2 Corinthians 7:9-8:7

God has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has made us ambassadors of the ministry of reconciliation. Now is the acceptable time; the day of salvation. The goal is to open our hearts and those of others. Do not be bound together with unbelievers. Paul asks what agreement Christ has with Satan and what a believer shares with an unbeliever? We are the temple of the living God. God promises to live among and walk with us. God will be our God and we will be God’s sons and daughters. Therefore we should cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit. Paul reminds them that he has not wronged, corrupted or taken advantage of anyone. They are in the hearts of the apostles, to die and to live together. Paul reminds them how proud he is of them. Paul was consoled by the arrival of Titus in Macedonia. Titus told Paul of the Corinthian’s longing, mourning, and zeal for Paul. Paul regrets that he grieved them briefly with his letter and does not regret that he made them sorry.

*How do you feel when someone believes you and acts on what you said?*

**2 Corinthians 7:9-13a**

**Vs. 9:** Paul does not rejoice because they were grieved but rejoices because their grief led to repentance. They felt a godly grief and so were not harmed in any way.

Note: NASB reads, “For you were made sorrowful according to the will of God.

*How does your translation read?*

**Vs. 10:** Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret.

Worldly grief produces death.

*Is repentance a requirement for salvation? See Matt. 4:17*

*How does this, “bring no regret”.*

*What is the difference between godly grief and worldly grief?*

**Vs. 11:** Godly grief has produced: earnestness, eagerness to clear themselves, indignation, alarm, longing, zeal, and punishment.

At every point, the Corinthians have proved themselves guiltless in the matter.

*What is Paul telling them and us about godly grief?*

**Vs. 12:** Paul did not write on account of the one who did wrong or the one who was wronged.

Paul wrote so their zeal for the apostles might be made known to them before God.

*Why does Paul tell the Corinthians how keen they are on him?*

**Vs. 13a:** Paul takes comfort in this.

*Does God use sorrow, pain, even evil, for God’s purposes?*

*Where have you seen “godly grief” in your life or that of others?*

**2 Corinthians 7:13b-16**

**Vs. 13b:** In addition to consolation of Paul and company, they rejoiced at the joy of Titus, because his mind has been set at rest by all the Corinthians.

*Some translations read “spirit” instead of “mind.” How does yours read?*

*What does this tell us about Titus?*

**Vs. 14:** If Paul has been somewhat boastful to Titus about the Corinthians, he was not disgraced; just as everything Paul said to the Corinthians was true, so his boasting to Titus has proved true as well.

**Vs. 15:** Titus’ heart goes out all the more to the Corinthians, as he remembers their obedience and how they welcomed him with fear and trembling.

*What does this say about how Titus was treated by the Corinthians?*

**Vs. 16:** Paul rejoices because he has complete confidence in the Corinthian believers.

*One commentary says this is a lead-in to what Paul is going to write next.*

*What is your opinion?*

Grace: Unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration or being set apart for a sacred purpose. A virtue coming from God. A state of being free from sin enjoyed through divine assistance. The word “grace” is used over ten times in chapters 8 and 9.

**2 Corinthians 8:1-7**

*As this is read, ask yourself, “Where is Paul going with this?”*

**Vs. 1:** Paul wants the Corinthians to know about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia.

Note: These are Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. It is possible that there was a cultural competition between Achaia and Macedonia.

*To what is Paul referring when he writes, “the grace of God”?*

**Vs. 2:** During a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity.

*Can you explain what Paul is saying here?*

**Vs. 3-5a:** Paul testifies that they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means. Note: The term translated “voluntarily” is literally “self-choices”.

They begged the apostles earnestly for the grace (privilege) of sharing in this ministry to the saints and did so not merely as the apostles expected.

*What is Paul saying about the churches of Macedonia?*

**Vs.5b-6:** They gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to the apostles,

so that the apostles might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning,

so he should also complete this grace (generous undertaking) among you.

*What is Paul telling the Corinthians?*

**Vs. 7**: Now as you excel in everything – in faith, speech, knowledge, utmost eagerness, and in our love for you – so we want you to excel also in this grace (generous undertaking).

*What is Paul’s definition of “grace” according to these verses?*

*If this is about sending money to Jerusalem, why is that so important to Paul?*

*Who do you know who is a very generous person? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Please contact them and thank them for their generosity.*

*After all, it is Thanksgiving.*

**No class November 27. Class resumes December 4**