

Paul's Fourth Letter to the Corinthians – Part 2 (Fall 54)

2 Corinthians 2:14–7:16

The Fragrance of Paul's Ministry

2:14 But thanks *be* to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ, and who reveals the fragrance of the knowledge of him through us in every place.

15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

16 to those on the one hand an odor from death to death, *and* to those on the other hand a fragrance from life to life. And who *is* qualified for these *things*?

17 For we are not like the majority who peddle the word of God, but as from pure motives—but as from God—we speak before God in Christ.

The Corinthians are Paul's Letter

3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or *do we*, like some, need letters of recommendation to you or from you?

2 You are our letter, inscribed on our hearts, known and read by all people,

3 revealing that you are a letter of Christ, delivered by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets but on tablets of human hearts. [cf. [Exod 24:12](#)]

Paul as Minister of the New Covenant

4 Now we possess such confidence through Christ toward God.

5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as from ourselves, but our adequacy *is* from God,

6 who also makes us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 But if the ministry of death in letters carved on stone came with glory, so that the sons of Israel were not able to look intently into the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, which was transitory,

8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be even more with glory?

9 For if *there was* glory in the ministry of condemnation, by much more will the ministry of righteousness overflow with glory.

10 For indeed what had been glorified has not been glorified in this case, on account of the glory that surpasses *it*.

11 For if what was transitory *came* with glory, by much more what remains *is* with glory.

12 Therefore, *because we* have such a hope, we use much boldness,

13 and not as Moses used to place a veil over his face, in order that the sons of Israel would not stare at the end of what was transitory. [cf. [Exod 34:29–30](#)]

14 But their minds were hardened. For until this very day, the same veil remains upon the reading of the old covenant, not being uncovered, because it is done away with in Christ.

15 But until today, whenever Moses is read aloud, a veil lies upon their heart,

16 but whenever one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. [cf. [Exod 34:34](#)]

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, *there is* freedom.

18 And we all, with unveiled face, reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory into glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Paul's Ministry of Proclaiming Christ Not Himself

4:1 Because of this, *since we* have this ministry, just as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart,

2 but we have renounced shameful hidden things, not behaving with craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but with the open proclamation of the truth commending ourselves to every person's conscience before God.

3 But if indeed our gospel is veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing,

4 among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they would not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

5 For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Christ Jesus *as* Lord, and ourselves *as* your slaves for the sake of Jesus.

6 For God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," [[Gen 1:3](#)] *is the one* who has shined in our hearts for the enlightenment of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

List of Afflictions—Paul's Suffering Brings Glory to God

7 But we have this treasure in earthenware jars, in order that the extraordinary degree of the power may be from God and not from us.

8 We are afflicted in every *way*, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;

9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed;

10 always carrying around the death of Jesus in our body, in order that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

11 For we who are alive *are* continually being handed over to death because of Jesus, in order that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal flesh.

12 So then, death is at work in us, but life in you.

13 But *because we* have the same spirit of faith in accordance with *what is* written, “I believed, therefore I spoke,” [[Ps 116:10](#)] we also believe, therefore we also speak,

14 *because we* know that the one who raised Jesus will also raise us together with Jesus and present *us* together with you.

15 For all *these things* are for your sake, in order that the grace that is increasing through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

The Hope of the Resurrection

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but even if our outer person is being destroyed, yet our inner *person* is being renewed day after day.

17 For our momentary light affliction is producing in us an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure and proportion,

18 *because we* are not looking at what is seen, but what is not seen. For what is seen *is* temporary, but what is not seen *is* eternal.

5:1 For we know that if our earthly house, the tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made by hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For indeed, in this *house* we groan, *because we* desire to put on our dwelling from heaven,

3 if indeed, even *after we* have taken *it* off, we will not be found naked.

4 For indeed we who are in this tent groan, being burdened for this reason, that we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

5 Now the one who has prepared us for this very *thing is* God, who has given us the down payment, the Spirit.

6 Therefore, *although we are* always confident and know that *while we* are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—

7 for we live by faith, not by sight—

8 so we are confident and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

9 Therefore indeed we have as our ambition, whether at home *in the body* or absent *from the body*, to be acceptable to him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive back the *things* through the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Ambassadors for Christ

11 Therefore, *because we* know the fear of the Lord, we are attempting to persuade people, but we are revealed to God, and I hope to be revealed in your consciences.

12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to boast about us, in order that you may have *an answer* for those who boast in appearance and not in heart.

13 For if we are out of our senses, *it is* for God; if we are of sound mind, *it is* for you.

14 For the love of Christ controls us, *because we* have concluded this: that one died for all; as a result all died.

15 And he died for all, in order that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.

16 So then, from now on we know no one from a human point of view, if indeed we have known Christ from a human point of view, but now we know *him this way* no longer.

17 Therefore if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; the old *things* have passed away; behold, new *things* have come.

18 And all these *things are* from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and who has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

20 Therefore we are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as *if* God were imploring *you* through us. We beg *you* on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

21 He made the one who did not know sin *to be* sin on our behalf, in order that we could become the righteousness of God in him.

Paul's Commendable Ministry

6:1 Now *because we* are fellow workers, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For he says, “At the acceptable time I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” Behold, now *is* the acceptable time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation! [[Isa 49:8](#)]

3 *We are* giving no one an occasion for taking offense in anything, in order that our ministry will not have fault found *with it*,

4 but commending ourselves as servants of God in every *way*, in much endurance, in afflictions, in distresses, in difficulties,

5 in beatings, in prisons, in disturbances, in troubles, in sleepless nights, in going hungry,

6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love without hypocrisy,

7 in the word of truth, in the power of God, with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and left hand,

8 through glory and dishonor, through slander and good repute, *regarded* as deceivers and *yet* truthful,

9 as unknown and *yet* known completely, as dying, and behold, we go on living, as disciplined, and *yet* not put to death,

10 as grieving, but always rejoicing, as poor, but making many rich, as having nothing, and possessing everything.

11 We have spoken freely and openly to you, Corinthians; our heart is open wide.
12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your affections.
13 Now the same *way in* exchange (I am speaking as to children), you open wide *your hearts* also.
14 Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers, for what participation *is there between* righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship *does light have* with darkness?
15 And what agreement *does Christ have* with Beliar? Or what share *does a believer have* with an unbeliever?
16 And what agreement *does the temple of God have* with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said, “I will live in them and will walk about *among them*, and I will be their God and they will be my people.” [[Lev 26:11–12](#)]
17 Therefore “come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord, “and do not touch what is unclean, [[Isa 52:11](#)] and I will welcome you, [[Ezek 20:41](#)]
18 and I will be a father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to me,” says the all-powerful Lord. [[2 Sam 7:14](#); [Isa 43:6](#)]
7:1 Therefore *since we* have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of body and spirit, accomplishing holiness in the fear of God.
2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have ruined no one, we have defrauded no one.

Titus’ Good Report—Godly Sorrow Brings Repentance

3 I do not say *this* to condemn you, because I have already said that you are in our hearts, so that we die together and we live together.
4 Great *is* my confidence toward you; great *is* my boasting on your behalf; I am filled with encouragement; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.
5 For even *when* we arrived in Macedonia, our body had no rest, but we were afflicted in every *way*—quarrels outside, fears within.
6 But God, who comforts the humble, comforted us by the coming of Titus,
7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort *with* which he was comforted among you, *because he* reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.
8 For if indeed I grieved you by my letter, I do not regret *it*. Even if I did regret *it* (I see that that letter grieved you, even though for a short time),
9 now I rejoice, not that you were grieved, but that you were grieved to repentance. For you were grieved according to *the will of* God, so that you suffered loss in no way through us.
10 For grief according to *the will of* God brings about a repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted, but worldly grief brings about death.
11 For behold how much diligence this very *thing*, being grieved according to *the will of* God, has brought about in you: what defense *of yourselves*, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! In everything you have demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in this matter.
12 Consequently, even if I wrote to you, it was not because of the one who did wrong or because of the one who had been wronged, but in order that your diligence on our behalf might be revealed to you before God.
13 Because of this we have been encouraged, and in addition to our encouragement, we rejoiced much more over the joy of Titus, because his spirit had been refreshed by all of you.
14 For if I have boasted anything to him about you, I have not been put to shame, but as I have spoken everything to you in truth, thus also our boasting to Titus has proven to be true.
15 And his affection for you is all the more *when he* remembers the obedience of all of you as you welcomed him with fear and trembling.
16 I rejoice, because in everything I am completely confident in you.

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