

## 2 Corinthians 1:23- 2:11

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 21 April 2024

[ 0 : 00 ] Bible is going to go into the book of 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians chapter 1. We're going to pick up in verse 23, which is where we left off last week.

2 Corinthians chapter 1. These new mics are so sensitive. That's why I'm so careful not to turn them on. But then they come on real quick.

I'm a little loud, brother. I'm hearing myself. You can kind of tone me down just a little bit. Some of you in the back should have said amen right there. If you can tone him down just a little bit, that'd be nice. But 2 Corinthians chapter 1.

We're going to pick up in verse 23, and then we're going to get into the second chapter and go to verse 11 of the second chapter. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, would you join together with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God, found in 2 Corinthians chapter 1, picking up in verse 23.

But I call God as witness to my soul, that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth, not that we lord it over your faith, but our workers with you for your joy.

[ 1 : 08 ] For in your faith you are standing firm. But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again. For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad, but the one whom I made sorrowful?

This is the very thing I wrote to you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice, having confidence in you all, that my joy would be the joy of you all.

Excuse me. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote to you with many tears, not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree, in order not to say too much, to all of you. Sufficient for such a one is this punishment, which was inflicted by the majority.

So that on the contrary, you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. Wherefore, I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

[ 2 : 09 ] For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also. For indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Let's pray. Lord, I thank you so much for the opportunity which we have together together today. Thank you, oh God, for the grand privilege it is of worshiping with brothers and sisters in Christ, of hearing of your great work that is going on all around us through the word of God.

Lord, what a privilege it is to stand with one another, to read and to hear the word of God in our own presence. So Lord, we pray that you would speak to us now, speak to our hearts and minds, speak clearly, and Lord, speak pointedly, that we may live it out for your glory, and we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. You may be seated. Amen. We have been looking at, the last couple of weeks, the book of 2 Corinthians.

If you remember, Paul is writing this second letter which we have recorded. It is not second in nature because more than likely it is the third letter which he wrote to the church at Corinth. But he is writing this second that we have recorded for us in the word of God, not for the purpose of admonition only or not to correct a problem, but to encourage the believers to live authentically.

[ 3 : 44 ] He is encouraging them to live out their faith in an authentic nature among those whom they have been placed and put among. He is encouraging them to live it out in truth and in sincerity.

And he is encountering a number of things introductory as we get into the first chapter of it and on into the second chapter which he needed to address before he could really get to the point of his letter.

But this morning, I want you to see the authentic accountability of the godly community. I know that's a long title. Stay with me. It is the authentic accountability of the godly community.

That part of this authentic living would be to live it out authentically among one another with godly accountability for his glory. It is called not only to correct one another, but to live alongside one another.

Paul is writing to a local church, the church at Corinth. Sure, the church that he is writing to will take this letter and also share it with those around him. But this is not typical of what we would call the circular letters of Paul which he would take a letter and he would write it and write it a letter to the book of Ephesians, by the way.

[ 4 : 58 ] The church at Ephesus, if you remember, some of the earliest recordings. I do not record the name. It says to the church and it's kind of a blank there in some of the earliest writings. It was originally sent to Ephesus but it was intended to be sent also to every other church around Ephesus.

And it was a church of encouragement to all of the churches in that region of the world. Paul here is writing to a local church, the church at Corinth, and addressing local matters. And in such, he is dealing with some specifics that pertain to that local church but we can see the application and the implication that it has for us as a local church.

There were matters that needed to be dealt with in the first letter, 1 Corinthians. If you remember, predominantly there were matters of immorality, there were matters of malpractice, there were matters of them taking the Lord's Supper in vain, some were coming and just rushing to the table.

There were things that were causing great discord and division, popularity among preachers and people having an affinity for this individual. And Paul was dealing with those matters pointedly and specifically and was correcting them.

When he comes to the book of 2 Corinthians, he is now, after dealing with those, encouraging them to live out their faith in an authentic nature. We have the tendency, I'll go ahead and introduce it here even though we don't know it, to say that what Paul is addressing in our passage here has its parallel in 1 Corinthians chapter 5.

[ 6 : 17 ] It may be so or it may not be so. If you remember in 1 Corinthians chapter 5, it was the immorality that Paul said was named even among them that a man had his father's wife, that a man after his father died had taken his father's wife and they had been wed together and Paul says this is immorality that's not even named among the Gentiles and Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 that they should put this man outside of the church, that they should go into corrective church discipline.

Paul says, I have handed such a one over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh and the preservation of his soul. You know, this real good loving Paul who's handing individuals over to Satan. Some would say that we have the answer to that found in our passage before us this morning.

We may, but it could be something totally different. We don't really know. So we need to come with the availability, allowing the Lord to be free, that we don't pigeonhole it and we don't put it in a box and say, well, Paul was dealing with that specific individual.

Notice, Paul never names the individual in this passage. And I'm thankful for that so that we can say that this is an isolated event and that's how Paul dealt with an event in isolation. Paul is dealing with matters that happen in a local church.

So we have all those things on the front end and how the church should live in authentic accountability with one another. Paul is writing to this church and if you remember by way of introduction, Paul has had to defend himself as to why he did not come because at the end of 1 Corinthians in the 16th chapter, the very last chapter, in the 5th verse, Paul had said that he was on his way there.

[ 7 : 55 ] He was going to go to Corinth on his way of his missionary travels. Paul never did that. Historically, we know that he never went. Some people inside of Corinth said, oh, well, Paul was just bluffing. He was just calling us out.

Paul is not a man of his words. He writes these weighty letters but in action, he's really not all that strong and they were kind of rebuking Paul and correcting him and saying Paul was just really blowing smoke so to say.

That's how we would say in our day and time and Paul was a little bit kind of put back by this because remember, Paul had spent longer at Corinth than he had anywhere else. Paul was not only the founding pastor of the church and raised up the elders in that church, Paul had spent longer at Corinth than he had anywhere else and he had invested in these individuals.

So Paul begins to defend himself not based on what others say about him or even the faithfulness of his own ministry. Paul defends himself on the testimony of his own soul and we began to look at that last week how Paul says that with a clear conscience he had served the Lord and that he was not just saying these things to brag and to boast and he was not saying these things to kind of bluff people into obedience.

He finishes the account here but rather he was dealing it with sincerity and in godliness. He was allowing some things to take place really ensuring that the letter which he sent would serve its purpose rather than his person being present.

[ 9 : 15 ] Now all those things are important so that we can rightly understand what Paul is dealing with here. I want you to see the first thing as we look at the authentic accountability of the godly community.

Number one I want you to see the position of the local church. This is why it is so connected to what precedes it and why we need to rightly understand the accusation that was going against Paul and how Paul had defended it.

Paul says there in verse 23 but I call God as witness to my soul that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth. Now let me go ahead and say this we need to say this on the front end so that we have this matter settled.

What the Lord testifies to us inwardly is so much more important than what we hear outwardly with our ears. That is what God says to our inner man is so much more than what other people say about us and we can hear.

So Paul says I call the Lord as witness to my soul. That is he's giving God the opportunity and the authority to search his soul and to put him on trial and say God am I doing this for ulterior motives or did I do this with godly sincerity.

[ 10 : 27 ] What God testifies to us inwardly is so much more important than what others say about us externally. It doesn't matter what we hear with the listening ear really what matters is what God testifies to us in the inner man.

So friend that is why we cultivate that relationship with the living and active word of God and allow the spirit of God to speak to the heart of the individual. We want to know what it is that he says to us and Paul here is putting himself on display.

You know as the psalmist cries out search me oh Lord and try me know my desperate ways understand my heart Lord help me to know me I know I'm paraphrasing help me to know me the way you know me I want you to search me and try me and put me on trial that I may know what's going on.

This is exactly what Paul is saying. Paul says but I call God as my witness to my soul that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth. So he says with all sincerity I didn't come to you. Now what is he sparing them from?

That's why we need to look at the passage right? Paul says to spare you. So what? Paul was going to go you know with a whip and beat them or Paul was going to go do something on the extreme? No Paul says I wanted to spare you what follows.

[ 11 : 34 ] Look at what follows. Not that we lord it over your faith. Here we begin to see the position of the local church. Now stay with me these matters are of utmost importance. especially to us as local individuals.

He says not that we lord it over your faith. So here we see it is what Paul is trying to spare them from. Paul could have at any moment went to Corinth and exercised what we would call apostolic authority.

That is Paul was an apostle born out of due season. He had met the Lord on Damascus Road. He had spent three and a half years in the wilderness of Arabia being taught in the school of Christ literally with Christ as his mentor and teacher.

Paul had the signs of every apostle upon him. Paul bore in his body the brand marks of Christ and at any moment Paul could have and on the authority of the apostles dictated and determined what the church should do.

But he didn't. And what he didn't do is of great importance because Paul says I do not lord it over your faith.

[ 12 : 44 ] He says you are a local church. You are a local body of believers. So rather than coming to you and making you do something because of the authority that I possess I want to what does he say but are workers with you for your joy.

So rather than telling the local church how you should respond in matters of faith and practice he said I wrote this letter so that I could come beside you and encourage you in matters of faith and practice and admonish you and sure rebuke you but I wanted to strengthen who you were locally because the authority of the church in its locale is not exceeded the authority of another individual somewhere else.

Now that's important. Now in Southern Baptist life they believe in the autonomy of the local church. That's a good way of saying it is that every local church has the right to to vote and to dictate and determine who their own pastor. There are other matters of church governance.

We can look at any other different ones that some pastors are there because the denomination says that the pastor is going to be there and the denomination proper has the opportunity to move pastors and to put pastors in the buildings and the premises don't belong to the local church and I'm not here to dictate which church governance is right.

I'm in one of those that you could have a meeting tonight and vote me out. That's the Southern Baptist life. You can also have a special called meeting. Actually you got to announce it twice so it can't be tonight. You can have it Wednesday. You can announce it today.

[ 14 : 12 ] You can announce it tonight and you can have it Wednesday and I can not be your pastor anymore next Sunday. That's the way that would happen. You'd have to have a majority of people there. I know how many votes it takes. You'd have to have a lot of people there but anyway it could happen.

That's the autonomy of the local church but what we need to understand here especially when we begin to look at church history and we begin to look at these matters of church governance and it's okay if we look at doctrines and things like that on Sunday mornings.

It doesn't make our brain smoke too much. That we are in a unique position as a local church because we are a local representative of the body of Christ of which he and he alone is the head.

And we have the authority in that position to determine faith and practice. We're not dependent upon any man to come in and exercise even apostolic authority over us and tell us what we should do.

Rather we look to Christ as those outside of us and even from within us encourage us to walk in faith and walk in faithfulness and we look to Christ as the head and the head dictates what we as his body do.

[ 15 : 21 ] Now that is a good thing but it also brings with it much responsibility. That is we as a local church are in a unique position that not only do we have the right to determine that but what does he say for in your faith you are standing firm.

That is we cannot and we dare not stand on the faith of another individual. The church stands in their own faith. The reality is that the strength and the power of the testimony of the local church is the local church's responsibility.

The problem is in the pew and the pulpit. We say well the denominations are doing that denominations and you know the universal church is weak and all those things. No let's bring it on down to where really it is our responsibility.

I have shared with a number of people privately and I don't mind sharing it publicly and I'm fully aware that I know we're streaming and all those even though thankfully we don't have this huge platform so these things don't go viral if anything ever goes viral it would have to be something like this but it doesn't matter.

These matters are not I don't have to be Southern Baptist but I have to be biblical because we are not determined and dictated by denominations we are determined and dictated by scripture and it is the position of the local church to make sure that they're walking in faithfulness to the Lord.

[ 16 : 44 ] Paul did not swoop in and tell the church what to do. Paul walked alongside the church and encouraged them sure but he also reminded them that they were in the position to deal with their own matters.

That is when there's a problem in the church that's the church's problem. When there's joy in the church that's the church's joy. It is the position of the local church.

Friend I believe I believe in the universal church that is I believe that just so we can go through all this really quick I believe that God has individuals who are not Southern Baptists you know Southern Baptists aren't the only ones in heaven.

I'm praying it's not it's okay we can be in glory maybe some of our little bit free spirited brothers and sisters will be there and liven up that worship around the throne so maybe some of our maybe dogmatic legalistic will be there to teach us the reverence of silence and not so carried away and you know this beautiful blend of glory I believe in the church universal but I am a firm believer in the church local that is that's where God does the work to individuals because it is the power and the position of the local church that God is called to be the bride of Christ and we see this here we don't want to get lost in this universal reality but we also don't want to forfeit our position as a local body but we see the position of the local church number two we also notice here the personal concern for other believers there's a personal concern Paul goes on he says that to spare you and he determines this he says in verse two but I determined this for my own sake that is according to my own wisdom that I would not come to you in sorrow again so he says I don't want to come being sorrowful I don't want to be upset and he begins to share the reality he said because if I came and I upset you then who would there be to make me rejoice he said if I caused you sorrow then who would make me joy but the very one in which

I call sorrow so we see here this principle that believers ought to be the greatest hope and source of joy to other believers right we rejoice with those who rejoice we mourn with those who mourn but our joy our true joy is found in Christian fellowship this is why the local church is so important this is why when we come together we understand the reality of it the forsaking not dissembling together of one another is not a legalistic matter really it is for our joy and our encouragement and our fitting for godliness and Paul says I did not want to come and cause you sorrow because my intention is that I would come and you would cause me joy and he said and I'm trusting as well that you would be joyous when I am with you I have some great brothers in Christ who are all around the world and some of them you know one of my great brothers in Christ and we support them as a church plan is brother Kirk I love calling brother Kirk I love calling him up on the phone and I can encourage with him and I get joy not only from church pastor because we have over 60 so he said oh it's the mega church pastor from war trace

[ 19 : 35 ] I said yeah that makes a lot of sense right mega church in war trace in the sea but brother Kirk does radio program in Utah trying to get the message out to the LDS so I'm the mega church pastor and he's the radio personality but it's just such joy that we can have in our fellowship one with another we create joy in that fellowship that's the way the body is to be when we come together right Paul is saying that when I come to you I want to be full of joy in your presence I want to be full of sorrow because I want to encourage you in your walk again we notice what Paul is doing here and then Paul says that he wrote this letter to them but look at what he says in verse four for out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears now if this is the matter in which Paul and I say if because we don't know for sure if this is the matter of which Paul wrote about in first Corinthians five it very well could be a matter of that what some people refer to as the lost letter the letter that was between first and second Corinthians in which people were rebuking Paul for not coming and Paul wrote him a quick letter and sent it by the hand of one of the people that were with him there it could have been either one but if this is the matter in which

Paul and if he wrote this according to one matter we can assume that Paul would write all matters this way so when Paul says I have handed such a one over to Satan we cannot say well look at how Paul is just being so mean and so so bigoted and so angry because Paul says that he's doing it with anguish of heart and bitterness of soul and with many many tears he's really broken over the reality of what's going on and if Paul is encouraging the church and he does to do church discipline then we understand that Paul is not doing it because he wants the matter to be right he's doing it because he has a concern for the individuals Paul says I'm sharing a truth that is difficult to hear because I care it is love and truth I'm going to tell you what you don't want to know I'm going to tell you what you've been trying to avoid and I'm going to tell you very pointedly because you need to hear it for your own sake see the difference someone once said that if we were to go to the offending brother or sister with tears and anguish of heart and if we would go to them with much affliction and confront them in their sin it would be so much more than just going to them and thumping them over the head and telling them they're doing wrong because Paul says

I'm concerned about you Paul bore a personal concern for the other believers he didn't want to cause them sorrow but even in his rebuke he was doing it with a broken heart he was going before them and saying you know with many many tears I'm writing to you of all this wrong that is taking place within your congregation things that matters that must be addressed and it is of this same spirit that Paul is writing to them and encouraging them to walk in faithfulness listen Paul is not trying to get jewels for his crown in heaven Paul is trying to ensure that others are walking in faithfulness and obedience and they're receiving a blessing of the joy of fellowship with Christ and Paul is broken over the sins of these individuals with the same reality of the sin in his own life remember the testimony of Paul the longer Paul walks with Christ the less he sees of himself he would say in Galatians 2:20 nevertheless you know I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live it's no longer I who lives but Christ who lives inside of me Paul would also define himself as apostle born out of due season and then eventually by the end of his writings he says I am the chief of all sinners so he went from being apostle born out of due season to be the greatest of all sinners why because the longer he walked with

Christ the more he saw of himself and the more he encouraged others to walk in faithfulness the more he realized his own weaknesses friend listen to me obedience to Christ does not lead us to a state of perfection obedience to Christ leads us to a place of humility where we say I fall woefully short I am not yet what I should be but I press on towards the call of heaven I'm pushing on towards the hope of the upper call that one day he will make me what I should be the longer we walk with Christ the longer we walk in sweet fellowship we don't see ourselves as having arrived but rather we see the great need that we have of a savior we cannot get over grace and mercy may we never get over grace and mercy because we need it each and every day and may we constantly be those who go with a broken spirit and a broken heart crying out to others that they may realize the joy that we have found in Christ if you have found comfort for your soul in any in Christ at all if you who know the desperate wickedness of your own heart have found peace that passes understanding in Christ don't you want others to have it as well and don't you go to them with weeping and crying and saying brother I'm not trying to offend you because as

Barnes said in Barnes notes the greatest offense to a brother is to leave a known sin unconfessed and the greatest offense that you can ever render to a brother is to allow them to walk in sin and never oppose them because you're allowing them to walk in unfaithfulness to the Lord and not finding the restoration of their soul it is not to confront the individual in their sin the greatest offense is to allow them to live unchallenged but if you go to them do not go to them with this high-handed spirit of Phariseeism go to them with a broken heart saying I am a sinner too and I want to encourage you to find hope where I have found it see that's the local church and that's authentic accountability it's not an accountability that says you're wrong and I'm right it's accountability that says let me show you where I have found the right for all my wrongs and let me walk with you in yours and it is calling individuals out so that you may know not so that you may feel better because you've cleaned the place up but because you know the Lord wants to restore them and use them for the glory of the kingdom it is a personal concern for other believers which leads us to the third thing and that is the purpose of godly discipline the first mentioning we have of the church is in Matthew 16 Matthew 16 you know where it is is there when Caesarea

[ 25 : 35 ] Philippi Jesus asked who the men say that I am and and they say well some say John the Baptist some say Elijah some say this some say that and then Jesus gets personal he says but who do you say that I am and Peter says that you are the son of God you are Jesus Christ the son of the living God in this confession of Peter the first mentioning of the church Jesus says a flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my father which is in heaven has revealed this to you by the way you ought to pay notice of that because the very first mentioning of Jesus Christ the Savior the very first admittance that he is Savior is not something you gain on your own that is if you confess who Jesus Christ is it is because the father has revealed it to you stop right there that's a great doctrine you need to understand it right this is big stone thing the only way you ever confess who Jesus Christ is is because there is a God who reveals it to you that is he is the initiator you didn't find it out yourself if Peter can walk with Christ and not come to that realization after walking on the water seeing the multitudes fed seeing the dead raised and seeing all the miracles he did if Peter didn't go man I got it figured out now I know who it is if the only way he could ever confess who Jesus Christ is is because the father revealed it then if we can confess who Christ is it is because the father has revealed it to us matter settled friend listen to me salvation is the initiation of the

Lord God almighty not the work of man and we just stand in that and that is awesome because the only way we come to Christ is because we're drawn now this is a good doctrine that I like and I know sometimes you say well I kind of get tired of hearing it no it gives me certainty in my salvation because if it's something I figured out there's the danger that maybe one day I'll figure something else out and I could lose it but if it's something that the father revealed to me and he has called me and all of his great work and mercy and all these things then the assurance is not found in who I am but in who he is and it is a wonderful thing Peter makes this confession and Jesus Christ upon this profession I will build my church boom first mentioning of the church right and the gates of hell will not prevail against it the church is on the offensive we're we're on the move second mentioning of the church you ever know where that is right because the gates of hell first mention a law first mention I know I'm getting a little preachy on you and it's a little long on Sunday mornings it's okay it's why we don't have clocks on the walls somebody say well I got it in my phone or on my wrist I do too I just don't look at it anyway so anyway we we have this second mentioning now the law first mention is say whatever is in scripture is going to stay consistent with the very first mentioning that's ever done there so in the beginning God created



Adam and Eve and then and you know he made Eve and he put the two together and he says for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother be joined together his wife and the two shall become one first mentioning of marriage which means everywhere else in scripture even though you meet some twisted definitions of marriage in scripture and you see you know Solomon has all these wives and all these things Solomon has twisted the law first mention it's not supposed to be that way for this reason a man should leave his father and mother be joined together to his wife singular that's law first mention anyway so we see this all throughout scripture church is mentioned in Matthew 16 first time and it is pushing back the gates of hell second mentioning of the church so it's going to stay consistent that's Matthew 18 you're saying with me right so just a couple chapters over and it is there that we begin this practice of church discipline because Jesus says that if your brother offends you or sins against you then you ought to confront your brother you ought to go to him personally and if he does not listen to you as you go to him personally then you ought to go to him with two or more and if he does not listen to you two or more then Jesus says then you take him before the church so Jesus again brought the church up now the church the purpose of the church is to push back the gates of hell stay with me and one of the things that will hinder that purpose of the church is when there's sin in the church so there has to be church discipline so we see here now church discipline is instituted Paul is exercising church discipline in 1st

Corinthians 15 or 1st Corinthians 5 and following he here is addressing it as well and this shows us why do we do church discipline okay so let's go it says in verse 6 sufficient for such a one is the punishment which was inflicted by the majority notice one thing Paul does not do Paul does not name the individual we have no record of who he is or who this one is and Paul does it so that this individual his name is not smeared because this is a brother in Christ is not public not publicly known it's not put out there Paul just says for such a one so that means he could be another individual to sufficient for such a one is the punishment that has been inflicted by the majority so he's saying the church has done what they're supposed to do they've went through the principles of church this one they've set the individual outside the church we're not getting into all that but we need to know this where Paul says sufficient it means that church discipline has an end in the matter that is it comes to a conclusion at some point so you're not putting the individual out of the church forever there is a goal in mind and this is where we begin to see this because this is the loving the the heartbrokenness that we see of Paul he says so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him we'll come back to in just a minute he says wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him for this and also wrote that I might put you to the test where you are obedient in all things Paul says that the purpose of church discipline is not removal but restoration you need to understand that the purpose of church discipline and calling out sins if an individual won't repent privately calling them out publicly is not so that people will be removed but rather so that they would be restored so that the church could be what the church is supposed to be it is for the restoration of the individual

Paul says the end of it is that you would not forget them but that you would walk beside them if you confront an individual in their sin you have accomplished half of it when that individual repents and confesses that sin he says then you are to walk beside them and love and comfort and reaffirm your love to that individual so that they do not be overwhelmed with excessive sorrow and if you read in other translations the legacy standard Bible says that he has graciously forgave graciously forgiven graciously forgiven graciously forgiven that is the forgiveness that we extend to those who have sinned against us or even among us should reflect the forgiveness that we receive in the presence of Christ so that how we deal with sin is really a reflection of how God deals with our sin go back to that law first mention the very first time God ever deals with sin is in the book of Genesis right Genesis is good you got to understand Genesis to understand anything else Adam and Eve they fall Eve takes of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil each from it and gives it to Adam who is with her so Adam sins knowingly Eve was deceived Adam sins knowingly and he chose to do it he said well if she's going to fall

[ 32:12 ] I'm going to fall with him too how does God respond to sin well we notice how it does God comes to them right God didn't have to come to them in the cool of the day God came to them looking for them calling them out do you think that God had to ask them where they were at I mean he's God but he came to them seeking them out and then he made a covering for them right so how does God respond to sin he's confront he's confrontational he comes and says what have you done and he goes to Adam first is Adam what have you done he said well I took from the fruit which the woman gave me and I ate it okay as soon as he says I ate it God leaves it alone and he goes to Eve Eve what have you done well the serpent deceived me and told me the fruit looked good so I ate it okay so then he goes to the serpent now serpent there's no restoration we see that he says well you know you're going to be on the dust and we see the proto evangelium in Genesis 3:15 but what it does God goes to the individual and waits for an admittance and an acknowledgement of the sin then he moves forward in grace and mercy and provides a covering for them in their sin so how do we respond to sin God put them out of the garden sure because that was the natural outcome of their sin he doesn't remove the effects of their sin but he does not forsake them either he walked with them everything else we have in scripture is God walking with man and love and grace and mercy as they repent of their sins and this is how we do this is the purpose of church discipline it is to restore the individual not to remove the individual fourth and finally and I'll be done it's the one thing that we need to know this is the power of unaddressed sin because if the church alone is in the position to deal with these matters locally and if the church has to have a personal concern for other believers and if there's a purpose behind this type of discipline what if we just choose not to do it what if we don't have anybody writing us a letter calling out to sin that's in our midst what if we just don't do it well there's power in unaddressed sin he says first of all we see the power that is there that maybe we deal harshly with he says that we need to forgive and comfort otherwise such one may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow friend listen to me if you have to confront a brother or sister in Christ in sin know that God is going to use that to bring conviction and that conviction should bring repentance and if that repentance comes then there needs to be affirmation because if not Satan can use that to bring excessive sorrow to an individual that would lead them to uselessness in the kingdom of heaven these are brothers even go all the way back first Corinthians 5 Paul says he'd handed such a one over to

Satan for the destruction of his flesh but what does it say and the preservation of his soul Paul was not dealing with eternal judgment Paul was dealing with temporal outcomes but what we see here is that Paul says so if you if you just don't fulfill your obligation to love and reaffirm that love then we are allowing that individual to live in sorrow that is really not theirs to carry anymore because if they've confessed it and they've repented of it and they've owned it then it's our responsibility to come beside them and to encourage them and to restore them the usefulness in the kingdom so what if we don't do anything with it look at what it says in verse 11 so that no advantage will be taken of us by Satan for we are not ignorant of his schemes so for the church who will not go to the end of church discipline and restore an individual then we know that Satan is using this to bring sorrow and excess to that one but also this harbored bitterness and anger in the individuals gives a platform for the enemy of our souls on which to work when we're holding on to these things and we're upset where they've sinned against us and they've done us wrong then we're giving Satan an opportunity so if we harbor that and say well we can't move past these things then we're doing it in our own assembly but then also if we don't confront it if we don't address it unaddressed sin becomes a great breach in our fellowship and a great platform for Satan to use everything that we see in scripture and it's a reality that we need to understand is that there's no such thing as personal sins because personal sins always have a corporate impact always Achan saw some things took it they went to battle the next day and I and thousands of people died

Achan and his whole household died not until after thousands of others died you go into the New Testament sins of individuals cause corporate problems and it is the church's responsibility to push back to darkness but if we're not careful as one preacher says sometimes Satan comes in the church and quite often he's riding on the back of individuals it's because we're not addressing the issues that are among us this isn't legalistic this isn't dogmatic this is biblical we have a high calling to live in authentic accountability as a godly community in the world in which he's put us in unfortunately Satan gets a grand platform in many many many congregations simply because the congregation will not walk in authenticity with one another we will not be real we'll not open up and we will not confront lovingly if we have to confront an individual let us do it as Paul did with much affliction and anguish of heart with many tears

Charles Spurgeon once said if men and women be damned to hell may they be going there over our weeping bodies and our bent knees as we beg and plead them not to go he was one by the way who completely believed in the sovereignty of salvation found in God and Christ alone he said if they have to go that they must be going may we at least do our part if there be matters in the church that are hindering our usefulness may it be not because we did not try even though we were broken even though we were weeping and we were trying to ensure that the fellowship walked in purity and sincerity for the mutual benefit of all Paul's not writing these things so that his life would be better Paul says it's for your joy your joy because Paul knew that a holy fellowship was a joyous fellowship and he wanted the fellowship of believers in the city of

Corinth to walk in authenticity with one another and that Satan would have no opportunity to do work among them the question is how do we live in that way and how do we handle it as a local assembly nobody comes in and told nobody's going to come in here with any authority and tell us what to do but Christ has already told us how to live and he tells us through scripture and it's our responsibility as a local assembly to deal with it in those matters let's pray well we thank you so much we thank you for your day that you've gifted us we thank you for the opportunity that we have to look at your word we pray Lord now as we take these truths and we allow them to speak to our hearts and minds Lord that you would speak with clarity Lord break our heart over the things in which we should be broken over Lord if we need to repent and confess may we do so if it must be privately Lord may we confess it privately if we need to confess publicly to one may we do that if we need to confess publicly to many may we do that Lord give us a boldness to walk in purity and holiness for your glory we ask it all in Christ's name amen so so so so so