

2 Corinthians 7

by John Nelson Darby

In 2 Corinthians 7, Paul emphasizes the significance of repentance and holiness in the believer's life, reflecting on his deep connection with the Corinthians and the transformative power of sorrow leading to salvation.

Scripture: Leviticus 11:44, Acts 2:38, Romans 11:29, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 2 Corinthians 7:1, 2 Corinthians 7:9-11, Galatians 3:26, 1 Peter 1:16, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Holiness", "Repentance"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the call for the Corinthians to cleanse themselves and pursue holiness, reflecting on the promises of God and the importance of being set apart for Him. He discusses the relationship between sorrow, repentance, and the transformative power of God's comfort, illustrating how true repentance leads to a change of heart and actions. Darby highlights Paul's deep affection for the Corinthians, noting that their struggles and repentance ultimately strengthen their bond. He contrasts genuine repentance with mere regret, underscoring the necessity of faith and the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the enduring love and confidence Paul had in the Corinthians despite their challenges.

Transcript

In this chapter, he applies the promises to the Corinthians themselves: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." First, rescue them out from the mass, and then purify them fit for God. The point here is, their being set apart to a holy God, and then in detail purify everything. We also find in Leviticus, "Be ye holy, for I am holy: sanctify yourselves, for I am Jehovah that has sanctified you: for Jehovah your God is holy," and such like words. That is, when they have been brought out of Egypt.

349 "To die and live with you," is not to die to sin first. Scripture never says we have to die to sin. "I die daily" is a dying in an outward sense every day. Paul's life was not worth sixpence, as men speak. Then we have a beautiful expression, "God that comforteth them that are cast down." God lets us be cast down that we may be comforted of Him. It is not a cold dead thing. People speak of the apostles as if they were like vultures soaring above the heads of others, and pouncing down when they were obliged to do it; but it is not so. "Though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent though I did repent." Paul said he "did repent," and when writing an inspired letter! The power of the Holy Ghost makes him write it, and then, when he looks at his own heart, Titus was so long coming, that he thought the Corinthians would not have

him; and that was his sorrow. Such is the human side of Paul, and is very instructive.

There is a thing that strikes me very much in Paul, that we may find at the bottom of our own hearts, too, perhaps, but there is a kind of character in it - a claim that he feels upon the affections of the people, and that of the strongest kind. "Ye have not many fathers, but in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." There is a kind of claim of relationship, which in the state of the church we cannot have in the same kind of way now.

Sorrow led to repentance (v. 9). There is more in repentance than a certain feeling, for when the Jews asked, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Peter says, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." They were already pricked in their hearts. Sorrow before God led to judgment of the sin. One man had done the act, but they had all gone in heart with it; and now they sorrow, not the man only. Conversion, repentance, being born again, and faith, all go together; and yet I must believe in order to get it, and still they all go together. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"; to be a child you must believe. A blow and pain are identical as to time, though I must give the blow, in order to the pain. Where there is not that settled estimate of the will and mind that looks back and judges everything under grace in the power of the word, there is repentance and judgment of self all one's life.

350 Verse 11 is the effect of their repentance (v. 10). All the outward things in which repentance shewed itself prove its reality. In verse 8, "repent" is another word in Greek meaning "regret"; so in verse 10 it is, "worketh repentance to salvation not to be regretted." It is not connected with a judgment of the evil, and is sometimes used for remorse. When he says, "Repentance not to be repented of," you get a very different idea from the expression "Repentance not to be regretted." The gifts and calling of God are without change of mind. In the passage "It repented God that he had made man upon the earth," it is not the change of mind in God, but when the thing changes, God does not like it; not because God changes, but because He Himself does not change. The Greek for repentance in chapter 7:9 is used for change of mind; you would not find that with Judas; it is remorse there, regret.

It is very beautiful to see the way in which Paul's heart was in them all: even natural affection is beautiful in such a world as this; but all this work had tended to check their love towards him; they had gone to the other side, so to speak. Moses was trained in all the habits of a court, and then when he had been forty years in the desert, and God would send to the court for His people, he said, "I cannot speak" - he quite fell over on the other side; that is how we change. But Paul had written, that his care for them might appear, and he heartily rejoiced in the joy of Titus, and was glad to say he had confidence in them in all things.

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