



EPISODE 4: II CORINTHIANS FEBRUARY 7/8

I. CONTEXT (FROM THE ESV STUDY BIBLE)

<u>Book</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Recipients</u>	<u>Place of Writing</u>
2 Corinthians	Paul	55–56	Church in Corinth	Macedonia

II. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

- a. While I Corinthians focused most on issues outside the church—about being a Christian in a totally pagan environment, II Corinthians is mostly concerned with issues inside the church. In First Corinthians, Paul was dealing with the question, “*How do you believe and live like a follower of Jesus Christ when everyone in the world around you says you are crazy to believe?*” II Corinthians deals with that question, plus the question of “*How do you deal with tension within the covenant community?*”
- a. In II Corinthians, Paul continued addressing issues within the Corinthian church. His primary purposes included defending his apostolic authority, addressing misunderstandings, and encouraging the Corinthians to live out their faith authentically. It is intended to accomplish three overlapping purposes: (1) to strengthen the faithful majority and the purity of the church (primarily chs. 1–7); (2) to complete the collection as the expression of their repentance (primarily chs. 8–9); and (3) to offer the rebellious minority one more chance to repent before Paul returns to judge those still rejecting him and his message (primarily chs. 10–13).¹ Paul also sought to reconcile with the Corinthian believers and reinforce the importance of generosity, sincerity, and loyalty in their relationships.

III. WHAT IS PERSONAL AND PRACTICAL?

- a. **Paul’s Change of Plans and the painful visit**
 - i. *I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace.¹⁶ I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. (2 Co 1:15-16)*

¹ Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 2220). Crossway Bibles.

- ii. ...² For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. ² For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? ³ And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. ⁴ For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you. (2 Co 2:1-4)

b. Paul's Suffering and the Cost of Discipleship

- i. **10** I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!—² I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh. (2 Co. 10:1-6)
- ii. But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. ²⁴ Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷ in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. (2 Co. 11:21-33)
- iii. ...⁷ So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Co. 12:7-10)

IV. WHAT IS POWERFUL (DOCTRINE)?

a. THE GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION:

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us **the ministry of reconciliation**; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ **For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.** (2 Co. 5:16-21)

II CORINTHIANS

The cross of Christ, embodied in the suffering of his apostle, unmasks the erroneous teaching of “false apostles” and “servants of Satan.”	11:13–15
In fulfillment of Jer. 31:31–34 and Ezek. 36:26–27, Paul is a servant of the new covenant (2 Cor. 3:6), whose ministry and message of the cross mediates the Spirit of the living God and God’s righteousness to believers.	3:3, 6–9; 5:14–15, 21
Endurance amid adversity and Christlike behavior, both made possible by the grace of God and modeled by Paul himself, are the greatest display of God’s presence, power, and glory in this fallen world.	1:12–14; 6:1, 14–7:1; 9:13–15; 12:7–10; 13:4
The presence and power of the Spirit transforms believers into the image of God seen in Christ, which is the dawning of the new creation characterized by the righteousness of God. Believers therefore embody the new creation of the new covenant by living for the sake of others. This is made possible by the reconciliation with God brought about by the cross.	3:18; 4:4, 6; 5:15, 17–21
Repentance expresses itself in holiness, which is defined as a purity-producing love for God and his church and a unity-creating love for one’s neighbor.	6:14–7:1; chs. 8–9
Christ, as Savior, is also the universal Judge, who will one day pass judgment on all people according to their deeds. In anticipation of this day, the Spirit transforms those in whom he dwells as a guarantee of the “eternal weight of glory” to come for believers at the resurrection.	1:14, 22; 3:6, 8–9, 18; 5:5, 9–11

V. WHAT IS PROBLEMATIC (CONTROVERSIAL)?**a. Spiritual Weakness**

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶ being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete. (2 Co. 10:3-6)

b. Deception

³ But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴ For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. (11:2-4)

VI. WHAT IS POETIC (THE RHETORICIAN-- JUST BEAUTIFUL)?

a. Treasure in Jars of Clay

- i. ⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. ¹¹ For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us, but life in you. (2 Co. 4:7-12)

b. Our Heavenly Dwelling

- i. ¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. ⁵ For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Co.4:16-5:1)

VII. WHAT IS PRAYERFUL (THE PART HE PRAYS TO GOD)?

⁷ But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. ⁸ For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. (2 Co. 13:5-8)
Your restoration is what we pray for. ¹⁰ For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down. (2 Co. 13:9-10)

VIII. PASTORAL SUMMARY

- a. **The Cheerful Giver:** ⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. (2 Co. 9:6-8)

IX. Live in Peace

¹¹ Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³ All the saints greet you.
¹⁴ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Co. 13:11-14)