

II CORINTHIANS: MINISTERING TO BELIEVERS FACING FALSE TEACHERS

I. Paul's Relationship With The Church, 2 Corinthians 1-7

C. The Traits Of Godly Leadership In Church Crises (2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11)

I. Introduction

- A. False teachers, claiming to be apostles, had entered the Church at Corinth, and tried to promote their own views while discrediting the person and message of the Apostle Paul. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 552)
- B. This was a difficult situation for Paul: his readers were immature believers who had been saved out of corrupt backgrounds in a city known for its vice, so they were easy prey for false teachers, and Paul had to be careful how he handled the situation lest his readers think he was being unjustly defensive and thus discredit himself.
- C. 2 Corinthians chapters 1-7 deal with Paul's relationship with the church, and 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11 gives the traits of Paul's godly leadership in a local church crisis. We view the passage for our insight and application:

II. The Traits Of Godly Leadership In Church Crises, 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11.

- A. Paul understood that his decisions twice to change his plans of visiting the Church at Corinth had created misunderstandings in the body, so he decided to explain his purpose in those changings of plans.
- B. In his explanation, Paul displayed qualities of godly leadership in a church crisis, 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11:
 - 1. First, Paul sought to be transparently honest with his explanation, 2 Corinthians 1:23a:
 - a. Paul realized that what he was about to write could be misinterpreted due to the Church's problems.
 - b. Thus, he made an oath, calling on God as his witness and staking his life on the truth of his explanation.
 - 2. Second, Paul refused to domineer his readers with his apostolic authority, 2 Corinthians 1:23b-24:
 - a. Paul stated that he had twice cancelled plans to visit his readers to avoid having to take disciplinary action against the Church were it not to obey a severe letter he had written to them, 2 Corinthians 1:23b.
 - b. He wanted to avoid using his life-and-death authority as an apostle to punish those who might disobey his directive, 2 Corinthians 1:24. (Ibid., p. 557) Note how 1Peter 5:3 also calls for this trait in church elders.
 - 3. Third, Paul showed great love for his readers as seen in his reluctance to hurt them, 2 Corinthians 2:1-4:
 - a. He was deeply grieved over even having to write his severe letter, so he had not wanted to add sorrow upon sorrow by coming and having to exercise severe discipline in the body, 2 Corinthians 2:1-4a.
 - b. Paul communicated this truth to his readers to convey the deep love for them, 2 Corinthians 2:4b.
 - 4. Fourth, Paul had bravely risked being misunderstood by tackling the crisis that had threatened the Church:
 - a. There existed the need for disciplinary action by the congregation on a man who had likely challenged Paul's authority as an apostle, Ibid., p. 558. However, this was a significant hurdle to address, for "(t)he Corinthians apparently failed to make the connection between a challenge to Paul's authority and their own spiritual well-being. They had regarded this as a personal problem requiring no action on their parts, a view which Paul had dispelled in his letter and which they now realized," Ibid.
 - b. This issue displays the courage Paul had to address the matter even if it risked the congregation thinking that he had personal enmity against his critic when the spiritual welfare of the congregation was at stake.
 - 5. Fifth, Paul impartially sought to restore the repentant man to church fellowship, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11:
 - a. The apostle acknowledged that the wrongdoer had not so much caused Paul grief as he had caused the entire congregation grief in the disciplinary action that it had to take against him, 2 Corinthians 2:5 NIV.
 - b. Nevertheless, Paul stated that the Church's discipline on the man had been sufficient to correct him, and that it was time for the congregation to forgive and to comfort the repentant person that the man not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow, 2 Corinthians 2:6-7.
 - c. Thus, Paul urged the congregation to reaffirm its love for the repentant man, and Paul expressed his reason for writing that they stand the test of executing Church discipline only to administer reconciliation once the man had repented, 2 Corinthians 2:8-9.
 - d. Paul shared that he had forgiven the man, thus urging the congregation to forgive him also, that Satan might not outwit them and cause needless division and harm in the body due to his wiles, 2 Cor. 2:10-11.

Lesson: *Paul exhibited godly leadership in a church crisis at Corinth by being candid with the church, by not domineering others, by being reluctant to hurt people, by tackling the crisis at the risk of being misunderstood, and by seeking to restore repentant parties to end the crisis.*

Application: *May we heed Paul's example as leaders and his lead as a congregation in handling church crises.*