed by your great name,  
soon the glories of this life will all be past,  
but only what you do for Christ will last.

Though your armies may control each hemisphere,  
and your orbits out in space cause men to cheer,  
your scientific knowledge may be vast,  
but only what you do for Christ will last.

Though your song and prayers are heard and praised by man,  
they've no meaning unless you've been born again,  
sinner, heed these words, don't let this harvest pass,  
for only what you do for Christ will last.

Remember only what You do for Christ will last.  
Remember only what you do for Christ will last,  
only what you do for Him will be counted at the end;  
only what you do for Christ will last.



Let us not be deceived or be at ease in Zion. The church has more than enough resources for the spread of the gospel. But the problem is that those resources are in your pocket.

The Lord Jesus Christ had more than enough resources to save us all. However, in order to save us, He had to give His very life on Calvary's Cross. The Lord Jesus Christ had to suffer and to die an ignominious death, being ridiculed and shamed. But He was willing to give Himself, in a manner that would make us all reconsider were we presented with that alternative, and end up in Joseph's new tomb, guarded by soldiers intent on keeping the disciples from assisting Him in being removed from that tomb.

Ah, but they found themselves guarding the wrong side of the tomb. For the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, rose physically from the dead and exited the tomb with all power in heaven and earth in His hands.

And we, twenty-one centuries later, still rely on His power on a daily basis. So let us give sacrificially even as He gave sacrificially to support those letting men, women, boys and girls know that although the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ.

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