

**2 Corinthians**  
**Verses 2:1-11**  
**Forgiveness**  
**June 26, 2011**

**C.S. Lewis wrote: “Everyone says that forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have to forgive someone.”**

**I. What is Paul’s Basis for Judging in the Following Passage:**

2 Cor 2:1-4

- 1 So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you.
- 2 For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved?
- 3 I wrote as I did so that when I came I should not be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy.
- 4 For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

**II. Forgiveness**

Forgiveness and judging are highly related. Forgiveness of our sins by God is an obvious theme throughout the Bible. A theme less visited is forgiveness of men by other men.

Two general words are used for forgiveness in the NT:

1. charizomai <sup>^5483^</sup>, "to bestow a favor unconditionally," is used of the act of "forgiveness," whether divine, <Eph. 4:32; Col. 2:13; 3:13>; or human, <Luke 7:42,43> (debt); <2 Cor. 2:7,10; 12:13; Eph. 4:32>.
2. aphiemi <sup>^863^</sup>, primarily, "to send forth, send away" (apo, "from," hiemi, "to send"), denotes, besides its other meanings, "to remit or forgive" (a) debts, <Matt. 6:12; 18:27, 32>, these being completely cancelled; (b) sins, e. g., <Matt. 9:2,5, 6; 12:31,32; Acts 8:22> ("the thought of thine heart"); <Rom. 4:7; Jas. 5:15; 1 John 1:9; 2:12>. In this latter respect the verb, like its corresponding noun (below), firstly signifies the remission of the punishment due to sinful conduct, the deliverance of the sinner from the penalty divinely, and therefore righteously, imposed; secondly, it involves the complete removal of the cause of offense; such remission is based upon the vicarious and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ.

The word used in 2 Corinthian is “1” above. In the gospels, Jesus is usually using “2,” as in Luke 6:37

Do the quiz!!!! (See last page)

### **III. Enough Already**

**2 Cor 2:5-6**

**5 If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent-- not to put it too severely.**

**6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him.**

The commentaries that I consulted all referred to 2 Cor. 2:5-11 refer to the incestuous man of 1 Cor. 5, either directly or as a distinct possibility, even though the name of the person or the situation is not indicated. While the context of this passage seems to refer to a specific situation, it is probably best to consider this passage as a general teaching on people forgiving people...it is the longest such passage in the Bible.

Paul has just stated that he did not want to grieve the Corinthians too much by making a painful visit. He builds on this thought by asking that the Corinthians not punish others too much as well. Apparently, the punished was administered by some kind of majority. Given that Paul is saying that he goes along with whatever the majority has decided, there may well have been a difference of opinion on how to punish the individual. In 1 Cor. 5:4, Paul directs the collective church to determine the punishment, but it is not clear if that is what majority means here.

### **IV. Forgive and Comfort**

**2 Cor 2:7-9**

**7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.**

**8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.**

**9 The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything.**

Why is it so hard to forgive someone? Has he learned his lesson, or will he do it again? Has his pain at least equaled the pain caused? Does your heart permit forgiveness?

In the Christian setting, the only purpose for punishment is to restore the individual. Any other purpose is wrong. (See Gal. 6:1-2) If the punishment is too severe, then this may cause the person to sin even more. Instead of pushing the individual too far, the goal is to encourage him; after punishing to show that his actions were sinful, then love can be used to encourage the individual to do right. In verse 9, Paul extends this thinking to the way in which he has

disciplined and worked with the Corinthians themselves. It should be noted that separating the act of forgiveness and the act of punishment is important.

## **V. Forgive, Forgive, Forgive**

**2 Cor 2:10**

**10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven-- if there was anything to forgive-- I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake,**

Does Paul suggest that absolution from a Priest is necessary?

The exact meaning of the verse is a little difficult to discern. The Greek only has three “forgives.” The NIV adds two more for its translation, while the NAU adds one, plus an extra “it.”

My best interpretation is that Paul is simply telling the Corinthians that it is their responsibility to forgive. Likewise, if they forgive, he also forgives. Refraining from forgiveness is not an option (See Mark 11:25). The reason for us to forgive is for ourselves and is stated in the next verse.

## **VI. Satan’s Schemes**

**2 Cor 2:11**

**11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.**

If we are not willing to forgive, we sin.

If this passage refers to church discipline and if our punishment is too severe, then we may push someone into Satan’s arms. If our punishment is the result of a heart of stone, then we sin ourselves. For me the guiding passage on church discipline is: **Gal 6:1-3**

**1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.**

**2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.**

**3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.**

## **VII. Homework: What do the phrases “the letter of the law” and “Spirit of the law” mean to you?**

The section next time is what brought these phrases into the English language?

## **A Simple Quiz on Man's Judgment and Forgiveness**

True or False

- |    |   |          |          |
|----|---|----------|----------|
| 1. | It is always wrong to judge someone             | T        | <b>F</b> |
| 2. | We should always forgive others                 | <b>T</b> | F        |
| 3. | Friends never judge friends                     | T        | <b>F</b> |
| 4. | Forgiveness means that no punishment is needed. | T        | <b>F</b> |

Other Questions:

1. Why should we forgive others?

Answers: So that God will forgive us. (Mark 11:25)

It is good for our relationship with God. (Matt. 18:35)

Others do not have to give account to us, only to God (Rom. 14:12-13)

2. How will we be judged if we judge others?

Answer: In the same way we judge others (Matt. 7:1-2)

3. Name some reasons why we may need to judge others.

Answer: Judging of false prophets (Matt. 7:20)

Church discipline/restoration (Matt. 18:15-17)

Judging to help others (Gal. 6:1-2)

4. How many times should we forgive someone who asks for forgiveness?

Answer: 77 times, or no limit (Matt. 18:22)

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