

**Negotiating Our Relationships With One Another
When Sin Enters**
2 Cor. 2:1-11

Introduction:

1. Sin has a destructive effect.
 - a. The brother or sister who is caught up in sin destroys himself/herself.
 - b. Their relationship with God is broken and death results.
 - c. And it should bring hurt and sorrow to the faithful.
2. How are the faithful supposed to respond? What can they do to bring restoration and healing to the circumstance?
3. Sometimes what we do only adds more destructive impact to the sin.
4. How does the Lord want us to negotiate our relationship with one another when sin enters the picture?

Discussion:

- I. The people of God should make us rejoice, but sometimes we make one another sorrowful (2 Cor. 2:1-5).
 - A. It is a time of rejoicing when people begin serving the Lord (1 Thess. 1:6-10).
 - B. The Philippians made Paul rejoice by reason of their participation with him in the gospel.
 1. Like the Thessalonians they were partakers of grace with Paul (Phil. 1:3-8).
 2. They participated with him in financing his preaching (Phil. 4:15-16).
 - C. Paul joyously gave thanks for the Christians at Colossae having heard of their faith, growth and steadfastness (Col. 1:3-12).
 - D. These Corinthians had made Paul sorrowful. He speaks of writing to them with affliction and anguish of heart and many tears (2 Cor. 2:4).
 1. The Epistle of 1 Corinthians identifies many reasons why. Paul was grieving over their behavior. It was not what it was supposed to be.
 2. One reason was they had not appropriately responded to one in their midst who had his father's wife. Adultery? Yes. But incest too! Paul says, "This kind of immorality does not even exist among the Gentiles."
 - E. Any sin should make us sorrowful.
 1. Our personal sin should make us sorrowful. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4).
 2. Other people's sin should make us sorrowful, because of the love that we have for them (2 Cor. 2:4d). Sin is destructive. We should grieve when we see sin destroying our fellowman.
 3. The Corinthians had not mourned but had been arrogant (1 Cor. 5:2).
 4. There are serious problems when sin does not make us sorrowful.
 - a. You have been sorrowful because of your own sin.
 - b. You have been sorrowful when you saw someone else sinning.
 - c. Let us behave in ways that make the people of God rejoice!

II. The punishment was sufficient (2 Cor. 2:6).

- A. There is a legitimate place for punishment.
 - 1. Not retaliation.
 - 2. Not angry hostility.
 - 3. Not so we can clear our conscience. Sometimes people feel guilty for not doing what they think they should when someone has sinned. Then after years they think they can now come back and discipline people who are now perhaps no longer even members of the congregation. They send out letters saying they are going to withhold fellowship, when there has been none for a long period of time. Angry feelings generally result.
 - 4. The punishment spoken of here in this text is a manifestation of love. 2 Cor. 2:8 speaks of reaffirming your love. Heb. 12:6 speaks of the Lord disciplining those whom He loves. And Matt. 18:15 speaks of “winning your brother.”
- B. Often discipline is avoided because we have problems communicating it with love.
 - 1. We respond in anger, because we are sorrowful.
 - 2. Anger is a secondary emotion and springs from our hurt. Yes, we are hurt by other people’s sin.
 - 3. Love is the POWER of discipline. Without love being clearly communicated discipline results in anger in the one being disciplined. With love communicated a powerful force works to change behavior. Illustration where a man made sexual advances toward two young women in the congregation. When the situation was addressed the man said, “Well, I will just stop coming to worship.” “That’s not what we want. We love you and want you to be a part of this congregation, but this behavior must stop.” He repented, publically confessed and apologized to the two women.
 - 4. The more love there is and the more effectively it is communicated the more effective the discipline.
- C. “But,” someone objects, “Doesn’t Matt. 18 say, ‘Let him be to you as a Gentile or tax-collector?’” That means to regard him as an unbeliever not to treat him as Pharisees treated Gentiles and tax-collectors. 2 Thess. 3:15 while reminding us to not associate with one who does not obey the instruction, says, “Do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

III. Forgive, comfort and reaffirm your love for him (2 Cor. 2:7-11).

- A. I have seen parents discipline their child and the child come for reaffirming love and the parent refuses and sends the child away. This is not healthy. It communicates, “I will love you only if you do what I want.”
 - 1. I like the way Cohen prayed. After thanking God for a variety of things he said, “And thank you for loving me even when I am bad.”
 - 2. It is not healthy to withhold love from the penitent.
 - 3. It crushes the spirit. It overwhelms with excessive sorrow (v. 7).
- B. Thus, we are to forgive, comfort and reaffirm!
 - 1. It gives hope.

2. It communicates to the one who has sinned we (you and I) can go on from here.
 3. Even though we have failed we can make repairs.
- C. That is what the Lord has communicated to us.
1. He forgives, comforts and reaffirms His love for us.
 2. He initiated it while we were ungodly, enemies and sinners (Rom. 5:6ff).
 3. He sacrificed His son. Rom. 5:8 says, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
 4. And after we become Christians when we sin, as is the case of the Corinthians, He appeals to us to repent and receive His forgiveness.
 5. This is what we are to manifest to others.
- D. And we are to do it so that "no advantage be taken of us by Satan."
1. Satan's objective is to destroy.
 2. The brother who repents and is not reaffirmed may be overwhelmed with excessive sorrow and then be destroyed.
 3. Our objective is to bring healing, not to give Satan an advantage to destroy.

Conclusion:

1. How does the Lord want us to negotiate our relationships with one another when sin enters?
2. We ought to try to make each other rejoice by doing right, but when we fail, discipline founded upon love is appropriate.
3. Repentance is appropriate.
4. Forgiveness, comfort and reaffirmation of love brings hope and healing.