

Christ Reformation Church

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God's Word to a Hesitating Church

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. (7:1)

“Boasting in One Another on the Day of the Lord”

June 8, 2014

Sermon Text: 2 Corinthians 1:12 – 2:4

Scripture Reading: Luke 15

IF YOU ARE NOT RIGHT WITH
GOD, YOU CAN NEVER TURN
YOUR MIND ANYWHERE BUT
ON YOURSELF. IF YOU ALLOW
ANYTHING TO HIDE THE FACE
OF JESUS CHRIST FROM YOU,
YOU ARE EITHER DISTURBED
OR YOU HAVE A FALSE
SECURITY.

OSWALD CHAMBERS

Evil characteristically sows discord among the people it wants to affect and control. You need to remember this so that you don't fall prey to this tactic. In our study of the psychology of sin, as evidenced by the wicked evil of abuse in which the sociopathic abuser has a fundamental mentality of entitlement to the possession of power and control over others, such a person characteristically sows discord and chaos among his targets. Why? Because people who are turned against one another are much easier to control.

And so it was at Corinth. There were people who were working to alienate the Corinthians from the Apostle Paul, who was really their father in the faith, having brought the gospel to them. These wicked workers were making innuendos and accusations against Paul as they worked to exalt and gain glory for themselves. Their message of course was the standard false gospel.

We have been reminding ourselves then of how vital it is that we in this

church *love and trust one another*. An atmosphere of dis-trust and suspicion and doubt is not conducive to a healthy ministry of Christ's Word and of a body of believers growing into Christ as they should. Over the years we have had many attacks on the unity of this church by people who love to be "first" – like Diotrephes.

And so, as we have been working our way through this first chapter of 2 Corinthians, we have seen Paul "boasting." He will use that term numbers of times in this letter, and he utilizes it for two purposes: 1) To facetiously expose the arrogant boasting of these so-called "super-apostles" who were accusing him at Corinth, and 2) As a term for defending himself against their false charges by speaking of his own divine calling and power and authority as an apostle of Christ. Paul uses this word "boast" and its forms over 40 times in his two letters to the Corinthians. This was a church obviously then characterized and threatened by pride.

This pride stemmed largely from the Corinthians' earthly, fleshly mindset about what is true greatness. Like their culture, they had it all wrong and it resulted in them embracing the false apostles while rejecting the real one! And so Paul (in chapter 1) jumps right into a description of his ministry as an apostle of Christ. He speaks of his

intense suffering and trials that made him despair of any escape from a deadly peril, forcing him to rely not upon himself, but upon the Lord alone. This is for their benefit as well because Paul is now able to comfort them in their affliction with the comfort he experienced in his suffering.

NOTE: There was then apparently some suffering, some persecution going on at Corinth and perhaps the false teachers were capitalizing on it, tempting the Christians there to escape that persecution by embracing a false gospel and a world-pleasing religion.



You will recall that these enemies jumped on Paul's change in travel plans, accusing him of being someone whose word was not to be trusted in anything. Paul defends himself and his ministry against that false charge, insisting that the very nature of Jesus

Christ and His Word is that it is “yes,” not “yes and no.” In fact his altered travel plans were made out of his love and concern for the Corinthians – it was for their own good. He did not want to visit them again (2:1) and experience another “painful visit” in which he would have to rebuke them as before. He wanted to know that they had repented first.

Unlike these wicked sowers of discord, Paul’s ministry is characterized by honesty and sincerity and truth. He says things like:

2Co 1:12 For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you.

2Co 2:17 For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

2Co 4:2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

And so it must be today. A ministry characterized by deceit and craftiness motivated by a desire for self-glory is entirely inconsistent with the gospel which is the proclamation of God’s infallible, inerrant, absolutely trustworthy Word.

Let me issue a kind of challenge and invitation here in this regard. There is no need whatsoever for anyone in this church to be hiding a pattern of sin and putting on a façade of godliness, which is of course, hypocrisy. There is no need because no one here is going to condemn a genuinely repentant person who in honesty and humility acknowledges their sin. That is what the gospel is all about! God’s mercy and grace shown in Christ to all who come to Him in real repentance and faith, right?

Luk 15:7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

The “righteous” people who need no repentance are, of course, the religious hypocrites who don’t see any need for repentance, but consider themselves to be quite worthy before God based on their own merits. This is the only kind of person who is not permitted to be present here in Christ’s church.

Over the years we have prayed regularly in this church that the Lord would reveal the hidden things. And He has. We continue to pray that prayer. “Lord, if there is hidden evil in this church, hiding behind a cloak of false righteousness, please expose it to the eyes of all.” Because it is a leaven that infects. It is grounds for the world to blaspheme Christ’s name when a professing Christian puts on a façade of religion and righteousness on Sunday mornings, but in fact is unchanged in heart and pursues their love for the world in their real character. So if anyone here is walking in sin, hiding it – then this is a call to you to confess and repent. Because you can be sure of this – your sin is going to find you out. Over and over again in this church we have seen this. Sin makes you crazy. If pursued long enough, it will lead you to do things that you would have marveled at in the past – “how can anyone be that stupid or evil?” Remember those sobering warnings from our study of Galatians:

Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

Turn from your sin, repent – in this time when Christ can still be found.

This is vital if we are to trust one another. We must be able to say to one

another the very thing Paul said here to the Corinthians:

2Co 1:13 For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and acknowledge and I hope you will fully acknowledge--

In other words – “what you see is what we are. What you hear us say is what we are saying.” Can we all believe that about *you*? It is vital and necessary that this be so. Think of what the presence of just one hypocrite/pretender does in a local company of believers. Just one. That is why Jesus warned us in particular to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. It spreads and it is destructive. It prevents Christ’s people from trusting one another, from hearing and believing God’s Word, and from growing into maturity in Christ. Listen again to Paul:

2Co 1:18-22 As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. (19) For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. (20) For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. (21) And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has

anointed us, (22) and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Think on this very carefully. Why is Paul going to such lengths here in his defense? Just for personal victory in a debate? No. It is because of this:

“If the enemy can successfully discredit the messenger, the message is also made void. In this case, that message is the gospel, the Word of God, by which the Corinthians are saved and established.”

And so it continues today. It is vital that we trust one another, that our “yes” be yes and our “no” be no. No peddling of God’s Word for deception. No living a lie, pretending to be a follower of Christ but really being of the world. The climate of this church must be the climate of Christ and His truth, believed in and relied upon and lived.

And we now turn to a subject that should further motivate us to these very things.

The Day of Our Lord Jesus

We should take the time now to learn more about this “day of our Lord Jesus” that Paul refers to in 1:14. Notice what he says in this connection:

2Co 1:13-14 For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and acknowledge and I hope you will fully acknowledge-- (14) just as you did partially acknowledge us--**that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.**

The Day of our Lord Jesus. There it is. It is vital that we all know this doctrine and be reminded of it regularly. It is a source of great encouragement for Christ’s people, and of great terror for the wicked.

Let me just read through some of the many New Testament scriptures that teach us about this Day, and comment on them as we read them. Understand and believe, as I read, that YOU are going to be there! WE are all going to be there. And it is coming quickly:

1Co 1:5-8 that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge-- (6) even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you-- (7) so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, **as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,** (8) who will sustain you **to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

The Day of our Lord Jesus Christ is connected here with the *revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This then is the Day when the heavens are rolled back and Christ is revealed in His glory to the whole world. And notice, Paul says of these Corinthian Christians, that the Lord *sustains them to the end...guiltless...in that day*. Guiltless. This is important for us to remember. Surely this is connected with our righteousness being in Christ, not in us.

1Co 3:11-15 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (12) Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw-- (13) **each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it**, because it will be revealed by fire, and **the fire will test what sort of work each one has done**. (14) If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, **he will receive a reward**. (15) If anyone's work is burned up, **he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved**, but only as through fire.

Once more – *the Day*. Here Paul tells us that this Day will be a time when the Lord will “test” the works we have done. Specifically a test in respect to

whether those works were founded upon the only foundation, Jesus Christ. Notice that this is a judgment of believers – not in respect to their salvation – but in regard to the work they have done in the Lord’s name. Most probably some of the things we have done for the Lord – to a greater or lesser degree in each individual case – will be toast! Done for the wrong motive. Others – hopefully many – will be found to be gold, silver, and precious stones that survive this test of the fire of the Lord’s examination. Much more could be said here. But we must leave it at just making a note to carefully examine ourselves. Are we doing what we do in the name of Christ TRULY in the name of Christ? Buildings can be built, big ministries can be established, great and sweeping missions works, building of hospitals and care for the poor – all wood, hay, and straw destined to go up in the fire of the Lord’s testing on that Day.

“Christian, what you are doing now in Christ’s name IS going to be tested and examined by Him. Will it survive the test? The defining criteria of what sort of work we have done is not the apparent ‘greatness’ of the thing, but whether or not it was build upon Jesus Christ, for His glory and His service and His truth.”

I hope this moves each of us to some serious and prayerful self-examination.

It is rather frightening to me how easily I can do something in Christ's name, but really be motivated by self-service.

1Co 5:4-5 When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, (5) you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

What do we see here in regard to the Day? Well, it also is a Day of judgment. Those who are genuinely repentant in Christ will be saved. Those who are not will be lost. This, you see, is one of the vital and good purposes of church discipline. The church hands a persistent and unrepentant sinner who claims to be a Christian over to Satan by putting him out of the fellowship of the church. One of the purposes of this action is, as Paul says, so that as he suffers in Satan's realm (the world), he might be brought to repentance and his soul saved on that Day. This also clearly implies that the Lord uses physical maladies and afflictions to effect repentance in such a person, and He works these afflictions through Satan. Here is an example:

Rev 2:18-23 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The

words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. (19) "I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. (20) But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. (21) I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. (22) **Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, (23) and I will strike her children dead.** And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.

We continue-

Php 1:6-10 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion **at the day of Jesus Christ.** (7) It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense

and confirmation of the gospel. (8) For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. (9) And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, (10) so that you may approve what is excellent, **and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,**

We should notice by now that this doctrine of the Day of Jesus Christ is also one of great comfort to the Christian. It is a day of reward. It is the time when Christ brings to completion His work in us, bringing us to perfect sanctification and holiness in our incorruptible resurrection bodies, fit for the New Heavens and New Earth.

And notice in Paul's frequent mention of this Day that it is a truth we all need to think of regularly because it is a truth that has great importance to our present lives. Not only does it give us great hope and assurance, but it serves as a wonderful motivation to us to live faithfully for Christ and for His glory. YOU are going to be there! And so am I!

Php 2:14-16 Do all things without grumbling or questioning, (15) that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among

whom you shine as lights in the world, (16) holding fast to the word of life, **so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.**

Here we see that on that Day the Lord's testing of us will be in regard to our service for Him. Paul had taught the Philippians, as Scripture teaches us today, how to live in a manner pleasing to Christ. Don't grumble and complain. Don't be conformed to this wicked world but in contrast to it shine forth the light of Christ's truth. We also see the implication here as well as in other texts about the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ that false professors will be exposed. Paul will see on that day the grief of people who he had ministered to, who claimed Christ, but who in fact were false in that profession. In contrast, it will be a Day of great pride and rejoicing as people we have presented the gospel to and instructed in the Word of God are rewarded by Christ for their genuine works done in His name.

Let me comment then at this point on what Paul told the Corinthians in 2 Cor 1:14 –

2Co 1:14 just as you did partially acknowledge us--**that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.**

This brings us back to this vital point that we must be able to trust one another. Christ's people in Christ's church, along with the pastors and elders of that church, should be able to *boast of one another*. To be proud of one another. This kind of climate must exist in every local church in Christ. Here is a related verse:

Heb 13:7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, **as those who will have to give an account**. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

My emphasis here is not upon convincing you to obey your pastor and elders – though that is vital in a church WHERE the leaders are living a godly life and are indeed truly keeping watch over the souls of Christ's people for the sake of Christ and not misusing the flock for their own gain and glory.

But the point I want us to see here in connection with the Day of the Lord is that 1) This doctrine directs and guides every genuine church

leader (knowing there is reward and an accounting to give one Day), and 2) that a healthy, growing church is a place where the leaders are able to shepherd the flock *with joy and not with groaning*. Myself and your elders need to be able to be proud of you as we see you growing in Christ, genuinely serving Him. And YOU need to be able to take pride in us, knowing that we are really are watching over you for the sake and glory of Christ.

Over the years, as you know, we have had people in this church who neither myself nor the elders nor the church members have been able to consider with joy. They were a burden and trying to shepherd them was like *groaning*. They appeared on almost every elder meeting agenda! Sometimes they cause us to lose track of the sincere members of the church who plug along faithfully, working quietly and living a godly life. These are the ones who give us joy – and who give you joy too.

It is not profitable for you if your fellow believers in this church are not able to take pride in you and rejoice over you. It is not profitable TO YOU.

Consider a plant. What kind of a plant does a gardener take delight

in and is proud of? Well, not a weed. And not a sickly one that just doesn't grow or flower or produce fruit. No, the kind of plant the gardener delights in and is proud of is a growing, healthy, productive one. "Look at this plant over here! I am particularly proud of this one." You don't have to be famous. You don't need to produce world-record fruit! You just need to evidence that the life of Christ is in you by growing and producing fruit.

1Th 5:1-11 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. (2) For you yourselves are fully aware **that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.** (3) While people are saying, "There is peace and security," **then sudden destruction will come upon them** as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. (4) But you are not in darkness, brothers, **for that day to surprise you like a thief.** (5) For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. (6) So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. (7) For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. (8) But since we belong to the day, let us be

sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. (9) **For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,** (10) who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. (11) **Therefore encourage one another and build one another up,** just as you are doing.

Here once more we see that the Day of the Lord Jesus is a truth that is meant to strike terror into the wicked, and great encouragement to Christ's people. We who are in Christ are not destined for wrath, but for salvation. The Day of the Lord is a truth by which we can encourage one another. And not that it is the DAY of the Lord as opposed to the NIGHT/DARKNESS of this world. The Day is a realm of light and truth and righteousness. In Christ, we are already children of light. We are Light Dwellers and we are called to live accordingly as such. The Earth Dwellers are also Cave Dwellers who live in the realm of darkness, carrying on the evil deeds that characterize that darkness. But the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ is coming on that DAY when all things will be exposed to His light. We have already been transferred into that kingdom of light

and we are to live in a manner fitting to that kingdom.

“When that Day dawns in the glorious, all-revealing Light of Christ’s glory, what will it expose in your life and mine? What will we be found doing?”

2Th 1:4-10 **Therefore we ourselves boast about you** in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. (5) **This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God**, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering-- (6) **since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you**, (7) and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the **Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels (8) in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** (9) They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, (10) when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have

believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

See it again? Paul boasts about the Thessalonian believers as they endured persecution. This is the mark of a healthy church – its members able to take pride and joy in one another as they faithfully persevere in Christ and live right out there in the light of truth.

We see here as well that the Day of the Lord Jesus will be the time of the righteous judgment of God upon the wicked. And it is a day when we are granted relief from persecution and suffering and hatred from this world. The Lord Jesus on that Day will inflict flaming vengeance upon the wicked, and *He will be glorified in His people who will marvel at His glory on that Day.* And YOU will be there!

Conclusion

There are numbers of other references in the New Testament to the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ (and we have not even mentioned the large extent that this same theme appears in the Old Testament):

2 Thes 2:2

2 Tim 1:12, 18; 4:8

And perhaps the best way to close is to read one of the strongest challenges in the New Testament regarding the

approaching Day of the Lord. Notice the dual theme in it: terror for the wicked, great encouragement for Christ's people:

Heb 10:23-31 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. (24) And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (26) For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. (28) Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. (29) How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? (30) For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." (31) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

May we in this church be able to take joy in one another and to boast of one another as we see Christ being formed in us, so that this church becomes increasingly a place where Christ is glorified and His people trust and love one another.