

**Workshop Title: Steps to Remaining Focused in the Midst of Storms**

**Workshop Text: 2 Corinthians 2:12-17**

**Workshop Purpose: To call the hearer to find encouragement in their calling as a result of ministry storms.**

**Workshop Proposition: There are 4 encouraging truths for the faithful slave servant.**

**Introduction:** The call to the ministry in the local church is an invitation to unparalleled blessing and unequalled privilege. But at the same time, it is an invitation to discouragement, difficulty, depression, sorrow, pain, and despair. It includes bright midday sunshine and pitch dark nights. (**2 Cor 2:3; 11:28-29**)

“Charles Spurgeon wrote: ‘Fits of depression come over the most of us. Usually cheerful as we may be, we must at intervals be cast down. The strong are not always vigorous, the wise not always ready, the brave not always courageous, and the joyous not always happy. There may be here and there men of iron, to whom wear and tear work no perceptible detriment, but surely the rust frets even these; and as for ordinary men, the Lord knows, and makes them to know, that they are but dust.’” (“The Minister’s Fainting Fits” in *Lectures to My Students*, First Series [Reprint; Grand Rapids; Baker, 1980], 167)

**(Acts 9:13-15, Romans 5:1-5; Philippians 1:27-30)**

1. 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 – Sex Immorality
2. 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 – Law Suits
3. 1 Corinthians 7 – Marriage and divorce
4. 1 Corinthians 8:1 – Pride
5. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 – Lord’s Supper abuse
6. 1 Corinthians 12:3 – Spiritual gifts abuse, etc.

**I. The pastor/leader is encouraged by a passionate burden from God. V.12-13**

**II. The pastor/leader is encouraged by his triumph in Christ. V.14**

**III. The pastor/leader is encouraged by his influence for Christ. V.14c-16**

**IV. The pastor/leader is encouraged by his entrustment from God. V.16-17**

**I. The pastor/leader is encouraged by a passionate burden from God. V.12-13**

A. The passionate burden to preach. V.12a

The slave of Christ has a burning burden to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified and the outworking of that reality.

Paul wanted to minister to them. The Corinthians shut the door to his ministry to them, but that didn’t stop him from ministering elsewhere.

Therefore, he changed his plans, he went to Troas, and because he was faithful in seeking ministry, the Lord opened a great door for him to serve.

B. The passionate burden for the church/churches. v.12b

Paul had a deep concern for troubled churches and for those who ministered to them. No word had come from Titus or the status of the church.

**Acts 20:31** "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

**2 Corinthians 11:28** besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

**2 Corinthians 12:20** For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and *that* I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest *there be* contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

**1 Thessalonians 3:10** night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

C. The passionate burden for a fellow worker. V.13 (**1 Corinthians 7:5-16**)

## II. The pastor/leader is encouraged by his **triumph** in Christ. V.14

- A. Thankful for the honor of being led by the **sovereign** God. V.14a (**1 Timothy 1:12-16**)
- B. Thankful for the honor of the **victory** parade in Christ. V.14b

“That background is triggered by the word in verse 14, “triumph.” That word “triumph” is a technical term, and it had some very significant meaning in the Roman world. The Romans had what they called, “a triumph,” It was the highest honor that could ever be paid to a victorious Roman general. When the Roman government gave a general a triumph, that was the ultimate. Before any Roman general could be granted a triumph, he must have achieved certain things. He must have been the actual commander-in-chief in the field, and not a secondary leader; the campaign that he engaged in must have been completely finished; the region which was conquered completely pacified, and the victorious troops brought home. Furthermore, according to Roman history, 5,000 of the enemy, at least, must have fallen in one engagement so that it fell into the category of a slaughter. Furthermore, as a result of this campaign, a positive extension of Roman territory must have been gained, and not merely a disaster retrieved or an attack repelled. And the victory must have been won over a foreign foe, and not in a civil war. Triumphs didn’t happen very often.

But in actual triumph, the procession of the victorious general marched through the streets of Rome all the way to the capitol. And you can even read about the sequence of that march and the order of the people in the parade itself. First, there came the state officials and the Senate – always the politicians. Then there came the trumpeters, who were heralding what was coming. Then came the spoils taken from the conquered land, carted along. For example, when Titus conquered Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the seven-branched candlesticks, the golden table of showbread, the golden trumpets were carried through the streets of Rome in his triumph. Then there came some painted pictures of the conquered land and some models of conquered citadels and conquered ships. Then there followed the white bull, which was gonna be offered as a sacrifice to the gods. Then there came the wretched captives, the enemy princes, leaders, and generals in chains, shortly to be flung into prison and, in all probability, to be executed. Then there came the, what were called lictors, or punishers, who were beating these people with rods. And then there came the musicians. And then there came the priests swinging their censers with the sweet-smelling incense burning.

And then came the general himself after all of this huge entourage. He was in a chariot drawn by four horses, he was clad in a purple tunic embroidered with gold and palm leaves, and over it a purple toga marked out with golden stars. In his hand he had an ivory scepter with a Roman eagle on the top of it, and over his head a slave held the crown of Jupiter. And after him rode his family. And finally, at Triumph!

And all this massive procession moves through the streets of the city, all decorated and garlanded with flowers all shouting and, along the edge of the road of course are these mobs of people cheering. It was a tremendous day – a day which probably happened once in a lifetime.

That is the picture in Paul’s mind. He sees the conquering Christ, who has triumphed throughout the world, and Paul is in the triumphal parade. That’s what he means in verse 14, when he says, “Thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ.” Do you understand that? In the midst of despair, discouragement, depression, he is catapulted to a completely different level. And he begins to realize the privilege of being a part of the conquering army of the triumphant Christ. And it changes everything in his perspective.” [From a sermon by John MacArthur entitled “Triumphing Over Discouragement in the Ministry”, 2 Corinthians 2:12-17, Code: 80-138]

What Paul pictures is a triumphant parade in Christ. God Himself is looking after the slave/servant, never taking His eyes or care of His faithful servant away. (**John 16:33; Romans 8:25-27; 1 John 5:4-5; Revelation 2:26; 3:5; 3:12; 21:7**)

### III. The pastor/leader is encouraged by his influence for Christ. V.14c-16

- A. The sweet fragrance of Christ everywhere. V.14c
- B. The sweet fragrance of Christ to God. V.15a  
The picture of the message of Christ, being spread makes an impact.
- C. The sweet fragrance of Christ dual impact. V.15b-15c
  - 1. Impact on those being saved.
  - 2. Impact on those who are perishing.  
(1 Peter 2:7; John 3:19-20)
  - 3. To the unsaved, to those who reject Christ, the message is a message of death. Christ is either counted as precious and accepted or counted unworthy and foul.
  - 4. To those being saved it represents life giving fragrance. Christ is either loved as the light of the world or hated as the light of condemnation.

### IV. The pastor/leader is encouraged by his entrustment from God. V.16c-17

- A. The slave servant is encouraged by the empowerment of God. V.16c  
The noun “equal or adequate” (hikanos) means “to be sufficient, large enough, or large in number or quantity and also generally to be fit, appropriate, competent, qualified, able or worthy. (Moses comparison “hikanos”; Exodus 4:10 Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I *am* slow of speech and slow of tongue." 11 So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? *Have* not I, the LORD? 12 "Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.")

- B. The slave servant is encouraged by the example of God. V.17a  
We are not like those who are adulterating the Word of God for profit as so many do. Hofermann’s reexamination of the primary evidence shows that Paul refers to “selling the Word of God as a retail dealer sells his wares in the market.” (Hefermann, “Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit, 106-25, p. 124)

The “watered down gospel of het ‘many’ was neither offensive enough to lead to destruction nor powerful enough to lead to salvation. The qualified man of God does not peddle or be a huckster. It means (kapeleuontes) to peddle, to adulterate, to whittle down, to containment, to tamper with the Word of God. It means to mix things into the Word of God, personal ideas, speculations, the latest religious fads, novel ideas.” (Matthew 22:29; 2 Corinthians 4:2). To survive in the market place the peddler must adapt to the market either by making sure that he has what people want to buy or by tricking them into thinking they want to buy.

- C. The slave servant is encouraged by the effectiveness of God. V.17b

The qualified man is sincere (eilikrineia). This means that the slave servant motives are pure and unadulterated, his motives have been shaken and culled through a sieve. The slave servant is unstained and untainted when inspected. God has called, and he is gripped by the necessity to serve God.

**Philippians 1:10** that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,

**Titus 2:7** in all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,

**2 Corinthians 3:4** And we have such trust through Christ toward God.

**2 Corinthians 3:12** Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—

Paul and all of us can be honest, blunt, and forthright because he does not and is not concerned for profit margins, or market share. He does not water down his directives to make them more profitable or pleasing for the disobedient.

D. The slave servant is encouraged as the **emissary** of God. V.17c

- 1) The qualified slave servant is called by God and realizes he is sent by God. He has a commission, and he fulfills it by the empowering grace of God, and lives to please the Lord God first and foremost.

Therefore, the concern for profit, position, or prestige does not undermine his sincerity, or cause him to adjust his teaching to what the audience wants to hear. Paul's manner, motives, and methods are determined entirely by God's grace in his life and not by worldly cunning deception.

**2 Corinthians 4:2** But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

**2 Corinthians 12:19** Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But *we do* all things, beloved, for your edification.

- 2) The qualified slave servant speaks about Christ, because he is in Christ.  
(**2 Corinthians 5:11-16, 20-21**)

He does not speak his own message, by his own power, but out of his fellowship and empowerment of Christ. He does not speak in his own energy and strength, not does he make himself the subject matter.

**Matthew 28:20** "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

**Luke 24:32** And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

**Hebrews 10:22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Taught by the Spirit

**1 Corinthians 2:13** These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

**1 Corinthians 7:40** But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment-- and I think I also have the Spirit of God.

**1 Corinthians 12:3** Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 4:13** And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak,

- 3) The qualified slave servant serves, lives, and is always consciously aware of God's presence, knowing he lives, moves, and has his being in the sight of God every moment of every day.