

Glory in the Face of People Problems

NOTES:

1. This week's text comes **AFTER** next week's text!

THIS WEEK'S TEXT: 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11 "Glory in the Face of People Problems"
NEXT WEEK'S TEXT: 2 Corinthians 1:12-22 "Glory in the Face of Changing Circumstances"

Someone should say, "That's wonky!" Someone should say, "I never saw that coming!" (Our newly appointed Apprentice Pastor Nate Wright's first "Glory in the Face" sermon)

What we have missed then is that Paul had changed his plan about visiting Corinth --- and certain people there, determined to ruin Paul's reputation, grabbed hold of the fact that he didn't do what he said he would do → in other words, Paul had a Corinthians people problem.

2. "2 Corinthians" is **NOT** Paul's second letter to the Corinthians!

PAUL'S LETTERS TO CORINTHIANS:

1 Corinthians 5:9 mentions a previous letter

→ **1 Corinthians** is (at least) the 2nd letter

2 Corinthians 2:9 mentions another previous letter

→ **2 Corinthians** is (at least) the 4th letter

WHY NOTICE? The relationship was more complicated than it appeared!

And the complication was caused by the people problems inside the church. The people problems outside the church are one thing, and to be expected. Inside people problems are something else again! To illustrate, let's dive into the middle of the text! Look for the emphasis on pain!

2 Corinthians 2:1-3 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?** And 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. **Pain!** This letter illustrates the pain sometimes involved in dealing with people. People are sometimes a pain! What we need to see that is this sobering thought is *directly* linked to last week's study.

LAST WEEK'S NOTES:

1. When God's people suffer, it is by God's design.

2. One of God's designs in his people's suffering is to intensify their reliance on him.

3. Another of God's designs in his people's sufferings is to increase their usefulness.

What we need to see today is that experiencing "people problems" is an important part of the design of God because of what they require of us.

ACTIONS: How to "see the face of Christ" in the face of people problems. (and problem people!)

- a) "**FAITH**" → Trust God as Joseph did.

2 Corinthians 1:23,24 But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your **faith**, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your **faith**.

Genesis 50:20 [Joseph to his primary problem people] "... you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" !

It is a matter of faith to trust God in regard to his control over the hearts --- and behaviours -- of all humanity!

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.

We must trust God about this. Our "people problems" are a part of our being conformed to the image of Christ. The people with whom we are associated / burdened / annoyed and by whom we are troubled / hurt / devastated / frightened are a part of the design of God: his wonderful plan for our lives. [In fact, all the people in our lives!]

LAST WEEK'S NOTES:

1. ... by God's design.

2. ... to intensify our reliance on him.

3. ... to increase our usefulness.

b) "LOVE" → Obey God as Jesus did!

Hebrews 5:7,8 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. Jesus "learned obedience through what he suffered"!

2 Corinthians 2:4-10 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. Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to **forgive and comfort him**, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to **reaffirm your love** for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are **obedient** in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, **what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake** in the presence of Christ...

Hebrews 12:3,4 A life of following Christ is like a marathon: **painful!** Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

c) "KNOWLEDGE" → Understand your enemy as Paul did

2 Corinthians 2:10,11 Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs. God has designs and the devil has his. But his are subject to God's approval...

1 Peter 5:8-10 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.