

SECOND CORINTHIANS

Chapter 7

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

7:1 *cleanse. ourselves.* Though the Christian is declared clean by Christ's righteous sacrifice (1Co 1:30; Rm 4:24–25; 1Pt 2:24), repentance and forgiveness remain daily activities of the Christian life (Gal 5:24–6:4; 1Jn 2:1). (TLSB)

defilement of body and spirit. Sins of thought, word, and deed contaminate body and soul (Mt 15:11; 1Co 6:18). (TLSB)

holiness to completion. Becoming like Christ (cf Eph 5:1–2; Php 1:6). (TLSB)

6:14–7:1 Our relationship with Jesus is intimate because we, as believers, are “the temple of the living God” (v 16). Our faith calls us to break from those things that would compromise our life with Jesus. The good news is that God's promises are sure even when we are unfaithful. God calls us to claim the promises of His gracious presence again and again through repentance and forgiveness. • Lord, give me the confidence to trust in You more boldly and to separate from the things of the world that would jeopardize my faith. May it be even more apparent that I belong to You alone. Amen. (TLSB)

Paul's Joy

2 Make room in your hearts[b] for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy. 5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. 8 For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. 9 As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. 11 For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. 12 So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. 13 Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14 For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true. 15 And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.

7:2 *We have ... wronged no one.* Implies that Paul had been accused by the false teachers of being unjust, destructive and fraudulent—the very things they themselves were guilty of. (CSB)

7:3 Again he declares the depth of his affection for the Corinthian believers and appeals to them to respond, contrary to the wishes of the false teachers, by displaying their love for him, their genuine apostle (cf. 6:11–13). (CSB)

to die together and to live together. The Corinthians and Paul share the deep, common bond of the Christian life, namely, dying in Christ to sin and living a new life together by the Holy Spirit's power (Rm 6:1–4). (TLSB)

7:4 *I am filled with comfort ... I am overflowing with my joy.* The long digression that started at 2:14 concludes here on this note of exhilaration. The news he had been so anxiously awaiting from Corinth has turned out to be good and reassuring, and Paul is overjoyed to receive it. (CSB)

Titus's good report (vv 13–14) alleviated Paul's concern for the Church at Corinth, expressed by his sending of Timothy (1Co 4:17; cf 2Co 2:4). (TLSB)

7:5–6 *when we came into Macedonia ... God ... comforted us by the coming of Titus.* Here Paul resumes the account he began in 2:12–13, where he described how his hopes of meeting Titus in Troas were disappointed and how, restless for news, he had decided to press on into Macedonia. He now explains that on reaching Macedonia, he was at last comforted by the arrival of Titus, who brought the news he most wanted to hear concerning the situation in Corinth. Titus himself had been well received in that city and was able to assure Paul (see v. 7) of the “longing” and “ardent concern” of the Corinthian Christians for him and of the “deep sorrow” they had expressed for the grief they had caused him. Consequently, his “joy was greater than ever.” (CSB)

There were outward struggles against people hostile to the Gospel; such response brought inward fear to those who preached Christ (cf Ac 16:19–23; 17:13; 19:23). (TLSB)

7:6 *comforts the downcast.* At the moment of Paul's greatest concern and deepest fears, God brought him good news concerning the Corinthians' faith (cf 6:1). (TLSB)

7:7 *comforted by you.* Titus journeyed to Corinth to deal with the issues confronting the Church sometime in the spring or summer, AD 55. His work there was well received, which was a great comfort to Paul as their spiritual father (1Co 4:15). (TLSB)

7:8–9 *I do not regret it ... I did regret it.* Paul did regret the necessity of writing a letter to the Corinthians that caused sorrow to them. However, it was not the actual writing that he regretted, but the situation that required the writing. Moreover, the fact that the letter had the desired effect made him happy, for their sorrow did not leave them embittered and hostile but led them to repentance. They became sorrowful as God intended, and so were benefited, not harmed, by the letter. (CSB)

Though it caused pain, it had to be done, as the results demonstrated. (TLSB)

grieved into repenting. The Law changes the heart, making it open to God's mercy. (TLSB)

godly grief. Guilt over sin is part of repentance (cf Ac 20:21). (TLSB)

7:10 *Godly grief... worldly grief.* The former manifests itself by repentance and the blessing of divine grace; the latter brings death because, instead of being God-centered sorrow over the wickedness of sin, it is self-centered sorrow over the painful consequences of sin. The letter's primary purpose was not to deal with the notorious offender in Corinth or the person he had injured, but to test their loyalty and devotion to Paul as their apostle. (CSB)

Destructive guilt abandons a person in despair (e.g., depression), which can result in physical and spiritual death (Rm 6:23). "The preaching of the Gospel must be added so that the repentance may lead to salvation and not to the Law's contrition or terrors" (FC SD V 9). Contrast the examples of Peter and Judas (Mt 26:69–75; 27:3–10). (TLSB)

7:11 *eagerness to clear yourselves.* Repentance has "fruits" (Lk 3:8), one of which is to try to clear up what was wrong. (TLSB)

proved yourselves innocent. Godly repentance and godly forgiveness was now powerfully at work in their lives (cf Ps 103:11–14; Heb 8:11–12). (TLSB)

7:12 *revealed to you in the sight of God.* Paul wanted them to recognize fully the genuineness of his service to them on God's behalf (see notes, 6:11–13). (TLSB)

7:13 Titus was relieved, for the congregation's problems were dealt with in repentance and forgiveness. Their desire to mend what was broken also brought Paul deep comfort and peace of mind. (TLSB)

7:15 *obedience.* The Corinthians' willingness to follow Paul's admonitions reflected their repentance and faith. (TLSB)

fear and trembling. Responses associated with God's royal presence (see note, Ps 2:11), showing the Corinthians' respect and reverence for the Word of God Titus declared to them. (TLSB)

7:2–16 Paul shares the ups and downs of ministry and his great joy in hearing that the Corinthians' faith in Christ was solid again. We Christians are often guilty of hoarding Christ's great love, rather than making room in our hearts for others (cf v 2) God has loved us with an everlasting love through Jesus Christ. To open up our hearts to others, to let them know of Christ's love, is to experience again the joy of that great love of God for all. • Lord, teach us daily how great, how long, how wide, and how deep is Your love for us and for every person in this world. And teach us the joy of seeing others come to faith. Amen. (TLSB)