

2 Corinthians 1:15-2:17

Lessons from Life

1. The situation
 - a. The church of Corinth was very young – it had only been in existence for 3 years
 - b. The believers were still immature in their faith
 - c. Paul had written a painful letter full of correction (1 Corinthians)
 - d. Paul had cancelled a planned visit
2. The church's response
 - a. Some were hurt by Paul's words and tone
 - b. Some took offense and attacked Paul in his absence, accusing him of being untrustworthy (among other things)
3. Paul's response
 - a. As his letter hurt the feelings of some Corinthian believers, so their attacks against him hurt Paul
 - b. Paul demonstrated Jesus' way of dealing with the attacks of others - 1 Peter 2:23 - "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."
 - c. Paul took the time and trouble to explain why he wrote as he did and why he changed his plans, assuring them of his love for them
4. What do we learn from these verses? We learn that:
 - a. God makes himself – and his will for us – known, not through angelic visitations or in moments of ecstasy, but in the ordinary flow of daily life
 - i. Sometimes through conflicts
 - ii. Sometimes through joy
 - b. Matthew 5:39 - When we are attacked, though we are tempted to strike back in order to defend ourselves, we should respond in love.
 - c. What does responding in love look like?
 - i. Making sure we don't deserve correction ourselves, through mixed motives or a harsh spirit
 - ii. Making sure our words were not misunderstood
 - iii. Making sure our motives are understood
 - d. Romans 8:28 - Whether others intend to hurt us or not, God works for our good
 - i. Genesis 50:20 – "You meant evil . . . but God meant it for good"
 - ii. 2 Corinthians 1:18 – "For all the promises of God find their Yes in Jesus"
 - iii. 2 Corinthians 1:22 – "God has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a down-payment of greater things to come."
 - iv. 2 Corinthians 2:11 – Don't forget we have an enemy – Satan – and we must not let him outwit us, "for we are not ignorant of his designs"