

**TITLE:** A MINISTER'S COMFORT

**TEXT:** 2 CORINTHIANS 7

**INTRO:** 7:10 is surely the most well known verse in this chapter. However, as important as it is, it is *not* the main lesson of the chapter. Rather, Paul is using it to make his main point – and that's the point of comfort.

**I. COMFORT EXPRESSED (v. 2-4):**

- A. (v. 2) *Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted (defiled) no man, we have defrauded (cheated –NKJV) no man.* Receive (make room for; open up to) us! He said this in **6:11-13**; now he returns to it, defending himself against accusations that would've caused them *not* to be open to him. "We haven't hurt anyone physically (by actions-**4:2**) or spiritually (by teaching)!"
- B. (v. 3) *I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.* Paul wasn't afraid to "condemn" those who needed it. But this was **not** his intention here. He's simply trying to encourage them to forget the false accusations against him & accept him! "We love you! We live & die with you!" **Rom 12:15**—"Rejoice w/them that rejoice...."
- C. (v. 4) *Great is my boldness of speech toward you...my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.* Paul was completely open w/them (about their strengths/weaknesses), so it must hurt when some of them reject him (or are at least partially swayed by his accusers). He started & strengthened this church, & he's comforted by their growth.

**II. COMFORT EXPLAINED (v. 5-11):**

**A. THEIR LOVE (v. 5-7)**

1. (v. 5) *For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.* We don't know specifically what Paul is referencing, but apparently it was rough (**1:8**).
2. (v. 6) *Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.*
  - a. This is an example of what he said in **1:3-4** – "The God of all comfort comforts us in all our tribulation...."
  - b. How? Through brethren! **2:13**–"I had no rest in my spirit because I found not Titus." Now he's comforted by Titus. We can & should always be comforted by sound brethren (those of like precious faith – **2 Pet 1:1**), especially after we've been around non-Christians! This is a great statement about Titus, but that's not really his point (see v. 7).
3. (v. 7) *And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.*
  - a. Paul's comfort wasn't only from being with Titus, but from the great news Titus brought about the Corinthians.
  - b. Again, this is **1:3-4** put into practice: The Corinthians comforted Titus, who then comforted Paul (because of the comfort he'd received from the Corinthians)! Paul's encouragement would've then been a comfort to Titus, as well as to the Corinthians again through this letter (they had to feel good when reading this)! (More specificity in v. **8-11**)

**B. THEIR OBEDIENCE (v. 8-11)**

1. (v. 8) *For though I made you sorry (cause distress) with a letter (i.e., 1 Cor), I do not repent (regret), though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.*
  - a. He knew that what he wrote (1 Cor) made them sorry (sad, distressed), and initially he *did* regret it (to a certain degree). Did Paul do the wrong thing? No! He regretted having to rebuke them at all, but clearly he never regretted addressing sin in the congregation! And neither should we. But that doesn't mean it's easy!
  - b. He tells us the reason he initially regretted it: "I see that I made you sorry." Nobody, including Paul, enjoys doing what he had to do. But we still have to address sin! But it's a lot easier *not* to regret it when they respond positively!
2. (v. 9) *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage (be cast away) by us in nothing.* The only two options: repent or be cast away!
  - a. "Receive damage" means "to be injured, suffer loss, be cast away." This was the case with the fornicator in **1 Cor 5**.
  - b. Repentance is always the desired result, & certainly worthy of rejoicing! It is **always** preceded by godly sorrow (**v. 10**).
3. (v. 10) *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.* True repentance can't happen without godly sorrow ("sorrow/sadness according to God"). We *must* feel the way God feels about sin! Anything else is worldly sorrow (i.e., sorry you got caught!), & will lead to death, because there's no repentance!
4. (v. 11) The fruit worthy of repentance (**Matt 3:8**), the result of godly sorrow – ...*what carefulness* (haste, diligence)...*what clearing of yourselves* (defense)...*indignation* (toward sin)...*fear* (take sin seriously!)...*vehement desire* (longing) ...*zeal* (fervor, intense interest)...*revenge* (punishment of the guilty)! *In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.* They did everything they were supposed to do, even withdrawing fellowship from the sinner (1 Cor 5; 2 Cor 2).

**III. COMFORT EXTENDED (v. 12-16):**

- A. (v. 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.* I wrote so you would know how much I care about you all (or, depending on MSS, to see your care for us by your response). Either way, this was for everyone, not just the sinner!
- B. (v. 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.* Repeat of what he said in v. **6-7**.
- C. (v. **14-16**) *For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you while he remembers the obedience of you all, how w/fear & trembling ye received him. I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.* This encouragement for them helps Paul to transition from the good they've done to the good they *need* to do (**ch. 8-9**).

**CONCLUSION:** Paul, the "minister," was comforted by the Corinthian brethren because they responded appropriately to his rebuke. This situation shows us the importance of church discipline. We must be willing to rebuke, & we must be willing to hear the rebuke (either as the one in sin, or as a congregation failing to address the one in sin). All can end well if we do as these brethren did: they listened to Paul's rebuke & exercised discipline, the sinner repented, and all were comforted because of it!