

“Ready To Forgive!”
2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Introduction:

1. Please Turn Back With Me In Your Bibles To:
 - 2 Corinthians 2:5-11:
 - “But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. / Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. / So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. / Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. / For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. / To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; / Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices!”
2. Before We Look More Closely:
 - Into The Rest Of These Verses:
 - I Would Like For Us To Ponder:
 - That Last Verse For A Moment:
 - “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices!”
 - This Is A Sobering Thought, Isn’t It?
 - That “Satan” Could “Get An Advantage” Over Us!
 - As A Church! As Christians!
 - This Does Not Mean That Satan Is More Powerful Than The Lord! But It Does Mean That Satan Is More Powerful Than You, When You Rely Upon Your Own Flesh!
 - And Satan - Who Is Your Adversary & Enemy:
 - Will Try To Do Anything He Can:
 - To Eliminate Your Usefulness & Effectiveness As A Christian!
 - And He Is Relentless In His Attacks!
 - In Luke 22:31 - Jesus Told Peter That:
 - Satan “Desired To Have” Him, So That He Might “Sift Him As Wheat!”
 - In 1 Peter 5:8 - We Are Told That:
 - “The Devil, As A Roaring Lion, Walketh About, Seeking Whom He May Devour!”
 - And He Will Use Anything He Can:
 - To Do The Same To You!
 - But How?
 - 3. Well - Here In 2 Corinthians - Paul Addresses One Way:
 - And One “Device” That Satan Has Always Used:
 - To Undermine The Spiritual Health:
 - Of Christians & Churches!
 - And That Is Bitterness!
 - Bitterness & Grudges Within Our Hearts!
 - What Is Bitterness?
 - Bitterness Is The Lack Of Forgiveness & A Forgiving Heart!
 - And It Is A Very Useful “Device” That Satan Can Use & Exploit:
 - To Sift Us / To Devour Us / To Gain An Advantage Over Us!
 - 4. The Relationship That The Apostle Paul Had:
 - With The Corinthian Church:
 - Was A Turbulent One!
 - And Even When 2 Corinthians Was Written:
 - There Were Still Some In The Church Who Were Questioning His Authority & Were Making Accusations Against Him!
 - If Anyone Had The Right To Be Bitter - It Probably Would Have Been Paul!
 - But Paul Sought To Live His Life:
 - With A Good & A Clear Conscience!
 - Before God & Before Men!
 - And So - He Sought To Live His Life:
 - Transparently!
 - Truthfully!
 - And Tenderly!

- And This Kind Of Life:
 - Is Reflected To Us In His Words:
 - In The First Chapter Of This Letter:
 - Which We Have Already Looked At!
- And The Tender Heart:
 - That We Read About In 2:1-4:
 - We Continue To Sense As Paul Describes:
 - Another Issue & Another Sin That Took Place Against Him & The Church!
- 5. Now - We Are Not Exactly Sure:
 - Who It Was That Offended Paul:
 - And Who It Was That Offended The Church:
 - But - It Is Clear That When The Church There In Corinth Exercised Their Authority:
 - To Discipline That Member - When He Repented - Paul Was “Ready To Forgive!”
 - Paul Was “Ready To Forgive” Because:
 - He Know That If He Didn’t:
 - Satan Was Ready To Use His Bitterness Against Him & The Church:
 - To Render Them Useless In The Work Of The Lord!
- 6. We Too Need To Be “Ready To Forgive!” Why? Four Reasons:
 - Because Of:
 - 1. ***The Plan Of Forgiveness!***
 - We See The Plan Of Forgiveness:
 - In 2:5-6 - “But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. / Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many!”
 - The Tender Heart That Paul Had For The Corinthian Church As A Whole:
 - Is Here Extended To A Single Member Who Had Offended Him Personally & Had Caused Him Grief & Sorrow!
 - But Just Listen To His Words!
 - They Are Soft Words!
 - Verse 5 Is A Verse That Has Been Difficult To Translate:
 - But Paul Is Using Soft Words:
 - Against The Offending Member!
 - Proverbs 15:1 - “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger!”
 - He Is Saying That The Person Who Caused The Grief & Sorrow:
 - Only Did So “In Part!”
 - This Could Apply Either To:
 - Paul Or To The Church:
 - But Either Way - Paul Did Not Wish To “Overcharge” And Increase The Load & Burden - Either On The Church Or On The Individual Member!
 - Because Paul Was “Ready To Forgive!” Also:
 - They Are Sensitive Words!
 - According To 2:6 - It Is Clear That The Church:
 - Exercised Church Discipline On The Offending Member!
 - They Would Have Followed Jesus’ Words In Matthew 18 - And Eventually Brought The Matter To The Church As A Whole - And “Punished” Him - It Was “Inflicted Of Many!”
 - This Means That He Would Have Been Cast Out From The Membership Of The Church - And Treated As “An Heathen Man And A Publican!”
 - But Now - Paul Writes - That This Man’s Punishment:
 - Was “Sufficient!”
 - It Was Enough!
 - Why? Because The Man Had Responded To The Discipline Of The Church!
 - And So - They Needed To Be:
 - “Ready To Forgive” As Well!
 - Because This Is The Ultimate Plan:
 - For Church Discipline & Forgiveness:
 - A Godly Sorrow & Repentance From Sin!

- Is This Your Goal - When Someone Offends You Or Sins Against You?
 - Sometimes Someone Can Even Offend You Without Knowing It!
 - And Satan Can Use This To Drive A Wedge Between Christians!
- Remember 1 Peter 4:8 - "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins!"
 - And Always Be "Ready To Forgive!"
 - Also - Because Of:

2. *The Purpose Of Forgiveness!*

- We See The Purpose Of Forgiveness:
 - In 2:7-8 - "So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. / Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him!"
 - Here - Paul Gives The Same Instruction To The Church As A Whole!
 - Paul Was "Ready To Forgive!"
 - Now - They Needed To Forgive!
 - Perhaps There Were Some In The Church:
 - Who Did Not Believe That The Man Had Been Punished Enough!
 - Or Perhaps They Questioned The Sincerity Of His Sorrow & Repentance!
 - Paul Says To Them All - "Forgive!"
 - After All - Forgiveness Is Part Of The Nature Of God Himself!
 - Psalm 103:8-18 - "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. / He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. / He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. / For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. / As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. / Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. / For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. / As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. / For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. / But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; / To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them!"
 - God Is A Forgiving God!
 - This Is The Good News Of The Gospel Itself!
 - That There Is Forgiveness Available To You When You Repent & Confess Your Sin & Believe In Jesus Christ As Your Own Savior From Sin!
 - And So - It Is On The Basis Of God's Own Forgiveness:
 - That We Are To Forgive!
 - Ephesians 4:31-32 - "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: / And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you!"
 - Are You "Ready To Forgive?"
 - Do Not Let Satan "Get An Advantage" Over You By Holding On To Bitterness!
 - Instead - Remember The Purpose Of Forgiveness!
 - To Comfort Each Other!
 - 2:7 - "So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow!"
 - Isn't This What Jesus Had Done For You?
 - When You Realized That You Sinned Against Him & Turned To Him In Repentance & Faith:
 - What Did Jesus Do?
 - Like The Father Of The Prodigal Son In Luke 15:18-24 - "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, / And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. / And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. / And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. / But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: / And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: / For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be

merry!”

- What A Comfort For This Prodigal Son!
 - He Was Restored!
 - This Is The Purpose Of Forgiveness!
 - We Also Need:
- To Confirm Each Other!
 - 2:8 - “Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him!”
 - We Need To Always Be Ready:
 - To Assure One Another:
 - Of Our Love - Especially When Someone Repents Of Their Sin!
- This Is The Purpose Of Forgiveness!
 - To Restore A Fallen Brother Or Sister In Christ:
 - To The Fellowship & The Favor:
 - Of The Church!
 - This Is What Christ-Like Love Is!
 - This Is What Christ-Like Love Does!
 - Are You “Ready To Forgive” In This Way?
 - Willing To Comfort & Confirm Your Love:
 - To Someone Who Has Offended You & The Church & Even The Lord?
 - When They Return - Do Not Remain Bitter! Do Not Hold Grudges! Instead - Remember:

3. ***The Point Of Forgiveness!***

- We See The Point Of Forgiveness:
 - In 2:9 - “For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things!”
 - Every Instruction That Paul Gave & Every Letter That Paul Wrote:
 - Was For A Reason!
 - And So Here - We Even See:
- The Reason For A Forgiving Spirit!
 - Paul Wrote:
 - “That I Might Know The Proof Of You!”
 - That Is - To Test Them & Their Character, To See What Kind Of Church They Had Become!
 - **IE:** One Definition Of “Character” Is - What You Are Like When You Are All Alone!
 - Paul Wanted To Know If They Would Be A Christ-Like Church!
 - Not Only When He Was With Them, But Even When He Was Not!
 - Like The Philippian Church - Philippians 2:12 - “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling!”
- ***A Forgiving Spirit:***
 - ***Is The Evidence & Proof:***
 - ***That Christ Himself Is In Our Midst!***
 - We Also See:
- The Response Of A Forgiving Spirit!
 - In 2:9 - Paul Adds - “Whether Ye Be Obedient In All Things!”
 - When Paul Instructed The Church:
 - To Confront Sin:
 - They Obeyed! But Now:
 - As Paul Instructs Them:
 - To Forgive Sin!
 - Would They Obey?
- The Point Of Forgiveness:
 - Is To Respond To The Will Of God:
 - Even When You Have Been Offended & Hurt!
 - Will You Obey The Lord In All Things?
 - Remember Colossians 3:12-13 - “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; / Forbearing one another, and forgiving

one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye!"

- Are You "Ready To Forgive?"

- Also Because Of:

4. ***The Power Of Forgiveness!***

- We See The Power Of Forgiveness:

- In 2:10 - "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ!"

- We Need To Always Be "Ready To Forgive" Because:

- Forgiveness Settles:

- The Offense To The Church!

- Paul Wrote - "To Whom Ye Forgive Any Thing, I Forgive Also!"

- Even Though Paul Was An Apostle, And May Have Been Personally Offended, He Extended The Power Of Forgiveness To Them!

- What They Forgave - He Would Forgive - How They Handled The Matter - He Would Accept - And It Would Be Settled!

- And When We Are "Ready To Forgive" In This Way:

- Satan Will Never Be Able To Use:

- Bitterness To "Get An Advantage Of Us!"

- Forgiveness Strengthens:

- The Fellowship Of The Church!

- Paul Also Wrote - "For If I Forgave Any Thing, To Whom I Forgave It, For Your Sakes Forgave I It!"

- Paul Understood The Power Of Forgiveness!

- When You Maintain A Bitter Spirit:

- Toward Those Who Have Sinned Against You:

- It Affects The Church!

- It Is Unprofitable!

- But - When You Maintain A Forgiving Spirit:

- It Also Affects The Church!

- It Benefits The Church!

- It Strengthens The Church!

- And When You Are "Ready To Forgive" In This Way:

- Satan Will Never Be Able To:

- Drive Any Kind Of Wedge Into The Fellowship Of The Church!

- Forgiveness Satisfies:

- The Head Of The Church:

- Jesus Christ Himself!

- At The End Of 2:10 - Paul Wrote - "For your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ!"

- Remember - Paul Sought To Live His Life:

- Always Before The "Face Of God!"

- And In The "Presence / Person Of Jesus Christ Himself!"

- Forgiveness:

- Reflects The Heart & Purpose Of Jesus!

- And That Is Why Forgiveness Pleases & Satisfies Him As Well!

- ***Forgiveness Brings Reconciliation!***

- With Christ & With Other Christians!

- This Is The Great Power Of Forgiveness!

Conclusion:

1. So - Are You "Ready To Forgive?"

- Remember In Matthew 18:21-22 - When Peter Asked Jesus:

- "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? / Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven!"

- Don't Let Satan:

- "Get An Advantage" Over You!

- Do Not Be "Ignorant Of His Devices!"

- He Will Always Use Bitterness To Divide & To Disrupt & To Devour:

- You & Keep You From Pleasing & Serving The Lord Effectively!

2. Remember The:
 - Plan Of Forgiveness:
 - To Bring Those Who Sin To Repentance!
 - Purpose Of Forgiveness:
 - To Restore Those Who Confess Their Sins Against You!
 - Point Of Forgiveness:
 - To Respond To The Will Of God In Obedience!
 - Power Of Forgiveness:
 - To Reconcile Sinners To Christ & His Church!
3. After All:
 - Isn't This What The Lord Has Done For You?
 - Psalm 86:5 - "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee!"
 - Be "Ready To Forgive" In Your Heart As Well!
 - 2:11 - "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices!"
 - Be "Ready To Forgive!"

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