

Series: 2 Corinthians

Title: Motive of Rebuke, Fruit of Repentance

Text: 2 Cor 7: 12-16

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2 Corinthians 7: 12: Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. 13: Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. 14: For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth. 15: And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. 16: I rejoyce therefore that I have confidence in you in all *things*.

Let me remind you, this problem at Corinth was a rare case—in the first epistle, Paul described it as—“...*such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.*” (1 Cor 5: 1)

We are not talking about the sin that believer’s battle against daily in our sinful flesh. This was outward, flagrant sin with no care that he gave the world reason to speak evil of Christ and the ministry; no care that he drew the focus away from Christ and caused division among brethren; no care that he was causing serious disruption in the public worship of Christ. So this sin and the way it had to be dealt with is the exception. We are not going around looking for sin and reasons to rebuke one another. But when rebuke is necessary the motive is love.

The motive of rebuke and the fruit produced in repentance are both the gifts of God produced in the heart.

THE MOTIVE OF REBUKE

2 Corinthians 7: 12: Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

Paul’s object in writing a letter of rebuke to Corinth was not merely to deal justly with the offender and not merely to obtain justice for the offended. Yet, both of these aspects of rebuke are very important. Paul wanted to see the brethren at Corinth doing what is righteous.

Seeing that God sent his only begotten Son to manifest his righteousness and seeing what Christ paid to magnify the righteousness of God, believers understand how important righteousness is! Therefore, we always want to be just and right in our dealings with all men, especially with one another.

But Paul's greater motive was to prove to the whole church how much he loved them—*“that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.”*

2 Corinthians 2:4: For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

The constraining love of Christ in the heart and love to brothers and sisters in Christ is the motive for true, sincere rebuke.

Proverbs 27: 5: Open rebuke *is* better than secret love. 6: Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.

In fact, God says it is to hate a brother not to rebuke him.

Leviticus 19: 17: Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

Whom the Lord loves, he chastens as a son.

Hebrews 12: 5: And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7: If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

God our Father gave his only begotten Son to save his people from our sins. So he will not allow one of his children to be turned away from Christ in sin. Christ Jesus laid down his life for his people. He purged the sins of his people by bearing our sins and the fierce justice we deserved. He made us the righteousness of God in him by his perfect obedience, even unto the death of the cross as our federal Head. Christ has the glory of calling and keeping all God's elect and losing none but presenting each one to the Father in the end. So Christ our Head is working from his throne above to rebuke them that are his and keep us looking only to him. So the motive for true rebuke is not revenge, not to embarrass, it is love. It is for my spiritual growth in Christ and not for mine only but for the edifying of the whole church.

Also, by the Spirit of God working in the heart, a believer considers the rebuke by a fellow brother to really and truly be the rebuke of his heavenly Father.

Proverbs 13: 1: A wise son *heareth* his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

An unregenerate man will not receive rebuke. But by the Spirit of God working in the heart, a true believer will not only receive rebuke, he will love you for it.

Proverbs 9: 8: Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

So if one brother rebukes me, it is enough to consider it is my heavenly Father. But if the whole church rebukes me then without a doubt I would be wise to consider it is my heavenly Father rebuking me. Brethren, never let the pride of our old sinful flesh prevent you from humbling yourselves in repentance. When rebuked by a brother, always consider it is Christ our living Head rebuking us. Always remember, the motive is love. And Christ works in each member to grow us individually, as well as to edify the whole body.

Ephesians 4: 15: But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: 16: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

THE FRUIT OF REPENTANCE

2 Corinthians 7: 13: Therefore we were comforted in your comfort:

When Christ works repentance in the heart of one of his redeemed, the first fruit produced by the Holy Spirit is comfort in Christ. When Paul began this letter, he already knew these Corinthians had been granted repentance by God. He was already comforted by God by Christ through their repentance. So he praised God our Savior for this comfort.

2 Corinthians 1: 3: Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4: Who comforteth 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. 5: For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

One reason the Son of God was made like unto his brethren was so that he, as a Man, might experience our tribulations so that he would be able to comfort us in all our trouble.

Hebrews 2: 18: For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Hebrews 5: 1: For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

Brethren, let us heed this word in time of repentance.

Hebrews 4: 15: we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. 16: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

JOY AND REFRESHING

2 Corinthians 7: 13...yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

Through repentance, Christ produces the fruit of joy and refreshing in our brethren. When a brother is fallen into sin, it causes his fellow brethren to be sorrowful, to be troubled, to have no rest in our spirit. It is because believers are one.

1 Corinthians 12: 26: And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

In the past when a brother has fallen into sin, I get phone calls and emails from brethren who troubled in spirit for that brother. But when Christ works repentance in the heart of a brother, there is great joy. God the Holy uses an erring brother's repentance to refresh the spirit of brethren: to give rest in our spirit, to calm our spirit, to quieten our spirit.

CONFIDENCE

2 Corinthians 7: 14: For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth.

Another fruit produced by God in repentance is confidence in our brethren, that they are truly a child of God. Believers ought never brag on ourselves. But there is nothing wrong with bragging on our brethren.

When a brother obeys our Lord and repents it proves to us that Christ is indeed working in their hearts by the Holy Spirit which he has given them. When we speak of their faithfulness, we are glorying in our Lord Jesus who worked faithfulness in them. It increases our

confidence that they are truly the child of God—2 *Corinthians 7: 16: I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.*

LOVE

2 Corinthians 7: 15: And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

Lastly, when Christ causes a brother to receive rebuke and grants him repentance, Christ increases our love for our fellow brethren.

Titus was a minister to the Corinthians. By making them obedient, Christ increased their pastor's love for them. Also, the love in all our brethren grows toward that repenting brother or sister.

Brethren, are these not reasons enough to cause us to receive rebuke and repent? My brethren will be comforted by Christ. They will cease being troubled and be refreshed in spirit. God will make them cease being sorrowful and be filled with exceeding great joy. Their confidence in me is increased as they see Christ work effectually in me. Their love toward me is increased. Any time I am in need of rebuke these are very good reasons to receive the rebuke and repent.

For our brethren—whoever they may be—who have received rebuke from their brethren—may God make them receive it and grant them repentance and produce all these fruits in his church. This is our prayer.

Amen!