

2 Corinthians 1.12-2.4

“Why Should we Believe You?”

We Live in World where People have a Hard Time GETTING ALONG...!

The problem isn't that we disagree, it's how we disagree...strong disagreements are inevitable. Disagreement helps us innovate, improve, and find the truth. But today many disagreements are characterized by a noxious brew of contempt and disgust. Contempt is the feeling that a person or a thing is worthless or beneath consideration.

Arthur Brooks, New York Times

PAINFULLY Clear that CONTEXT of CONFLICT behind 2 Corinthians...

Apostle Paul's ENEMIES Brewed ANGRY POT of CONTEMPT & DISGUST

Place as RESPECTED FATHER been HIJACKED by Dynamic False Apostles

If Paul was for real, why was there so much suffering in his life?...why was his ministry so lackluster? Why was his preaching so dull? And why did he change his travel plans if God was actually directing his life? Moreover, what lay behind his refusal to accept payment for his services, as most preachers did? Was he really collecting money for the poor? Why didn't Paul have letters of recommendation like the others? Why didn't he regale them with stories about God's power in his ministry? Was it because there were none? Kent Hughes

ONE of FLASH Points for their FALLING Out --- Paul's VISITS & LETTERS

NOT Sure just HOW Many VISITS and LETTERS btwn Paul & Corinthians

End of what we Call 1st Corinthians (at least 2nd Letter), Paul writes...

I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost...

1 Corinthians 16.5-8



Paul writes this Letter 2nd Corinthians from EPHESUS – Capital Roman Asia
 Key cities Corinth & Ephesus // Strategic M Hdqtrs for Apostle to GENTILES
 Paul made Several Trips by LAND > via Macedonia & SEA > direct

Apparently Paul's LAST VISIT did NOT END WELL...

For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. 2 Corinthians 2.1

Then PERHAPS his Follow-Up Letter was MISUNDERSTOOD...

For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.
 2 Corinthians 2.4



If LOOKING for Ph.D. topic > Question of How Many Visits/Letters of Paul??
 No Matter > As we Step into our TEXT – Paul called for COOLING Off period
 He will STAY in Ephesus for NOW – sends THIS Letter to Explain and Exhort
 BEGINS with “Elephant in Room” – Obvious, Sensitive, Primary Question
 “Why Should we Believe You?”

1. Loving Intentions

No church FRUSTRATED Paul more than Corinth > But he Loved Them!
 Letters & Visits – All made FREE of CHARGE – Showed Fatherly HEART

1.7 Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

a. Grace 1.12 not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God

GRACE is UNCONDITIONAL, UNDESERVED Forgiveness

It is what WE have FREELY Received from the GOD we Unendingly Offend
 Paul MODELS the CHRIST he was Following > Demonstrates Grace in Corinth

VS. 8,9 – Paul tells how he ALMOST DIED as he Served as Apostle to Gentiles
 CORINTHIAN Army SHOOTS their WOUNDED!

Instead of HONORING Paul they HURT him Some MORE

1.15 Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace.

PAUL could have STERNLY Exercised his Apostolic Authority > GENTLE

He wants them to have DOUBLE BLESSING –

May mean COMING TWICE – ON his Way TO and Coming FROM Macedonia

May mean GRACE OF GIVING – chs 8 & 9 – Give their Collection for POOR

Paul received SUPPORT from HUNGRY Christians in MACEDONIA
So he could Preach FREE of CHARGE to the PROUD Corinthians

Plans get you into things, but you have to work your way out! Will Rodgers

1.23 But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth.

NO More PAINFUL VISITS or TEARFUL LETTERS Paul will Just WAIT
Like GOD is PATIENT waiting for People to REPENT – So is His Servant Paul
NOT Come so they can TAKE Time to REFLECT, REPENT, be RESTORED

b. Joy 1. 24 but we work with you for your joy

Paul was PARENT who was HURT by his SPIRITUAL KIDS

But he does NOT PUNISH in ANGER – Not Hurt because he IS HURT

Swallows his PAIN so they can be RESTORED to TRUE JOY in the LORD

2.1,2 For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained?

Paul's RELATIONSHIP with them was DEEP NOT DISTANT

REAL AFFECTION not ALOOF – CONFRONTS them because he CARES

“I MADE Up my MIND” – I Judged for Myself – Thought it BEST

Wants them to have GODLY SORROW that leads to LASTING JOY

Paul knows the JOY of the LORD WILL be their STRENGTH

Nothing kills STRENGTH like BITTERNESS and UNFORGIVENESS

2.3 for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all.

He will SURRENDER to Bitterness of Lack of Forgiveness – Not Lose His JOY

MINISTERS in LOVE and KINDNESS – Showing JOY – for them to Receive Character of Church will NOT Usually RISE HIGHER than their LEADERS

“Gladness and gravity should be woven together in the life and preaching of a pastor...God’s aim is to ravish our affections with irresistible displays of glory...when the kingdom is a treasure, submission is a pleasure...do not take precious realities lightly (hence the call for gravity)...do not load the people with the burden of obedience without providing the strength of joy to help them carry it (hence the call to gladness)”
John Piper

2. Life of Integrity

Argument about CALENDAR soon became ATTACK of his CHARACTER

a. Conscience

Paul BRACKETS his DEFENSE with the WORD BOASTING

Uses word BOAST 3 X’s More in 2 Corinthians than any of his Other Letters

Several Times WARNS AGAINST Boasting

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God...so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”
1 Corinthians 1.28-31

BOASTING: COMMON in 1st C ROMAN World as SMART Phones Today

Paul REBUKES EXCESSIVE, SELF-FOCUSED, GOD-DENYING Boasting

Corinthians likely heard Paul’s Anti-Boasting Sermon Many Times

Most of the Time in Corinthian SOCIETY – Boasting was UNGODLY Act

Roman Soldiers Boasted of their Victories with Wall Murals & Epic Tales

PHARISEES Boasted of their VIRTUES and EPIC HOLINESS

SUPER-Apostles of Corinth BOASTED of their Credentials & Experiences

NOW gets Attention as OPENS this Letter – NOW, I AM BOASTING

NOT to Make HIMSELF look GOOD > STOOPS to their Level to Save Them

1.12 For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity

NOT about his SPORTS CAR, BUT his SIMPLICITY

NOT about his SHAMEFUL BEHAVIOR but his GODLY SINCERITY

Paul has not been a financial burden in Corinth with his simple lifestyle. And he refused to Sophistic rhetoric...in both word and manner of life he was plain, without ornamentation. Ben Witherington III

NOT JUST him – WE Behaved – All his TEAM all TRUE Believers in Corinth
BOAST NOT in POSSESSIONS or AWARDS /// POVERTY & AFFLICTIONS

Hardships, Struggles, Trials, Suffering as DESPISED GOSPEL Worker

...on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses— though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me...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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12.5-9

1.12 For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience...

Paul uses LANGUAGE of the COURTROOM – Solemn OATH & Testimony

Word CONSCIENCE is used BY or ABOUT Paul 23 X's in NT

And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day.” Acts 23.1

The Holy Spirit constantly educates our consciences by the Scriptures. He uses both the Bible and the conscience to convict us...Conscience has a habit of remembering things, and reminding us of them at crucial moments. It is God's monitor in our soul. Derek Prime

I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.

Acts 24.16

Conscience is not the Law of God, but it bears witness to the Law. It is the window that lets in the light; and if the window gets dirty because we disobey, then the light becomes dimmer and dimmer. Warren Wiersbe

b. Clear

1.13 For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand—

Paul's whole PURPOSE of Life was that People KNOW & FOLLOW TRUTH

His MOTIVES were PURE and his CONSCIENCE was CLEAR

Paul NOT a SPIN-DOCTOR – Expert in LEGALIZE >> Clear, Simple Preacher

Far from forcing the Corinthians to 'read between the lines' – as they complained they had to do – Paul's intent was to write only what they could easily read and understand...One of the functions of the letter carrier was to read the letter and answer any questions that the recipients might have had. With Paul's letters, however, there are no hidden meanings or obscurities that require the on-the-spot explanations of a carrier. What he says he means. Linda L. Belleville

We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. 2 Corinthians 4.2

Watch Out for Bible Teaches who OBSCURE Word, Look for Hidden Meanings

Expositor's just TAKE OUT and DECLARE what is Plainly Written in WORD

Not to Use Word to ADVANCE our OWN IDEAS or PERSONAL Advantage

c. Consistent

1. 17 Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time?

PLANS Deliberate Course – SINCERE Intention – Having Every INTENTION

Paul was NOT an IMPULSIVE LIGHTWEIGHT --- You could COUNT On him
Knew COMMAND of Our MASTER and did his BEST to OBEY

Jesus: “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”
Matthew 5.37

But even as Paul MADE a PROMISE – He know ONLY God could KEEP IT

I hope to spend some time with you, *if the Lord permits.* 1 Corinthians 16.7

GEORGE FOX – English, Evangelical QUAKER in 1600’s

Widely RESPECTED – Humble, Honest, Direct, Spoke UNVARNISHED Truth

Quakers moved to NEW ENGLAND – Pennsylvania – HONEST Businessmen

SO Honest became WEALTHY - People TRUSTED doing Business w/ them

It is essential that Christian ministers...be clear in their own minds about the proper priorities in ministry...making clear his identity to the congregation as a person under authority...ready in any given situation to do what through God’s word, circumstance, conscience, or godly counsel the Holy Spirit is leading toward...Paul’s example suggests that one must learn when to follow a plan and when to depart from it. This wisdom comes partly through experience, partly through the Word and Spirit’s guidance, and partly from knowing ahead of time what the priorities are in one’s ministry.
Ben Witherington III

d. Confident

1.14 just as you did partially understand us—

Paul sees GLIMPSE of God’s Work in Them – He BEGAN Good Work in them

Jesus will give them 2nd Touch – So they can One Day See all things Clearly

1. 24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

This is always a settled principle – that pastors have no special lordship over men’s consciences because they are ministers and helpers and not lords.

John Calvin

Paul was NOT Trying to BULLY Them to BELIEVE Him

Job of MINISTER Not make People Believe what THEY Believe, Follow Them

Paul PREACHES Christ – So they can MEET HIM – Submit to Him as LORD

Yearns for their MATURITY in Christ NOT their IMITATION of him

Paul DISCIPLINES them to DRIVE them to Christ and DEPEND on Him Alone

“The best way for the pastor to make the members feel like prisoners is to act like their warden.”
Jack Miller

2.3 And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice

1.16 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea.

1.14 that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

Paul TRUSTS God will VINDICATE him & Reveal TRUTH to Corinthians

One Day – By God’s Grace – there will be MUTUAL BOASTING

His CONSCIENCE is CONVINCED – His CHARACTER will be CLEARED

If they can BOAST in Paul as a GENUINE APOSTLE

Paul will BOAST in THEM as GENUINE BELIEVERS

Nothing can be more humbling and leveling than the expectation of that day when before the sole and supreme glory of Christ all the glory of man will sink into judgment and oblivion. There will be no place for deception, disunity, and self-esteem in that day.
Philip Hughes

“I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit”
Romans 9.1

3. Larger Issue

They MIGHT have thought this was LITTLE Complaint about Paul's TRAVEL
Paul > Much LARGER Issue > Testimony of Servant > Reflects Truth of Master

1.18,19 As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No.
For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and
Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes.

For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves
as your servants for Jesus' sake. 2 Corinthians 4.5

Not Important what they think ABOUT Paul

ETERNALLY Important what they think about PAUL'S LORD – Jesus Christ
CHURCH is God's EMBASSY and WE ALL are His AMBASSADORS

Paul now makes CLEAR Reference to Each Member of TRINITY

GRUMBLING in Church ROBS GLORY from Father, Son, and Spirit

What is at stake is not Paul's personal reputation as an apostle, but the work and
witness of God in the world. Scott Hafemann

a. Promises of the Father

1. 20 For all the promises of God > from GENESIS to REVELATION

From ETERNITY to ETERNITY

1. 21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the
Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his
own will he brought us forth by the word of truth James 1.17,18

b. Procurement of the Son

1. 20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through
him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

Jesus Christ reveals the promises, fulfills the promises, and enables us to claim the promises.
Warren Wiersbe

"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."
John 6.38

Jesus is INCARNATION of TRUTH and FAITHFULNESS > FULL TRUST
As Corinthians Doubt his SERVANT they are Doubting their ONLY SAVIOR
Paul was their MATCH-MAKER to meet their LORD and BRIDEGROOM

"For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me...I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it"
John 17.8,26

c. Provided by the Spirit

Paul's OPPONENTS said if he CHANGES his Plans does NOT have SPIRIT
"I have the Spirit – all Praise to God – you make sure your Established in Him"

1.21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has...

1) 1.21 anointed us

Like Prophets, Priests, Kings – ALL New Covenant believers Anointed by Spirit

you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge...the anointing that you received from him abides in you
1 John 2.20,27

Not because of their GOODNESS, but all because of GOD'S GRACE

They FULLY BELONG to God – FILLED and CONSECRATED by Spirit

2) 1.22 put his seal on us

God – like Ancient King – Puts SEAL of AUTHORITY in Wax of our Lives
SEAL of King – AUTHENTIC – PROTECTED – Warning against Tampering

OWNERS Branded their ANIMALS and SLAVES with Mark of Ownership
 Roman SOLDIERS wore BADGES to Designate their REGIMENT
 Having HOLY SPIRIT marks you as BELONGING to GOD ALONE

when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit Ephesians 1.13

Like PLASTIC WRAP around your LUGGAGE when you Board the PLANE
 All TREASURES of Gospel-Grace SECURE NOW and Until FINAL Arrival

3) 1.22 given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it Ephesians 1.13,14

FIRST Big Payment on HOUSE is TOKEN that One day FINAL Payment Made
 GOD gives us HOLY SPIRIT from Heaven > One day Take us TO Heaven
 RISEN Jesus has Ascended > Spirit of RISEN JESUS has Come to us NOW

Paul moves from TRAVEL PLANS to the CENTER of the Gospel

All things – Even Eating and Drinking – Done Now for the GLORY of God

Paul declares I have always had Yes as my answer to you. It may come out in different ways, but I have been completely consistent. He has lived, prayed, and planned on the basis of the gospel itself; and the gospel is all about God saying Yes to people through gospel of his Son, the Messiah. Tom Wright

There is a TRIPLE YES in the GOSPEL

First – Yes to all Promises of Scripture – 1000 yrs of God's Promises Declared
 Saul the Pharisee AND Paul the Apostle built LIFE on Truth of God's Promises
 Study TODAY in Joshua Training – All the Promises are from GOD

Second – Your Yes and My Yes --- to God --- Yes Lord, AMEN, So Be It
 I Believe – I Bow Down --- I Repent, Receive, and Rejoice
 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit --- Yes, Yes, Yes

Third – God’s Yes to YOU! Welcome Home my Daughter! Good Job my Son!

New Birth – New Creation – Heavenly Citizenship and Home

Anointed – Sealed – Guaranteed > Nothing can Separate us from Love of Christ

Close with Prayer from Apostle (small a) to IRELAND > St. Patrick....

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,

Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

Christ on my right, Christ on my left,

Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise,

Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,

Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,

Christ in every eye that sees me,

Christ in every ear that hears me.

I arise today

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,

(Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

Through confession of the oneness,

Of the Creator of Creation.

Patrick of Ireland, 5th Century

1 Corinthians 1.¹²For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. ¹³For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand— ¹⁴just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you. ¹⁵Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace. ¹⁶I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. ¹⁷Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time? ¹⁸As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. ¹⁹For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. ²⁰For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. ²¹And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²²and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. ²³But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. ²⁴Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith. 2.¹For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. ²For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? ³And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. ⁴For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.