

**August 8, 2010**

**Listening Well -- 2 Corinthians**

1 Corinthians 2:1-5(page 792)

<sup>IV</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:1 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>2</sup> For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. <sup>4</sup> My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

While Paul adapted his presentation to reach the culture, in return the influence of the culture started adapting the **MEANING AND VALUES** of the Gospel

TROUBLE IN THE CHURCH

The church is fragmenting into **SOCIAL** and "**SPIRITUAL**" divisions

The case being made against Paul is that he is a mediocre teacher at best, evidenced by the fact that he **DOES NOT CHARGE** people to listen to him

In 2 Corinthians we have a **RESOLUTION** of some of these issues

But what is unique about this letter is not how it continues or completes the correspondence and conversations from 1 Corinthians but the self revelations of the Apostle himself. They come in two categories; his **PERSONAL EMOTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES**, and his personal experiences both **PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL**.

THE EMOTIONS OF PAUL

Hebrews 13:17 (page 836)

<sup>NIV</sup> Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

How they have treated Paul has negatively affected him and his **ABILITY TO PROVIDE** for them the ministry that they need

My faith has to be in the God who **ESTABLISHED THE AUTHORITY** not in the person through whom it is expressed. And the **WARNING TO ME** is that if I make that person's job hard I am hurting myself.

Remember the issue is not rebellion against the person who has been given the authority but **REBELLION AGAINST THE GOD** who gave that person authority.

Authority is the tool through which ministry flows. Separate yourself from authority and you separate yourself from the **MINISTRY GOD** is trying to bring into your life. Regardless of your "**JUSTIFICATION**" in the end you

### 2 Corinthians 1:1-3:3 (page 801)

<sup>NIV</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia: <sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. <sup>5</sup> For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. <sup>6</sup> If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. <sup>7</sup> And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. <sup>8</sup> We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup> Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup> He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, <sup>11</sup> as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. <sup>12</sup> Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace. <sup>13</sup> For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, <sup>14</sup> as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Because I was confident of this, I planned to visit you first so that

you might benefit twice. <sup>16</sup> I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. <sup>17</sup> When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, "Yes, yes" and "No, no"? <sup>18</sup> But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." <sup>19</sup> For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." <sup>20</sup> For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. <sup>21</sup> Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, <sup>22</sup> set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. <sup>23</sup> I call God as my witness that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. <sup>24</sup> Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm. 2:1 So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. <sup>2</sup> For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? <sup>3</sup> I wrote as I did so that when I came I should not be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. <sup>4</sup> For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you. <sup>5</sup> If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent-- not to put it too severely. <sup>6</sup> The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. <sup>7</sup> Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. <sup>8</sup> I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. <sup>9</sup> The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. <sup>10</sup> If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven-- if there was anything to forgive-- I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, <sup>11</sup> in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. <sup>12</sup> Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, <sup>13</sup> I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye to them and went on to Macedonia. <sup>14</sup> But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. <sup>15</sup> For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup> To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task? <sup>17</sup> Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God. 3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? <sup>2</sup> You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. <sup>3</sup> You show that

you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

### 2 Corinthians 7:2-16 (page 804)

<sup>NIV</sup> 2 Corinthians 7:2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. <sup>3</sup> I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. <sup>4</sup> I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds. <sup>5</sup> For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn-- conflicts on the outside, fears within. <sup>6</sup> But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, <sup>7</sup> and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever. <sup>8</sup> Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it-- I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while-- <sup>9</sup> yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. <sup>10</sup> Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. <sup>11</sup> See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. <sup>12</sup> So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. <sup>13</sup> By all this we are encouraged. In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. <sup>14</sup> I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. <sup>15</sup> And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. <sup>16</sup> I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

### THE MINISTRY OF PAUL

Paul has suffered much to be the apostle they ***NEED HIM TO BE.***

### 2 Corinthians 10:12-12:12 (page 805)

<sup>NIV</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and

compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.<sup>13</sup> We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you.<sup>14</sup> We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ.<sup>15</sup> Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand,<sup>16</sup> so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in another man's territory.<sup>17</sup> But, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."<sup>18</sup> For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends. 11:1 I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that.<sup>2</sup> I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.<sup>3</sup> But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.<sup>4</sup> For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.<sup>5</sup> But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles."<sup>6</sup> I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.<sup>7</sup> Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge?<sup>8</sup> I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you.<sup>9</sup> And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so.<sup>10</sup> As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine.<sup>11</sup> Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!<sup>12</sup> And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about.<sup>13</sup> For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ.<sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.<sup>15</sup> It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.<sup>16</sup> I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting.<sup>17</sup> In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool.<sup>18</sup> Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast.<sup>19</sup> You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise!<sup>20</sup> In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face.<sup>21</sup> To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that! What anyone else

dares to boast about-- I am speaking as a fool-- I also dare to boast about.<sup>22</sup> Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I.<sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.<sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.<sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea,<sup>26</sup> I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers.<sup>27</sup> I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.<sup>28</sup> Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.<sup>29</sup> Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?<sup>30</sup> If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.<sup>31</sup> The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying.<sup>32</sup> In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me.<sup>33</sup> But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

12:1 I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord.<sup>2</sup> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know-- God knows.<sup>3</sup> And I know that this man-- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows--<sup>4</sup> was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.<sup>5</sup> I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses.<sup>6</sup> Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say.<sup>7</sup> To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.<sup>8</sup> Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.<sup>9</sup> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.<sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.<sup>11</sup> I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the "super-apostles," even though I am nothing.<sup>12</sup> The things that mark an apostle-- signs, wonders and miracles-- were done among you with great perseverance.

How are you doing **PAYING THE PRICE OF SERVICE** for the people God has placed in your life to serve by with authority He has given you

How are doing making the service of others **PLEASANT AND MEANINGFUL**