

# (Through the Bible) 2 Corinthians 1-2

by Chuck Smith

---

*Chuck Smith explores the themes of suffering, comfort, and divine calling in Paul's letters to the Corinthian church.*

**Duration:** 1:19:19

**Topics:** "Gods Love", "Spiritual Renewal"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the experience of reaching a point of despair and defeat in life. He emphasizes that this is often the place where God's power can work in our lives and bring about a new beginning. The speaker uses the example of the apostle Paul, who faced great suffering and despair but ultimately turned to God for strength. The sermon also highlights the importance of understanding God's love and compassion towards us, even in times of discipline or correction.

---

## Transcript

Tonight, let's turn to 2nd Corinthians chapter 1. The church of Corinth had been a divided church. There was a lot of carnality, a lot of problems in their doctrines. That prompted Paul's first epistle, which is a rather stern epistle, and was a corrective epistle, seeking to correct a lot of the doctrinal errors that did exist, seeking to bring them from their carnality into a real spiritual walk.

A mark of their carnality, one of the marks of their carnality, was the party spirit that existed. For some were saying, I'm Baptist, and others were saying, I'm Presbyterian, and others were saying, I'm Nazarene. Or they were actually saying, I'm of Paulus, I'm of Cephas, I'm of Paul, I'm of Christ.

And these little party spirits dividing the body of Christ. And so Paul wrote to rebuke this party spirit. He wrote to correct their carnality, their doctrinal errors.

But the effect of his first epistle was sort of a polarizing of the people. And there were those who did repent and were corrected. They really came along after receiving Paul's epistle.

But there were others that turned more firmly against Paul. And it seemed to be those who were the Judaizers, or perhaps those who said we are of Christ, and were teaching basically from the Sermon on the Mount, and had not really accepted the grace of God that Paul shared that has come to us through Jesus Christ. They began to speak disparagingly of Paul.

Began to challenge his claim of apostleship, and thus speaking to them with authority. And it would seem that Timothy probably delivered the first epistle, and brought back to Paul the initial reaction toward the epistle. Titus had stayed there for a while, and was to meet Paul in Troas, and to give Paul a full report on the Corinthian church.

When Paul got to Troas, Titus had not shown up. And God opened for Paul an effectual door of ministry in Troas. However, he was so upset in his spirit about the possible offense that the Corinthians might have for him, rather than staying in Troas and ministering in that effectual door, he journeyed on over to Macedonia where Titus did meet him, and gave to him news of the church in Corinth, which encouraged Paul.

But he also heard of this faction that had set themselves against Paul, were challenging his apostleship. And so Paul learned from Titus now the condition of the church in Corinth. Timothy had been with Paul when Paul first ministered in Corinth.

And so Paul joins Timothy with him in his salutation to the Corinthian church. In verse 1, notice Paul first of all asserts, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God. There were those who were challenging his apostleship, saying that he, you know, just took that title on himself.

But here he lays claim to the fact that he is an apostle by the will of God. Now when Paul was writing his first epistle to the Corinthians, in chapter 12 he said, Are all apostles? Are all evangelists? Do all work miracles? And the answer is obviously no, because it's a rhetorical type question. So Paul, an apostle by the will of God.

However, God hasn't called all to be apostles. Now the question is, what has God called you to be? If I were writing to the church, I would have to write Chuck, a pastor teacher by the will of God. I couldn't really write Chuck, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, for that isn't my calling in the body.

God has called me as a pastor teacher. But, there are others who could write Frank, a mechanic by the will of God. John, a fisherman by the will of God.

Mike, a car salesman by the will of God. For God has called men into all types of occupations. The important thing is that I am what I am by the will of God.

That I am doing what God has willed for me to do. And it's marvelous when you can say concerning your life, I am walking according to the will and the plan of God for me. That whatever it is I am, I am by the will of God.

So Paul, an apostle by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother, because Timothy was teaching them and ministering to them when Paul first visited the Corinthian church, he joins Timothy together in his greeting. Timothy, our brother, unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, and then he includes all of the area around Corinth, the area of Achaia. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

We recognize this as a typical Pauline salutation. He begins many of his epistles with this very similar salutation. Grace to you, which is of course the typical Greek greeting of one another.

And peace, which was the typical Jewish greeting. Shalom. Keres, the Greeks would greet.

And shalom, the Hebrews would greet. These beautiful Siamese twins of the New Testament, coupled together. From God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, I would like to point out that the Lord Jesus Christ is not His name. Jesus is His name. Lord is His title that signifies relationship.

And too many times people think of it as first, middle, and last name. The Lord Jesus Christ. But Lord is a title.

And it's an important title. Which signifies my relationship to Him. Which signifies that I am a servant.

He is my master. And it is necessary for me to confess this to be saved. For if thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord.

Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. So the Lord signifies the relationship. Christ is again a mission.

The anointed one, the Mashiach. And it speaks of the fact that He is the fulfillment of God's promised salvation. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. And again, this is so typical of Paul. Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ and heavenly places. How he begins his Ephesian epistle is quite similar to this. First of all, the greeting to the people, the grace and peace to them.

The acknowledgement of His mission as being what He was by the will of God, an apostle. And then the thanksgiving to God. Praise be unto God.

The word blessed is actually praise be unto God. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who is the Father of mercies and the God of comfort.

Who comforted us in all our tribulation. That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble. By the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounded by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation. Which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer.

Or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. So Paul here is speaking of the afflictions that he had experienced. The sufferings that he had experienced and the tribulation that he had experienced.

We have difficulty in our minds wondering why God would allow us to experience suffering. Why God would allow us to go through tribulation. Why God would allow us to be afflicted.

Because we believe that He is a God of love and we know that He controls the circumstances. That surround our lives and that come into our lives. And it is difficult for us to understand why God would allow me to suffer.

If He loves me so much. Why God would allow me to be afflicted. Now Paul declares that he experienced these things in order that in them he might also experience the comfort of God so that he would be able to comfort others with the same comfort that he had received.

So it was for their sakes as much as his own that God allowed these things to happen to him for he needed to be ministered by God in these areas so that he could minister to others in these very same areas. As I look at my own life I realize that God has allowed a lot of difficult experiences to happen to me so that I can truly understand and sympathize and minister to those who are going through the similar or the same kind of difficulties. Had I never gone through them myself I wouldn't have understanding of that person's need, where they're coming from.

But having experienced the tragic death of my father and brother, having experienced the suffering of my mother by cancer, having experienced being broke, not knowing where money was going to come from for dinner, I understand when people are going through these kind of experiences and I can minister to them with that same comfort whereby I have been comforted by the Spirit of God when I was going through these things. And so it's always good to say, I know what you feel. I've been there.

I went through it. And so Paul could say, Hey, I know the sufferings. I know the afflictions.

I know the tribulation. I've been there. And he could comfort them.

While I was there though God proved his faithfulness to me. God saw me through. God provided the strength.

God provided for me that comfort that I needed and I am able to comfort with the comfort whereby I was comforted. And so Paul said, Therefore, it was for your sakes really that I might be able to give this kind of consolation to you, the consolation that I myself received. And so if we are afflicted, it's for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same things which we also suffer.

Or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye also be of the consolation. I know that God is faithful and even as you have suffered, as I have suffered, I know that you will come forth victoriously as I came forth victoriously.

And so he is able to encourage them in the victory that they were going to experience because I was there and God brought me through in victory. And I know he'll bring you through victoriously. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia.

Now, it is felt that Paul wrote this right after that experience that he had in Ephesus, which is recorded in the 19th chapter of the book of Acts, the latter portion, where Paul was in Ephesus and many people were turning to Christ. And so Demetrius the silversmith called together all of those of his trade. And he said, fellows, do you realize that this new sect that is being preached here in Ephesus is destroying our business? We've made our livelihood selling all of these relics of the goddess Diana.

Now they are teaching that Diana isn't a goddess. Our business is suffering. Our profits are down.

If this gospel continues to spread, we could be out of business. We've got to do something. And so they grabbed a couple of the disciples who had been working with Paul who were from Macedonia.

And they drug them into the big arena there in Ephesus. And they began to sort of riot and carry on. And one of these fellows from Macedonia attempted to speak to the crowd.

And they all began for the space of two hours to chant, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! And Paul the Apostle, when he heard of it, he wanted to go in. But some of the leaders of the city who loved Paul said, don't do it. They'll tear you apart.

You know, it's a mob frenzy. And if you go in there, it's the end for you. Well, Paul, as a result, had to flee from Ephesus.

His life was in jeopardy. And so he left from there and went over to Macedonia. And it is thought that while he was then at Troas or Macedonia that he wrote this epistle, probably in Macedonia.

He could have started it in Troas and finished it in Macedonia. That he wrote this epistle right after this harrowing experience in Ephesus where his life was really threatened. In fact, he thought he had had it.

The crowd was in such a frenzy, Paul really thought that this is it. This is the end. But he was ready to go in and face them anyhow.

So I would not that you were ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia that we were pressed out of measure beyond our strength insomuch that we despaired even of life. It was just too much. It was beyond my ability to handle.

I really despaired of my life. I really felt this was the end. For we had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust ourselves but in God which raises the dead.

I believe that many times in many different areas God brings us to the end of our own resources. Emotional, physical, perhaps financial. That we get right to the end.

There's no place else to go where we actually give up and we just say, I've had it. I can't do anything else. I've had it.

Now God's brought me to that place many times where I thought this is it. This is the end. The end of my strength, the end of my abilities where I have given up and I don't give up easily.

That's one of my problems in my spiritual walk is that I keep trying until I have tried everything before I really turn it over to God. But God brings me to that place where having tried everything I now have given up. And you know I discover something.

That many times when I get to that point of just giving up that that is the point where I experience the power of God and the work of God in my life. Not until I have run out of my strength and my resources. Classic example comes to us from the Old Testament and that fellow Jacob who received his name at his birth because of an incident that took place at his birth.

He was the second of twins that were born and when his mother Rachel was expecting these twins of course they didn't have sonograms and things in that day. They couldn't get two heartbeats. They didn't know or she didn't know that she was carrying twins but all she knew it was a miserable pregnancy.

I mean it was just really bad and she said, Lord what's going on? This is horrible. And God said, there are two nations in your womb and they're different from each other. They were not identical twins.

They were fraternal twins. Two nations in your womb diverse from each other and they're fighting each other. Poor Rachel, these two brothers going at it against each other in the womb.

Wailing away. And when they were born the first brother was born all covered with hair and so they called him Harry. Esau.

And when the twin was born he was ready to continue the fight because the first thing he did is reached out and grabbed Esau's heel. And they said, look at that little rascal. He's a heel catcher.

And so he got the name Yaakov which is literally heel catcher which being translated a little more loosely would be dirty rotten thief or dirty sneaky thief which of course would be a tough name to be tagged with. You go to school and the teacher says, what is your name? And you say, dirty sneaky thief. They call roll.

And they call, dirty sneaky thief. Here. This conflict between the brothers continued through their lifetime.

Dirty sneaky thieves tricked his brother or took advantage of his brother and bought the birthright from him. And then later deceived his father and stole the blessing, the family blessing which should have gone to the elder brother. And when the older brother Esau found out that Jacob had stolen the blessing, he said, my dad's about ready to die and as soon as he's dead, I'm going to kill that rat.

I've had it with him. I'm going to kill him. And Jacob was more the tender sort, a mama's boy, whereas Esau was a man of the fields, a hunter, rugged outdoor individualist.

Going to kill him. As soon as dad's dead, I'm going to kill him. I swear I'm going to kill him.

So his mother heard the brother's threats and she said, son, you better take off. Your dad's not doing very well and your brother has vowed to kill you. So you better take off and go stay with my brother for a while over in Haran, about 800 miles away.

And so Jacob took off and he went to his mother's brother Laban who was just about as crooked as he was and he was a dirty, sneaky thief. He fell in love with one of Laban's daughters. He said, I want to marry your daughter, but I don't have any dowry to give to you.

So Laban says, well, that's fine, son. Just be my slave for seven years and that can be the dowry. You can marry her.

So he became the slave of Laban for seven years and he loved Laban's daughter so much, he loved Rachel so much that it was just like a moment's time. So the day of the marriage came. Marriage ceremony.

And of course, according to custom, the bride was veiled and all. So they went into their tent, spent the night together and the morning when the veil was removed, it wasn't Rachel at all, but her older, ugly sister Leah. And Jacob went storming out of the tent, got hold of Laban and said, What have you done? That isn't the deal that I made with you.

Sorry, son. It's just the custom. The older sister has to be married first, according to our customs.

If you want to work another seven years, then you can have the other one too. So you see, Laban was quite a match for Jacob. But in the end, Jacob won out.

After 17 years, stripping Laban of practically everything he had, he saw that things weren't going too well anymore. They weren't smiling at the table anymore when they looked at him. And he realized, I've got to get out of here.

And so he left with all of the flocks and the herds and all that he had gained from his service to Laban. And now he's on his way back home. And he comes to the border of the land.

And he fords the stream of Jabbok. Sets things up because suddenly he gets word from the scouts going ahead, Your brother Esau is coming with 200 warriors. Oh man, the last time I saw this guy, he had threatened to kill me.

And I ran because he was going to kill me. Now he's coming with 200 men. What am I going to do? I can't go back because he and Laban had drawn a line.

And Laban says, don't you cross over this line. If you do, you've had it. And Jacob says, don't you cross over to me or you've had it, you know.

And so they put a line of, you know, don't cross over. He couldn't go back, but he was afraid to go forward. Hey, Jacob was one of the most resourceful persons in the world.

Naturally. He was a resourceful guy. Always had an angle.

Could always get the best of the other person. Totally resourceful. But now he's cornered.

In the morning Esau will be coming over the hill with 200 men. He can't go back. And so he seeks to set things up and then beds down for the night.

Get a good night's rest. I'm going to need all the strength I can in the morning, but the Lord had other ideas and there wrestled with him an angel of the Lord all night long. So rather than getting a good night's rest to face a heavy day, he finds himself wrestling all night with an angel of the Lord until the day began to break and the angel had not prevailed against him.

Many people believe that the angel was none other than the Lord. I do believe this. It was Jesus Christ that wrestled with him.

He called the name of the place Peniel, for he said, I've seen God face to face. But it said the angel of the Lord touched him in the thigh and he became a cripple. Hey, what it took to get this guy to the end of himself.

Because he was so clever and resourceful, God had to really deal with him in a heavy way. He's got a line. He can't go back.

His brother's coming with 200 men. Now he's been wrestling all night. He's tired and beyond that, now the angel touches him and he becomes a cripple.

The muscle shriveled up. Painful cripple. Now at that point, he had had it.

He was finally defeated. The resourcefulness, it's all over. I've had it.

And so he began to weep and cry and he said to the angel, don't leave me without blessing me. Now according to the Scripture, if you ask for a blessing, you are acknowledging the superiority of the other

party. As the lesser is always blessed by the greater.

You've read that in Scripture. So when he is asking for a blessing, he is admitting defeat. I've had it.

I'm defeated. Please bless me. And the angel of the Lord said, what is your name? And he said, Dirty Sneaky Thief.

And he said, you won't be Dirty Sneaky Thief anymore, but you will be a man governed by God. Israel. A man of God.

He was brought to the end of himself, but he was brought to the beginning of a whole new dimension of life. What a glorious day of victory that was for Yaakov. When he was brought to the end of himself, the end of his natural cunning craftiness, and he turned his life over to God, and he became from that point a man governed by God.

So the place of defeat was actually the place of the beginning of a life of victory. As we so often discover in ourselves, the place where we give up, where we are forced to give up, where we despair ourselves of ever coming out of it. This is it.

I've had it. This is the end. And I just give up.

That is the place where God then has the opportunities of working. It's not a Scripture, it's a poem, but it has so much truth in it, it could be a Scripture, and that is man's extremities are God's opportunities. When I come to the extremity of my own self, and I can't go any further, that is the place that God has the opportunity to work in my life.

And I find that God often brings me to that place in order that He might work. Now, because of my nature, God often has to bring me to that place before He can work, because He knows that I am basically a pretty self-confident person, feel that I can handle a situation. And if He let me just go ahead and handle it, then I would say, well, I face that, but I just set myself and gritted my teeth and said, I'm going to make it, you know, and I went through.

And God knows I'm that kind of a person. I'll try and go through. And so God lets me try and try and try until I'm beat, until I come to the end of myself.

And I say, God, I can't go through. I've had it. And then God opens the door.

And I say, oh God, why am I so stupid? Why did I wait so long? Why did I go through so much suffering before just turning it over to You? You see, the place of our defeat is often the place of the greatest victory because we come to the end of ourselves and we turn it over to God at that point. So many people, when they get to that place, alas, I've had it. This is the end.

No, it's the beginning of a whole new experience. The experience of God's power working in your life. So Paul came to that place.

Paul's the same kind of guy. He was the kind of guy, hey, let's go for it, you know. A will that wouldn't quit.

So God brought him to the despairing of life. I was pressed beyond my measure, beyond my strength, so that I despaired of life. I thought, this is it.

And we had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust ourselves. And that is always the purpose for God bringing you to the end of yourself is that you won't trust yourself, but you'll learn to trust in God who can raise the dead, who delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver us in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us, the past, present, future. He did deliver us.

Right now, he is continuing to deliver us. And I just trust he's going to deliver us. You see, the future victories are assured by the past victories.

God's faithfulness in the past is a testimony to me of His continued faithfulness in the future. God was faithful. He delivered me.

God is faithful. He is delivering me. And thus, my faith and trust grows, and I know that God will be faithful and shall deliver me.

The past becomes a prophecy of the future and the basis for my trust and faith for the future. And ye also, helping together by prayer for us. And so, Paul is acknowledging his gratefulness to them because their prayers had an important part in that work of God.

And for the gift that was bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, that thanks may be given by many on our behalf. So I thank you for your prayers and your gifts for us. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our manner of life in the world and before you or more abundantly to you.

So Paul describes the way he lived with them and before them. It was in simplicity and godly sincerity. And that should be the case of every minister of God.

That they learn to live a simple life in all sincerity before people. That they not be caught up with fancy clothes and fancy fashions and high fashion or high life kind of a thing, but they live a simple life. And also that they live a very sincere life.

That they are not one thing in the pulpit and they preach one thing and live another. But their life is sincere before the people. And they are the same out of the pulpit as they are in the pulpit.

They are the same in the home as they are in the church. A life of sincerity. Of course you know the origin of that word sincere in English.

It comes from Latin, *siniseri*. And literally it means without wax. Now of course in the time of Rome and the Roman Kingdom because people didn't have much to do there were a lot of men who just sat around and chiseled on marble and made statues, busts and so forth of different persons.

If you look at the work of these artists it's remarkable. It's really outstanding. I've been through the museum in Greece and in Rome and have seen a lot of the work that goes back to that period.

But you know even an artist can sometimes make a mistake. And you might be trying to get just the right curve on the nose and the hammer slip and wham the nose pops off of this bit of marble. Well these fellows became very clever.

They had learned how to take wax and mix it with marble to where it looked just like marble. And so they would patch up this broken nose with wax. And you would buy this beautiful statue not knowing that the nose was wax.

And come summertime on those hot days you'd walk into your family room and look at your beautiful statue that you'd paid so much for and the nose had melted and run down the face. And so the word sincerity without wax. What you see is what you get.

That you are the same. That you live a very sincere life. And thus Paul expressed his life.

His manner of living before them. In simplicity and godly sincerity. Not in fleshly wisdom.

But by the grace of God. For we write none other things unto you than what ye read or acknowledge. And I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end.

In other words I'm not two-faced. I'm just straight. And the things I write to you I'm not thinking something else.

There isn't a double meaning in what I am saying. I had a woman in the church that I pastored one time that was always looking for a secondary meaning. And she would call me up on the phone on a Monday morning.

And she'd say, Now, Pastor Smith, last night when you said goodnight to me, what did you really mean by that? And always, you know, what do you really mean? What are you really trying to say to me? Well, for one thing, I'm too stupid to, you know, have hidden kind of cryptic messages in what I say. I say what I mean, and I mean what I say. And so Paul is declaring the same thing about himself.

What I acknowledge to you is the same, you know. It's what you read and acknowledge. I don't have any other writing.

That's what I feel towards you. That's what it is. As also you have acknowledged us in part that we are your rejoicing even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And in this confidence, I was minded to come to you before that you might have a second benefit. Now, I really intended to come. What Paul had said, he had written earlier and said he was coming to them, and then he didn't show up.

And so those detractors of Paul were saying, Oh, the guy's fickle. You can't take him for his word. He just said that, but he really didn't mean it.

And so Paul here is bearing witness to the fact that he was sincere when he wrote the things and acknowledged the things. That's what he was intending to do. He was sincere in it.

And I was intending to come unto you and to pass by you into Macedonia and to come again out of Macedonia unto you and of you to be brought on my way towards Judea. That was what I had in mind. And when I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness, or the Greek word is fickleness.

Was I fickle when I said that? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay? He says yes, but he really means no. He says no, but he really means yes. Now Jesus said, let your yes be yes, and let your no be no.

Be a man of your word. They were accusing Paul of violating this. He is not a man of his word.

He said he was going to come. He didn't come. He never intended to come in the first place, you see.

And they were using the fact that he didn't show up as a tool against him. But Paul is saying, hey, I was sincere. I'm not fickle.

But as God is true, our word toward you was not yes and no. I was really intending to do it. It was in my mind to do.

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, and even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus. So Timothy was there and Silvanus was with Paul when he first preached in Corinth, was not yes and no. But in him it was a yes.

The gospel that we preached was a positive gospel. It was straightforward. It wasn't a two-faced thing.

And then he declares, for all of the promises of God in him are yes. In other words, all of the promises of God to us have been fulfilled in Jesus. In him they are yes under the glory of God by us.

Jesus is the assurance to us that God's promises are all true. And all of God's promises to you are wrapped up in Christ. God has promised to give you life.

That life is in Jesus. This is the record God has given to us eternal life. And this life is in the Son.

God has promised to give you peace, but that peace is in Jesus. God has promised mercies to you, but those mercies are coming to you in Jesus. All of the promises in Him are yes or are fulfilled in Him to us.

And the fact that God sent His Son is the assurance to us that God is going to keep all of His Word and all of His promises that He has made to us of that eternal kingdom and the glory that we shall share with Him world without end. Jesus is the affirmation to you that God has meant what He said and that He will keep all of the promises that He has made of the coming kingdom and the glory of that kingdom that shall be yours when you live with Him in His kingdom forever. So, Paul is declaring here Jesus, the assurance.

He is the yes of God to us. Now He who has established us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God. It is God's work, Paul is acknowledging.

The one that has established us with you in Christ and has anointed our lives. And who has also sealed us and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. The earnest, the word there is a Greek word which is like our word deposit or down payment.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 1 that God has given to us, He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. God has purchased you that you might be His forever. That you might share in the glory of His eternal kingdom.

Now to show you that He is sincere He has given you a down payment. Yes, I really intend to complete my redemption of you. To show you that I am sincere I'll give you a deposit, a down payment.

The Holy Spirit sealed. Sealed with the Holy Spirit of course the idea of the seal was the stamp of ownership. You're mine.

I claim you, here's the down payment and one day I'll redeem your body and bring you into glory. But in the meantime, I'm sincere. Here's the Holy Spirit to prove my sincerity.

He is the earnest. And so God has given to us the Spirit, sealed us. Given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul that to spare you I have not come as yet to Corinth. The first word that Paul got back from Corinth wasn't so encouraging and he was upset and was going to come and just take off into them, you know. Just really go at it as the natural man would.

And he was patient waiting to hear the full word from Titus before coming. And so it was really to spare you that I didn't come. Because I didn't want to exercise dominion over your faith.

But I'm just a helper of your joy. For by faith you stand. Paul's glorious attitude.

I didn't want to come and have dominion over you. There are many pastors today that want to have dominion over the people. Now don't you dare go to another fellowship.

Don't you dare do this or that. And they want to have dominion over the people. Paul said, I don't want to have dominion over your faith.

I want to just share in the joys. Great position to be in. For by faith you stand.

I just want to help you to experience the full joy in the Lord. I was in a church for so many years where they exercised dominion that I was almost afraid of going to another church. I'd surely, you know, well if you go to another church and pray the rapture, it doesn't happen while you're there.

Because they're not as spiritual or righteous or all as we are, you know. And it was terrible to feel so bound. And that's why I think that I've always ministered with such liberty.

I've always felt that if you have to tie someone to keep them, you don't have them anyhow. You better let them go. And have them there screaming because of their bondage.

But I determined this with myself that I would not come again unto you in heaviness. I wrote a heavy letter to you. But I was determined that I wasn't going to come again in heaviness.

For if I make you sorry by having to rebuke you and deal with those issues, who is it then that makes me glad but the same ones that I made sorry? You rejoice me. You cause my heart to rejoice when I see your faithfulness and all. But here I am rejoicing in the very same persons.

They're causing me to rejoice the very same persons that I had to make sorry. So I wrote this same unto you lest that when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice. Having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all.

So I didn't want to have sorrow when I came. I wanted it to be a joyful experience when I come. I want us both to be able to rejoice.

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you that first epistle. It was a hard thing to write. I want you to know that it was hard for me.

It was with a lot of anguish and with a lot of tears. The anguish of my heart, I wrote to you with tears. It wasn't the heavy rebuke of a hard-fisted tyrant.

But the first epistle was coming out of a broken heart. I think that we so often misunderstand God. Because we so often think of God coming down on our heads as a heavy tyrant.

When we read in the Bible the stories of the Bible, it's too bad that we can't somehow have it in record that we could hear the tone of voice. Because many times the tone of voice really determines what is actually said. And your relationship with God or your understanding of God often times, I believe, puts the wrong tone of voice on the Word of God.

For instance, when Adam sinned in the garden and God came down to talk with Adam and Adam hid himself from God and God said, Adam, where art thou? What tone of voice do you hear? Heavy judgment, an arresting officer. Hands up, you're under arrest. I don't hear that tone of voice at all.

I hear the sob of a heartbroken father. Adam, where are you? What have you done? And the disappointment of a heartbroken father over the failure of man. Even as Jesus wept over Jerusalem when He saw what their actions was going to bring upon them.

And God knowing what Adam's action was going to bring upon mankind, sobbing over the failure of man. And when God deals with you, it's with tears. A heart filled with anguish.

For He loves you and He wants only the best for you. Don't misunderstand God. Paul didn't want them to misunderstand Him.

God's servant. That heavy letter that I had to write to you. It was hard.

I did it with anguish. It was with tears. And not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love of which I have more abundantly unto you.

But if any have caused grief, He has not grieved me, but in part, that I may not overcharge you all. Now you remember when he wrote the first epistle, he wrote to them concerning that man that was living in an adulterous relationship with his father's mother or with his father's wife. And Paul had told the church that they should put him out of the fellowship.

That they weren't to keep company with a brother who was an adulterer. That they should turn him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. It was not good that they just accepted and received this man into the fellowship of the believers because he was leaven.

And a little leaven will leaven the whole lump. Now, they did follow Paul's injunction. They put the fellow out because of the adulterous life that he was living.

But the desired effect came. The man did repent. And he wanted now to come back into fellowship having cleaned up his act.

But there were those that were going to still keep him from fellowship. And Paul is saying, Now, sufficient to such a man is the punishment which was inflicted by many of you, so that contrarywise now you ought rather to forgive him and to comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow or with overwhelming sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you that you would confirm your love towards him.

Time now to receive him back. And to this end also did I write that I might know the proof of you whether you are obedient in all things. Now, to whom you forgive anything, I also forgive.

For if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it for your sakes, forgave I it in the person of Christ. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices. So, Paul encourages them to take the fellow back in.

Lest Satan really get hold of the guy and he lose out. That if they forgive him, he forgives him in the stead of Christ. He offers that forgiveness.

Jesus said, They shall be remitted. Whoever sins you retain, they shall be retained. Paul here is in the name of Christ forgiving the man because of the man's repentance.

Now, God doesn't require us to forgive except there be repentance. If he repents, forgive him. Now, that bothers a lot of people.

But I like to suggest that you think that through. God does not forgive apart from repentance. Jesus said, Unless you repent, you're going to perish.

God will not forgive apart from repentance. But where there is repentance, then there ought to be and should be immediate forgiveness. If your brother offends you and repents, forgive him.

But there is not a requirement of forgiveness apart from repentance that I know of in the scriptures. We are not ignorant of Satan's devices. Now, our problem is that we are ignorant many times of Satan's devices.

I think that a lot of times we have real difficulty because we don't recognize the real source of conflict being ignorant of Satan's devices. I believe that Satan is able to attack us in the realm of the spirit, also in the realm of our emotions. I feel that some days when we just feel out of sorts and nasty, that really it is a spiritual attack of the enemy against us.

I feel that a lot of times when there is this unrest within the home, the children are really on each other, that it is a spiritual battle that is going on. And if we are ignorant of Satan's devices, many times we can be drawn into these conflicts and we can lose our joy and the blessing of the Lord upon our lives as we get drawn in to this physical kind of a contact. Satan is constantly trying to draw you into the physical realm to battle with you because if he can get you in the physical arena, he can knock your block off.

He can beat you to pieces. That's why I never like to meet him in the physical arena. In the area of the flesh, I don't want to meet him.

I only want to meet him in the spiritual arena because there I have the great advantage, the name of Jesus Christ. And so a lot of times we have problems when we are ignorant of Satan's devices and we need to recognize the source of this problem that we are facing. And recognizing the source, it is Satan that is coming against us.

It is Satan that is allowing this or doing this to us. Then I can deal with it and I resist him in the name of Jesus and then I rejoice for the glorious victory that I have in Christ. So those are the three R's of the spiritual walk.

The recognition of the source of the problem. The resisting of his work. For the Bible says, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

And then the rejoicing in the victory that we have through Jesus Christ over every work of the enemy. So remember the three R's. Don't be ignorant of his devices.

Or you can find yourself really being defeated more often than you like to be. Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's Gospel, he had gone to Troas from Ephesus in Acts 20. A door was opened unto me of the Lord, and I had no rest in my spirit because I did not find Titus my brother.

So I left them and I went from there to Macedonia. So Paul went to Troas. Opportunity was given to him to preach, but his spirit was so heavy because Titus wasn't there who was to meet him and bring him news of the church in Corinth.

He went on over to Macedonia. He just was restless. Concerned, so concerned for the condition of the church in Corinth for the believers there.

Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ and makes manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place. So Paul gives thanks to God who causes us to always triumph I love that, in Christ. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish.

To the one we are a savor of death unto death and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? God has made me responsible to be His representative to bring a message to people which to some is a message of eternal life, a sweet savor unto God, life to life. But to others who reject and who refuse it's a message of death, of judgment.

I bear God's Word. To believe and to receive means life. To reject means death.

To bear that kind of message, a message of life and death is a heavy responsibility. The message that I bring, the teaching of God's Word that I bring, a person's eternal life hangs in their believing that message. That is why it is so important that I teach the message clearly, that I teach it plainly and that my life backs up what I say.

Because it's a person's eternal life that's at stake. And if I get too much of my personality into it and they find my personality obnoxious and they go away from the message because of the way I have presented it, it was offensive or obnoxious to them, then it was a savor of death unto death. Tragic.

So it is a heavy responsibility that I have in bearing this message because it is life or death. And that is why Paul said, who is sufficient for these things? I mean, hey, I can't handle that. That I am responsible of bearing a message that can mean life or death.

That's eternal life or death. Who is sufficient for these things? In the next chapter, and it's too bad we don't get there tonight because Paul gives the answer to this question who is sufficient for these things. He says, for our sufficiency is not of ourselves but of Christ.

If that weren't the case, I wouldn't be here. You know, if God put it all on me, I'd say, no way. But our sufficiency is of Christ.

For we are not as many which corrupt the Word of God. There are people today who are guilty of corrupting the Word of God, twisting the Scriptures to their own ends in order that they might gather a following after themselves. People who are always looking for some secret meaning within the Scripture, making it mean something other than what it says.

Now that's not really what God meant. What God meant was, and then they go off on their own little tangents. I'll tell you what God really meant to say.

I know He said that, but that's not what He meant. Let me tell you what God really meant. And I've become God's interpreter.

Dangerous place to be. A place I don't want to be. For I personally feel that God meant what He said.

And if God didn't mean what He said, I don't know why He didn't say what He meant. But I do believe God meant what He said and thus I believe that always the plain and obvious meaning of the Scripture is the correct interpretation. Unless your understanding of that Scripture makes it seem foolish, then your understanding is wrong, your interpretation is wrong because God didn't say anything foolish.

But I believe that the plain and obvious meaning, I believe that God meant what He said and I believe that any of you can go home and take your Bible and read it and understand it and know what God said and know what God meant to say. I don't have any science and health and keys to the Scriptures to tell you what God meant to say. I don't have any awake magazines to tell you what God meant to say.

I don't have any revelations from the angel Moroni to tell you what God meant to say. You see, people always say, well, there are so many religions and there are so many churches and they say different things so I'm confused. I don't know who to believe so I don't go to any church.

Agreed. A lot of churches are saying a lot of different things and they're all saying they are right. Then how do I know? Just read the book.

You see, we don't have any other books to peddle. We tell you, just read the book. I'm not afraid of anything that you will come to believe by just reading this book.

I have such confidence in this book and in the Holy Spirit to guide you in your understanding of this book that I don't have any worries or fears about what you're going to come to believe by reading this book. I don't have to say to you, oh no, don't read that book. If you read that, you'll get confused.

You can read this for two years and you'll be in darkness. But you read our books which explain this book to you. And you don't have to read this book anymore.

All you read is our explanations. Why do they have to do that? Because if you just read this book, you'll never come to their explanations. I mean, they are so weird and far out that unless it was explained to you that way, you would have never have guessed it.

You could never have come to believe it that way except it was taught to you that this is what God really meant. Hey, I don't have any qualms or fears about your reading the book. In fact, I encourage you, read the book and get it firsthand.

Let God speak to you right out of His Word. You're not going to come up with any weird doctrines or be led astray. The Spirit of God who is the Spirit of Truth will lead you into all truth if you'll read the book.

Now that's what makes us different. Others are afraid for you to read the book unless you also read theirs. Definitely read theirs because you can't understand this book, you see.

No, no, that's not so. You can understand this book for the Spirit of God will teach you the truth. Read the book.

We are not as many which corrupt the Word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God in the sight of God, we speak in Christ. We speak as God's servants before God, His truth. Father, we thank you for your Word which gives light, for the entrance of thy Word gives light.

The light into our path to guide us into truth. May we walk in the light and in the truth of thy Word. Bless, Lord, thy Word to our hearts tonight.

Help us to assimilate it, to meditate upon it, and to feed from it that our spiritual man might grow and become strong. In Jesus' name, Father. Amen.

May the Lord keep His hand upon your life in a wonderful way this week. May it be a week of spiritual growth as you come to a richer, fuller understanding of the grace and the love of God towards you that He has demonstrated in Jesus Christ. And may the promises of God be to you, yes, in Christ.

And may you begin to experience the richness and the blessings of those promises of God as His peace and His joy and His love fill your life. And may He use you as His instrument in sharing that joy and peace with others. In Jesus' name.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6584.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-2-corinthians-1-2/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**