

Parson to Person

2 Corinthians 1 (Part 6)

~Repeated from Last Week~

“For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit—to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Corinthians 1:12–22).

Integrity is the greatly needed attribute in ministry—layman or clergy alike. Those who name the name of Christ should (above all things) be a people of love: *“godly sincerity.”* Love demands honesty, clarity, trustworthiness, accountability, and transparency.

Those who profess to love must understand that love is others-centered, tells the truth, and is therefore trustworthy.

Relationships built on deception, complexity, manipulation, selfish-ambition, and self-seeking are sure to fail.

Paul's "*conscience*" was clean before the Lord and the Corinthians. His motives were with pure and offered in "*simplicity*"—not with confusing or vague language designed to blur, distract, or skirt important details. He was exact, straightforward, and intentional—based upon genuine love for the Corinthians. However, even still, a group in Corinth were accusing Paul of falsehood and deception—coupled together with wordplay and selfish interest. A rumor, gossip, accusation or denial of truth, does not suggest error on Paul's part. His communications were clear and his "*conscience*" was clean.

Paul had planned on visiting the Corinthians on his way to Macedonia, but something in the plans were readjusted by the Lord and therefore the plans earlier communicated were true but nonetheless fell short of completion. What happened? We don't know.

Of a certainty, Paul saw the benefit of visiting with the Corinthians and would indeed "*benefit*" from a visit with them. However, he was motivated to provide them the "*benefit*" of his presence in order to help settle them in the trust he desired to develop and directly answer his critics. Of this I admire Paul.

"Rumors are always worse than the truth." Therefore, a face-to-face visit is generally the best approach to putting out the fires of gossip and misinformation.

With this in mind may I remind you:

- 1) Tell the truth.
- 2) Note that telling the truth does not always insure that all said or done is known or foreknown.

- 3) Telling the truth is always designed to benefit the hearer. Therefore, exposing others to things that harm may not be the manifestation of love.
- 4) Love demands that we *“believe all things,” “hope all things,” “endure all things.”*
- 5) Believing the best of others may seem naïve—and may prove to be problematic.
- 6) Trust is the firm foundation of a good relationship: lack of trust is the sandy soil of certain collapse.
- 7) Broken trust is difficult to rebuild—but *“with God nothing shall be impossible.”*
- 8) Integrity demands transparency if questioned.
- 9) A lie begets future lying—unless corrected.
- 10) Repentance is the fruit of love.

Paul was honest but disbelieved by the selfish.

Paul was transparent and stood before the Lord with integrity.

Paul was transparent and stood before the Corinthians with honesty.

Paul had a clean conscience.

Selflessness, integrity, honesty, and a clean conscience provided Paul the courage to face those he loved. Paul had the peace of God ruling in his heart.

“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”

I love you all,
Pastor Paul