

“LEADING WITH INTEGRITY”

(2Corinthians 1:1-24)

May 14, 2017

There are a couple of differences between this letter and 1Corinthians. Paul's tone is different. First, he is much more autobiographical. He also seems much more DEFENSIVE.

I. Divine WORDS

Paul shares a blessing upon the church from God the Father and Jesus: grace and peace. We should never take those words lightly. Grace is the unmerited, or UNEARNED favor of God.

Peace is elusive in this life and on this planet, but THE great promise for those who trust in Jesus is “peace with God.”

II. Divine COMFORT

- 1. The ROOT is God (the God of *all* comfort). Paul uses *parakletos*, the same word used for the Holy Spirit in His role as paraclete, or comforter (one who stands alongside and helps).**

It is hard to feel comforted from a DISTANCE. The Holy Spirit, our comforter, dwells within us and is beside us in all of our challenging times, just as Jesus PROMISED:

And I will ask my Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – The Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:16-17

God is the SOURCE of our needed comfort.

- 2. The FRUIT is the comfort we are able to share with others.**

There are a couple of different kinds of comfort Christians can share with each other. The first is EMPATHY.

An even more powerful kind of comfort happens when someone who has ALREADY gone through the experience comes alongside to comfort.

III. Divine DELIVERANCE

It is often incredibly challenging to find any purpose in the devastations of life, but there is that one—learning to RELY on God. But always remember this: “After the cross comes Easter!”

IV. Divine PLANS

In 1st Corinthians 16, Paul described his plans for his next visit to Corinth.

Somehow, they got the idea that he would come to see them first and they are upset that he hasn't. They think he is taking them for granted.

In truth, he had made the statement about his plans:

“... if the Lord permits.” (1 Corinthians 16:7)

In other words, his plans were tentative, dependent upon what the Lord ALLOWED him to do. But that does not CHANGE his honesty or integrity. Paul does not engage in double talk:

“For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand.” (13)

“I will remember you as one of the very few pastors I have come to totally respect for your integrity and obedience in preaching God's word.”
-Dale Ewald

While Paul takes no prideful credit for his integrity, he insists that its source is in a God who's “yes” never turns to “no.”

**Think of all the profound questions to which God says “yes”:
Do you love me? Am I FORGIVEN ? Am I secure in your love? Is there a purpose for my life? Is there LIFE beyond the grave?**

To all of those questions, God answers an everlasting “yes.”

His answer will never change, because his integrity is PERFECT and we can put our full trust in him.