Transformed – **2 Corinthians - wk 15 – On My Way**

**Have you ever tried to talk to someone, and it seems it is just not getting through? It can be frustrating. God has to change the heart.**

**This is the situation in 2 Cor. It is an ongoing conversation between Paul and a troubled church. A church he planted now struggling w/ division, sin, and shifty leaders.**

**Written by Paul, a spiritual father to Corinth… then so-called "super apostles" came to tear down what he started.**

**The “super-apostles” aka. the “wolves” – like to talk about how great they are – and talk trash about Paul. Paul responds by telling them about his trials for the sake of Jesus Christ!**

**Last week – he praised God for his weaknesses, for in those moments, the strength of God in him was on display. For Christ told him –**

**2 Cor 12:9 But he (God) said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”**

**Today - we pick up where we left off – Paul is wraping up his letter and really hits home with them. It is confronting and hard. It is known as the end of the fool's speech (3 chapters (11:1) – bear with this fool).**

**2 Corinthians 12:11 I have been a fool! (I have talked about me too much) You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. (You should have stood up for me to these people) For I was not at all inferior to these “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing. (I'm a nobody 3:4–6; 4:7 - even though I have done more than them) 12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.**

**My suffering and signs and wonders are evidence of who I am.**

**You saw signs and wonders that confirmed my authority and the preaching as an Apostle. Miracles confirmed the Apostle's message, much like Jesus' miracles confirmed his message.**

**The Apostles were: personally appointed by Jesus, eyewitness of the resurrection, sovereignly chosen to be the foundation of the church, and uniquely empowered by the Holy Spirit.**

**This was the NT era – we have less miracles today as we have the confirming Word of God. Though they still happen at God’s discretion and will.**

**13 For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, (are you better than other churches?) except that I myself did not burden you? (I never asked anything from you) Forgive me this wrong! (Sarcasm - maybe I should have – you ungrateful!)**

**Basically - I asked nothing from you and it made you selfish and disrespectful toward me.**

**This next part is part sarcastic and part pleading - 14 Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. (Here I come – think of Tombstone) And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. (I deeply care for you as Father – I am not coming for an offering – but for your sake.) 15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. (I'd gladly spend all I have for you - This is not about personal gain) If I love you more, am I to be loved less? (why, after I have loved you so much- do you treat me so badly?)**

**In other words - disciple makers we often will spend and exhaust yourselves on others, even if we are never encouraged, hear gratitude, or at times don’t see the fruit.**

**16 But granting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and got the better of you by deceit. (Sarcasm - just the opposite.) 17 Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus to go and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?**

**The accusation from the “super apostles” / wolves – was that though Paul did not ask for money, he sent Titus and others who took offerings (for Jerusalem) and were going to keep it.**

**They came in with the same spirit and attitude as I did. Earlier in the letter, he addressed financial accountability in churches.**

**19 Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? (the whole point of this letter was for your benefit) It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved.**

**This was not to justify me or to make you feel bad - or make you nervous because I'm coming - but to wake you up!**

**Memes that say Paul is coming – or Paul is on the phone.**

**20 For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish – (I’m concerned I’ll find you the same - and that I will get angry with you – which you don’t want to see) that perhaps there may be quarreling (discord - division), jealousy, anger (fits of rage), hostility, slander, gossip, conceit (arrogance), and disorder.**

**These are the issues talked about in this letter. I am writing so you can work them out before I get there because I will absolutely be addressing them when I do.**

**21 I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, (I fear I'll realize I did not do well with you – or have to repent for my anger) and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced. (I’m concerned that we will still be dealing with the same issues as last time) 21 I fear that when I come… I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of… (these things).**

**Last chap - Paul moves from a defensive posture to a offensive posture**

**2 Cor 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.**

**Paul follows Jesus in Matt 18 (Deut 17:6, 19:15 principle) if there are accusations about himself and others.**

**2 I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again, I will not spare them— (I told you the last time I was there those issues need to be dealt with – there will be discipline. I pray they repent before I get there.)**

**3 since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you but is powerful among you. (You want to see God's power at work in me - you will in a rebuke - if things are not dealt with – “God disciplines those whom he loves”) 4 For he was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.**

**Christ on the cross appeared weak - but he was showing his mighty power to save us - likewise you think I'm weak - here comes the boom! I’m on my way!**

**Next week – the last – Paul asks them to examine themselves to see if they are “in the faith” are you really a Christian?**

**Confrontational Lessons - What can we learn from this section?**

**Who here is good at confrontation? For some it’s easier than others.**

**1. Don't be afraid to confront difficult issues**

**Paul did not hold back - but in his love for them that he confronted.**

**Paul had a godly jealousy for their devotion to the Lord. (2 Cor 11:2) He spoke to them as a loving spiritual Father and friend repeatedly.**

**2 Cor 12:14 …I seek not what is yours but you.**

**I love you too much to let this go. I love our relationship so much that we need to talk it out.**

**We are to confront out of love which overrides any fear we might have.**

**1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.**

**Paul was willing to address serious divisive issues in others and the church - 11 Sins that undermine unity in a church: (V.20-21)**

* **quarreling (discord – division – strife)**
* **jealousy (human jealousy for others gifts or possessions)**
* **anger (fits of rage, short tempered people)**
* **hostility (rivalries, selfish ambitions over others)**
* **slander (speaking evil of others, backbiting)**
* **gossip (whispering secretes - true or not - about others)**
* **conceit (arrogance and pride – superiority over others)**
* **disorder (chaos, instability, confusion)**
* **impurity (unclean, defiled actions and attitudes, lack of restraint)**
* **sexual immorality (sexual activity outside God’s design)**
* **sensuality (lewd conduct, sexual jokes and behavior)**

**Romans 15:1 - We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.**

**God's grace & courage gives us the compassion and passion to lovingly confront even the hard stuff.**

**2. Be sure the details are accurate**

**2 Cor 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.**

**If there are accusations about himself and others - Paul refers to an OT principles and Jesus’ challenge.**

**Deut 19:15 “A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. (Deut 17:6)**

**Matt 18:15 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. (ascertain if this is true) 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (consider them as one who needs Jesus)**

**Make sure the details are accurate – confront privately, then take 2-3 witness – after that tell it to the church (leaders). Engage church leadership in correction.**

**This applies to church leaders too - 1 Tim 5:19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.**

**3. The goal of confrontation is always restoration**

**Paul was writing not only as an apostle – but as a spiritual father motivated by love for them – he wanted them restored. Calling them to repent and receive discipline.**

**2 Cor 2:6 For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, 7 so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.**

**1 Cor 5:4 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.**

**Galatians 6:1 - Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.**

**James 5:19 My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, 20 let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.**

**The goal is not being right – to belittle – prove a point, mock – or make someone feel small or controlled… but to restore.**

**4. Stand up for those who are in the right**

**2 Corinthians 12:11 I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. (You should have stood up for me to these people)**

**They should have risen to his defense. When you see an innocent friend attacked – say something!**

**It shows your commitment to them and to the truth. So many times, we sit in silence while injustice rolls over them.**

**5. Never give up on people**

**2 Cor 13:2 I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again, I will not spare them…**

**They called him names, cursed him, lied about him, tried to break up his relationships, and claimed he was a thief - but Paul never gave up on them as individuals or as a church.**

**1 Thess 5:14 - And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.**

**What if they keep making the same mistakes?**

**Luke 17:3 - Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”**

**We don’t burn bridges, and we don’t give up on people.**

**One day, you might be the person they come to for help.**

**What if they don’t receive it or get mad at me?**

**\*\* If it’s a sin issue - Jesus said – treat them like a lost person.**

**\*\* If it’s a personal offense – forgive them and leave it to God.**

**\*\* If it is harmful, abusive, or violent – forgive and remove yourself.**

**\*\* If it is illegal – forgive them and notify the authorities.**

**Romans 12:17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” 20 To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

**\*\*\* Forgive them, bless them, and leave it to God.**

**To The One Confronted:**

**1. Failure does not mean you’re out**

**2 Cor 12:21 …I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented… (these things).**

**Paul repeatedly says - deal with before I come – there’s still an opportunity to get things right.**

**2. It’s simpler than you think – Repent**

**Paul was not expecting perfection – but repentance.**

**Repentance is a change of mind (a turning) that results in a change of action. We repent to God and then the one you hurt.**

**The issues of this letter are not about those who have sinned – but those who have sinned and not repented.**

**This is the big idea of 2 Cor - trials & troubles are real - friends fall out and fall away - things do not always go as planned - but Jesus is greater and is making me more like him in the middle of it all.**

**Even if we make mistakes - stumble - fall - we don't give up or give in. We get up make it right, and do what is right.**

**I don’t know if I can. I’m not strong enough to tell them. I don’t know if I’ll be able to receive it if confronted.**

**2 Cor 13:4 For he was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.**

**The same power of God that raised Christ from the dead can give you the power to confront when needed and the power to receive the confrontation.**

**Next week! Paul asks an important question for all of us.**