

CFM 36 – 2 Cor. 1-7 “Be ye reconciled to God”

Potomac Crossing Ward, Ashburn Virginia Stake

September 14, 2019

S. K. Neumiller

Subject

In First Corinthians, Paul is arguing against Hellenistic cultural baggage among the Ecclesia, or outside influences of the world. In Second Corinthians, Paul is arguing about enemies from within.

In this letter, Paul is principally encouraging the church at Corinth to be closer to him, the ecclesia and the Lord. In the opening of the letter in the KJV (1:3-7), Paul repeatedly uses the word “comfort”, which is the Greek term:

parakaleō

The KJV translates Strong's G3870 in the following manner: beseech (43x), comfort (23x), exhort (21x), desire (8x), pray (6x), intreat (3x), *miscellaneous* (4x), variations of 'besought' (1x).

Outline of Biblical Usage

1. to call to one's side, call for, summon
2. to address, speak to, (call to, call upon), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc.
 1. to admonish, exhort
 2. to beg, entreat, beseech
 1. to strive to appease by entreaty
 3. to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort
 1. to receive consolation, be comforted
 4. to encourage, strengthen
 5. exhorting and comforting and encouraging
 6. to instruct, teach

Paul is not trying to ingratiate himself with anyone at Corinth who was offended by the previous letter. Rather, Paul's desire is they be united with him and Jesus Christ, and enjoy the benefits of being spiritually united with them. This is very much his challenge at the end of the letter in ch. 13, for them to test themselves and make sure they are following Christ's teachings.

Paul is apparently walking a fine line with the church at Corinth, because some new interlopers have appeared on the scene there and they are trying to lead the church away from Paul and towards themselves. They are actively criticizing Paul, and he has to defend himself from their accusations, while encouraging the church at Corinth to stick with him.

“It is evident from 2 Corinthians that Paul's opponents in Corinth were a group (“many,” 2 Cor 2:17) of persons (*hoi kapēleuontes*, “hucksters” or “peddlers,” 2 Cor 2:17) who had

“come” to Corinth (2 Cor 11:4–5) from outside (their “letters of commendation,” 2 Cor 3:1) where they and their message had been “received” (2 Cor 11:4, 20).

It emerges from 2 Corinthians that these newcomers legitimated their [service] in Corinth by “boasting” (*kauchasthai*, 2 Cor 10–12) of their achievements, “contrasting” (*synkrinein*, 2 Cor 10:12) their strengths with Paul’s weaknesses. In their missionary journey to Corinth they have come a greater, Paul a lesser, distance (2 Cor 10:13–14). They have “letters of commendation” (from Jerusalem?); Paul has none (2 Cor 3:1–3). They are “sufficient,” triumphant figures; Paul is inadequate, a sorry figure as he limps from place to place in defeat (2 Cor 2:14–3:5; 4:1, 16). Extrapolating from remarks Paul makes about himself, some scholars affirm that these experiences were being claimed by his opponents. They are men of divine power (“beside” themselves, 2 Cor 5:13), “caught up ... out of the body ... into paradise” where they see “visions” and hear “revelations” of what “cannot be told” (2 Cor 12:1–5), whereas Paul is mundane, a minister without power, worldly and weak (2 Cor 10:3–6; 12:1–10; cf. 2 Cor 5:12–13). Possibly they performed “the signs of an apostle” (2 Cor 12:12) whereas, they allege, Paul did not. They are powerful in speech (2 Cor 11:5–6) and in wisdom whereas he is in speech “unskilled” and in general “a fool” (2 Cor 11:1–12:13). In all things he is “inferior” (cf. 2 Cor 11:5), whereas they are superior, “better” (hyper, 2 Cor 11:23).

– *Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., Dictionary of Paul and His Letters (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 647.*

The text itself is somewhat muddled. It is clear Paul is in distress over the situation at the church in Corinth, and has probably also had some personal health problems, which may still be affecting him (1:8-9, 7:5-7, perhaps 12:7 as well). Paul is apologetic, but defensive. This letter is not cut and dry like that of First Corinthians, it is more emotional and more personal.

Another problem with the text is, like First Corinthians, only one side of the story. We don’t have the rest of the letters to more fully establish the context, so we are left with only this one text to ferret out the details and strain for implications.

Major Themes

Among the dozen or so topics discussed, it is clear Paul has some main points.

- 1) Be united with the larger Church, not divided (ch. 1, 13).
- 2) Paul responds to the Church’s reaction to his previous letter, i.e., the text of First Corinthians. In that letter he reprovved the church over a number of false doctrines and bad practices, and he follows up with them in this letter (ch. 2, 7).
- 3) Paul defends himself against some recently arrived false teachers who are promoting themselves at his expense. It is not at all clear who these people are. They clearly have at least some Christian doctrine. Chapter 3-5 suggests they are Judaizers, as Paul is arguing against the Law of Moses in favor of the gospel of Christ, which makes no sense when preaching to Greeks, unless the false teachers are attempting to

Judaize them. These interlopers are much more charismatic and eloquent than is Paul, and take advantage of his absence to disparage him (1:15-19, 2:5-11, 4:2, 9:10, 11:6, 12:20-21). Paul defends his apostolic calling (ch. 4) and does not shrink from it (ch. 5).

- 4) Asks for donations to support the ecclesia at Jerusalem (ch. 8-9). The issue of money is an issue in this text because he doesn't preach the gospel for money (11:7), but these newcomers do (2:17). Paul is asking for money for the church, while the interlopers want money for themselves. It appears the church at Corinth has not sent money to Paul as requested, instead they have retained it or given it to the interlopers. Corinth being a wealthy city, it would be a prime location for grifters.

CFM 36 – 2 Cor. 1-7 “Be ye reconciled to God”

Subject

In this letter, Paul is principally encouraging the church at Corinth to be closer to him and the Lord. In the opening of the letter in the KJV (1:3-7), Paul repeatedly uses the word “comfort”, which is the Greek term:

parakaleō

The KJV translates Strong's G3870 in the following manner: beseech (43x), comfort (23x), exhort (21x), desire (8x), pray (6x), intreat (3x), *miscellaneous* (4x), variations of 'besought' (1x).

Outline of Biblical Usage

3. to call to one's side, call for, summon
4. to address, speak to, (call to, call upon), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc.
 1. to admonish, exhort
 2. to beg, entreat, beseech
 1. to strive to appease by entreaty
 3. to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort
 1. to receive consolation, be comforted
 4. to encourage, strengthen
 5. exhorting and comforting and encouraging
 6. to instruct, teach

Paul is not trying to ingratiate himself with anyone at Corinth who was offended by the previous letter. Rather, Paul's desire is they be united with him and Jesus Christ, and enjoy the benefits of being spiritually united with them. This is very much his challenge at the end of the letter in ch. 13, for them to test themselves and make sure they are following Christ's teachings.

Paul is apparently walking a fine line with the church at Corinth, because some new interlopers have appeared on the scene there and they are trying to lead the church away from Paul and towards themselves. They are actively criticizing Paul, and he has to defend himself from their accusations, while encouraging the church at Corinth to stick with him.

“It is evident from 2 Corinthians that Paul's opponents in Corinth were a group (“many,” 2 Cor 2:17) of persons (*hoi kapēleuontes*, “hucksters” or “peddlers,” 2 Cor 2:17) who had “come” to Corinth (2 Cor 11:4–5) from outside (their “letters of commendation,” 2 Cor 3:1) where they and their message had been “received” (2 Cor 11:4, 20).

It emerges from 2 Corinthians that these newcomers legitimated their [service] in Corinth by “boasting” (*kauchasthai*, 2 Cor 10–12) of their achievements, “contrasting” (*synkrinein*, 2 Cor 10:12) their strengths with Paul's weaknesses. In their missionary journey to Corinth they have come a greater, Paul a lesser, distance (2 Cor 10:13–14). They have “letters of commendation” (from Jerusalem?); Paul has none (2 Cor 3:1–3). They are “sufficient,” triumphant figures; Paul is inadequate, a sorry figure as he limps

from place to place in defeat (2 Cor 2:14–3:5; 4:1, 16). Extrapolating from remarks Paul makes about himself, some scholars affirm that these experiences were being claimed by his opponents. They are men of divine power (“beside” themselves, 2 Cor 5:13), “caught up ... out of the body ... into paradise” where they see “visions” and hear “revelations” of what “cannot be told” (2 Cor 12:1–5), whereas Paul is mundane, a minister without power, worldly and weak (2 Cor 10:3–6; 12:1–10; cf. 2 Cor 5:12–13). Possibly they performed “the signs of an apostle” (2 Cor 12:12) whereas, they allege, Paul did not. They are powerful in speech (2 Cor 11:5–6) and in wisdom whereas he is in speech “unskilled” and in general “a fool” (2 Cor 11:1–12:13). In all things he is “inferior” (cf. 2 Cor 11:5), whereas they are superior, “better” (hyper, 2 Cor 11:23).

– *Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., Dictionary of Paul and His Letters (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 647.*

The text itself is somewhat muddled. It is clear Paul is in distress over the situation at the church in Corinth, and has probably also had some personal health problems, which may still be affecting him (1:8-9, 7:5-7, perhaps 12:7 as well). Paul is apologetic, but defensive. This letter is not cut and dry like that of First Corinthians, it is more emotional and more personal.

Another problem with the text is, like First Corinthians, only one side of the story. We don't have the rest of the letters to more fully establish the context, so we are left with only this one text to ferret out the details and strain for implications.

Major Themes

Among the dozen or so topics discussed, it is clear Paul has some main points.

- 1) Be united with the larger Church, not divided (ch. 1, 13).
- 2) Paul responds to the Church's reaction to his previous letter, i.e., the text of First Corinthians. In that letter he reprovved the church over a number of false doctrines and bad practices, and he follows up with them in this letter (ch. 2, 7).
- 3) Paul defends himself against some recently arrived false teachers who are promoting themselves at his expense. It is not at all clear who these people are. They clearly have at least some Christian doctrine. Chapter 3 suggests they might be Judaizers. These interlopers are much more charismatic and eloquent than is Paul, and take advantage of his absence to disparage him (1:15-19, 2:5-11, 9:10, 11:6). Paul defends his apostolic calling (ch. 4) and does not shrink from it (ch. 5).
- 4) Asks for donations to support the ecclesia at Jerusalem (ch. 8-9). The issue of money is an issue in this text because he doesn't preach the gospel for money (11:7), but these newcomers do (2:17). Paul is asking for money for the church, while the interlopers want money for themselves. It appears the church at Corinth has not sent money to Paul as requested, instead they have retained it or given it to the interlopers.