

1st and 2nd Corinthians

Introduction

The apostle Paul started the church in Corinth during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-7). The large church in Corinth was made up of mostly lower income Gentile believers who were extremely gifted in spiritual things. However, the Corinthians were greatly tempted by the wickedness in their city. The city of Corinth was a wealthy seaport city known for luxury and immorality, and was regarded as the "sin center" of the Roman Empire.

Paul writes these letters back to the church he had started. The primary theme of 1 Corinthians is correction – addressing specific local church problems. The letter was so stern that Paul cried as he wrote it (2 Cor. 2:4). Because of his concern for how the Corinthians had received this first letter, Paul sent Titus to check on the church. Titus brought back good news that things were much better in the Corinth church and that his first letter had produced the desired changes. It was this joy that prompted Paul to write 2 Corinthians – the primary theme of which is comfort and encouragement.

Structure and Outline:

1st Corinthians – A Letter of Correction for the Church

- **The Truth about The Cross (Chapters 1-2)**
- **The Truth about The Church (Chapters 3-5)**
- **The Truth about Companions (6-7)**
- **The Truth about our Commission (8-14)**
- **The Truth about the Coming of Jesus (15)**

2nd Corinthians – A Letter of Comfort for the Church

The Comfort of God (Chapters 1-7)

The Concern for Others (Chapters 8-9)

The Conclusion of Paul's Ministry (Chapters 10-13)

The Message of 1st Corinthians

I. The Truth about the Cross (1-2)

Paul is writing to a group of believers that had moved on from the cross to bigger and better things in their Christian life, and as a result had gotten far away from God. Out of his love, Paul writes to remind them that the cross is the only hope they have for true peace, hope, and joy in this world. The Key Verse is 1 Cor. 1:18 – *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*

II. The Truth about the Church (3-5)

- Divisions are Ungodly – 3:3-4 - 3:11 is the key verse
- Imitate my Life and you will be imitating Christ (4:16) – Wow! Can we say this?
- Immorality Must be Addressed (5:7)

III. The Truth about Companions (6-7)

- Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit – 6:18-20
- Marriage is life long commitment (7:10-16)

IV. The Truth about our Commission (8-14)

Paul addresses exactly what we have been called to do and the fact that our spiritual gifts are just that – a GIFT from God

- Called to Witness – 8-10 – Key Verse - 10:31
- Called to Remember – 11 – 11:23-34 is Lords' Supper
- Called to Serve – 12-14 – Chapter 13 is famous chapter on love

V. The Truth about the Coming of Christ (15)

Paul writes this part of the letter because some are saying that there is no such thing as resurrection. 1 Cor. 15:50-58 is a famous passage about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Personal Application:

- Is the Cross the center of your life?
- Are you at odds with a fellow brother or sister in Christ?
- Are you treating your body as the temple of the very presence of God?
- Are you doing what Christ commanded you to do in life?
- Are you ready for the second coming of Jesus Christ?

The Message of 2nd Corinthians

I. The Comfort of God (1-7)

- **Comfort in Suffering (1)**
- **Comfort in Forgiveness (2)**
- **Comfort in the New Covenant (3-4)** - Key verse is 4:7-17
- **Comfort in Death (5)**
- **Comfort in Trials (6-7)**
 - Paul lists 18 trying experiences of his ministry and then we see the comfort of God in the heart of Paul in 7:4,6,7,13

II. The Concern for Others (8-9)

- We give bountifully (9:6)
- We give cheerfully (9:7)
- We give proportionately (9:12-14)

III. The Conclusion about Paul's Ministry (10-13)

- Paul and Strongholds (10) – Key verses 4-6
- Paul and Suffering (11) – Key Verses 22-33
- Paul and Sufficiency (12) - Key verses 7-10

Personal Application:

- Whatever you are going through tonight, you can find comfort in our God!
- Would God say that you are a cheerful giver?
- Where do you need a touch from Christ tonight – Over a spiritual stronghold, over an area of suffering. Let 2 Cor. 12:9 feed your soul!!