

WITHOUT WERE FIGHTINGS WITHIN WERE FEARS

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1 – 16



~ Our Spiritual Safari enters its fourteenth report from this second epistle the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. The God of all comfort has consumed the first six chapters of second Corinthians; and He is going to, likewise, consume this chapter. We have become very personal in our previous several reports; and this chapter may be the most personal chapter Paul wrote. As we begin this leg of our expedition, we consider “*these promises*” in verse one – and we learned what those promises were in our previous report. If you have not read that last report, I suggest you go back and do so now. “*These promises*” refer to the last two verses from the last chapter; where Paul tells the Corinthians, “.... *wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*” ~

¹ Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

~ This is not a threat to ‘come out or lose salvation;’ but if we don’t begin to lead a clean life, then God won’t be able to treat us like a Father should treat a son or daughter. God wants to treat us like the son we are; but if we alienate ourself by continual sin and willful disobedience, then you will end up resenting the way God treats you, friends – it’s just that simple. That doesn’t mean He isn’t your Father. You’ll always be a son or daughter – but your relationship may constantly be strained. We have the promise that God wants to treat us like a Father but, unfortunately, many of us don’t know anything about the loving relationship we could have with our Father in Heaven.

We can only have that experience of a loving relationship by “*cleansing ourselves*” – which is done only in the power of the Holy Spirit; and it

means to wash ourselves *DAILY* in the Word of God. Naturally, all sin is filthiness, but there is filthiness of the flesh and filthiness of the spirit. Fleshly sins speak of unholy lusts, unbridled appetite, drunkenness, gluttony, licentiousness, inordinate affections, laziness, and just wanting the wrong things, in general. We all have them in our life; and we know what's dirty and what's not — if we are honest with God. The world we live in today gives total respect to the sins of the flesh, as most of us are well aware. Alcohol, for example, is just wrong for the Christian — and the Word of God rebukes it.

Habakkuk 2:¹⁵ *Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness ~*

Proverbs 23:³¹ *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.* ³² *At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.* ³³ *Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things ~*

There are a whole bunch of Christians who seem to think casual alcohol use is acceptable. One popular liquor advertisement says, “.... *the mark of a mature and successful man is one who drinks responsibly.*” Well, who do they think they're kidding? Alcohol related deaths, injuries, sickness, rehabilitation, drunk driving and family problems are at epidemic proportions; yet we say “drink responsibly?” I have bad news for you – God condemns it. Most ironically, if everyone drank responsibly, the liquor companies would be out-of-business. Most people with any reasonable semblance of sense recognize that our business society is more hypocritical and absurd than ever before; and, my friends, our leaders just happen to *ALL* be drunks — or heavily medicated by powerful psycho-tropic prescription drugs — which compounds the problem to the tenth power; but I digress, sort of.

If you want to know what's wrong in society, particularly in America, this is it. It's not some big mystery. Then, these same people say, “.... *there are just some people who cannot handle their liquor.*” Well, you bet your life there are – several million of them, to be exact. If you go to the hospital for

a simple broken arm, you'll get a bill for thousands of dollars as a *DIRECT* result of the problems drugs and alcohol create in our society. That's just one example of what we're talking about when we say sins of the flesh.

Further, pornography and homosexual perversion of the most violent and twisted types imaginable permeate society. Most of it can be traced directly back to drugs and alcohol, too, by the way. This lost world teaches sexual education to kindergartners in our schools. There is no bottom to our shamefulness. God's Word condemns those things; and it is never going to change — or pass away — irrespective of how many laws we pile on top of one another — no pun intended. And if we're going to indulge in those sins, God cannot treat us as a Father should treat a son — impossible. That's what the Spirit of God is teaching you through the apostle Paul in this section of Scripture.

My teaching is not popular, friends, I know that. My style, theology, and method are rejected wholesale by the natural man; because my statements are coming from the Word of God — which is not popular when taught properly, correctly and completely. In fact, I advise everyone to stop reading right now; because we're going to take up these topics one-by-one. We'll start with gossip and vicious slander against our Christian brother and sisters. Most people won't physically and violently attack another; but they'll not hesitate to spiritually put the knife in the back of anyone with vicious lies, innuendo, and half-truths based on falsities.

Vanity is another prevalent and persistent spiritual filthiness. Some who profess to teach the Bible are more interested in their appearance than anything else — so, they spend more time looking at themselves than they do preparing a Bible study. Now, don't think I am against looking as good as we possibly can; although some of us don't have much to work with — but vanity is one sickeningly filthy sin. I'm not going to expound on pride, conceit, and haughtiness — or unbelief. The average American is so utterly *S-T-U-P-I-D*, illiterate — unlearned in the most basic of academics, that you could never hope to speak to them fruitfully concerning the Bible. They are narcissistically malignant believing they have the Bible mastered — when they haven't even opened one in years. It doesn't get much worse than that, my friends. Say, this all kind of hurts, doesn't it? Let us cleanse

ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God, shall we?

We are to follow peace and holiness with all men, without which no man shall see the Lord, as the writer to the Hebrews says. Christ is our righteousness, and He is our holiness, yes – but – my life and His perfection are far apart. God says, *“let’s close the gap of holiness today!”* This is a tremendously convicting section of Scripture ~

² Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

~ When Paul took an offering, he didn’t take it under the guise of feeding a bunch of orphans. Not only are we not to take up offerings for things like that, but we *DEFINITELY* aren’t to give to those causes – because that’s not God’s plan for offerings, friends. Those are scams that are *ALWAYS* used for something else. Some support these little *“orphanages”* that sell children on the slave market. I have bad news for you: if you support that, then *YOU* are complicit. Further, when someone gives money for a certain purpose, then that money is to be used for that purpose. Well, I just happen to know that almost *NEVER* happens. Paul corrupted no man, and he defrauded no man. Most people are literally stealing from God Himself today. And I don’t say this to condemn you; I say all of this because I love you....

³ I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.

⁴ Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

~ Paul’s first epistle to the church in Corinth was sharp and biting. Paul called them babes in Christ, he called them carnal Christians, and he called them ignorant. Well, there was gross immorality among them, and Paul condemned it in no uncertain terms. Then, the Corinthian church dealt with the problem and put it away. Titus met Paul at Philippi and told him how the man had repented; so, Paul wrote again and told them to receive that man back into the church. It seems Paul is rethinking the rebuke he gave

the church. Of course, Paul was writing in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but Paul was human. God had him write like that and God is having him write like this at this time to let you and I know how human Paul really was. Deep down, Paul was tender and loving; and you and I should be the same way. Oh, what a reality lesson this is for us. Maybe someone reading this report needs to sit down and write a letter to someone that we may have rebuked too harshly. It just might make someone exceedingly happy to receive such a letter from you....

⁵ For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.

⁶ Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

~ I feel as if Paul never expected anyone would read this letter. Perhaps we should be inclined to turn away and not read it. God used another man of God to comfort the apostle Paul. Have you ever put your arm around your preacher and let him know you're praying for him — and that he's doing a good job? Have you ever stood with the man who actually believes God and stands for the things of God? I can tell you one thing: they would appreciate that. God comforts those who are cast down; and He may be calling *YOU* to be the one through which He does the comforting....

⁷ And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

⁸ For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

⁹ Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth.

15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.

~ Repentance and the shedding of tears are not synonymous. They will likely occur simultaneously, but not necessarily – and they’re not the same thing. Real repentance is a change of mind. The only thing God asks of the lost man in the way of repentance in the Word of God is for that man to change his mind and believe in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he reminded them how they “*turned to God from idols.*” First, they turned to Christ; and *THEN* they turned from idols. Paul didn’t preach against idolatry – Paul preached the Gospel of Christ. If you’re ever going to reach the lost world, that’s how you are going to reach them, too; there is no other way.

The Thessalonians were also rank idolaters. If you tell the unsaved man to repent from their sins, then you will never have another opportunity to witness to that person. Repentance is only for believers – you can just write that down! Many people shed tears, but Christ means nothing to them. Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation; but the sorrow of the world worketh death! Most of those who shed tears usually cry many big crocodile tears, but they just keep going the same direction day after day after day. The thief weeps when he gets caught – but not because he was sorry for stealing – he weeps because he got caught. We have a lot of self-professing believers who desperately need to repent today. What wonderful lessons we have learned in this leg of our Spiritual Safari ~

