

Faithful in Absence

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Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 0 0] Now, this second chapter of 2 Corinthians really has one overarching theme, which you could say divides into two parts in terms of the actual material here.

And the overarching theme is Paul's love for the Corinthians. The particular responsibility that he feels for them as a church, perhaps, over and above, you might say, many other churches of his acquaintance because of what he understands to be the special relationship between himself and them.

You couldn't say they were his favourite church. I think we have to concede that Virgil Philippi is almost certainly his favourite church in that sense in terms of the relationship of love that is between them.

But in the relationship of the bonding that is between himself and Corinth, the investment that he had made of himself and his ministry in them, the special word that he had from the Lord to them, his love for them cannot be in question.

And that is the overarching theme of this second chapter. But we could also say the chapter divides roughly into two parts. Verses 1 to 11 concerns pretty much his dealing with them in relation to what we must conclude is the subject matter in 1 Corinthians chapter 5, which if you look back you'll see it concerns the individual who was engaged in fornication with his stepmother.

[1 : 3 0] And Paul's having written to them as to what was to be done about that and then their response to that. And then after that, the second part in verse 12 onwards, he was anxious about their reception of what he had said because whether they loved it or hated it, he had to be faithful to the word of God, not to corrupt it.

He had to be faithful to the commission he had been given.

He had to be faithful to the commission of what he had said. He had to be faithful to the commission of what he had said. He had to be faithful to the commission of what he had said. Clearly he has been in Corinth twice by this reference. And if we look a little bit further on, if we were to see in chapter 12, for example, we see chapter 12 at the end, verse 14, behold, the third time I am ready to come to you.

So he's been twice before. The first occasion when he actually planted the church in Corinth and one subsequent time when he clearly had to visit them in a disciplinary sense and laying down the law and so on.

The third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdened simply if I seek not yours, but you. And again, chapter 13, verses 1 and 2. This is the third time I am coming to you.

[3 : 1 0] In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. I told you before and foretell you as if I were present the second time. And being absent now, I write to them which heertiford have sinned and all of her that if I come again, I will not spare.

So he has been twice and the second time he came was in a spirit of heaviness. But I determined this with myself. I would not come again to you in a spirit of heaviness.

What did he done then? Well, we saw at the end of chapter 1 when we looked at it, despite the fact that he had intimated to them his intention to pass through Macedonia and then Corinth into Achaia, that is southern Greece, he had been prevented from doing so.

He had been unable to do so. And we now understand the reason why he had not done so. He had held off. He had restrained his desire to visit so that they would have a chance themselves to sort out this disciplinary problem.

And having sorted it out themselves, they would be the stronger. They would be able to prosper, to flourish. Having seen the problem, had it pointed out to them, dealt with it themselves, they could have a clear conscience before God.

[4 : 25] They could have a clear conscience when they next met with the apostle. They wouldn't have to be sort of hiding in a corner and making excuses and so on. And because they had been faithful, their relationship with the Lord would also prosper.

This is why he says, I didn't come. When I said I was going to, I held off. For if I make you sorry, with a letter, I am emphatic in the original here.

So it's if I make you sorry, who is he there that maketh me glad? But the same which is made sorry by me. How can I hope that I'll have joy in you if I have just made you miserable?

I didn't want to make you miserable, he said. That's why I didn't come. That's why I wrote to you so that you could deal with the problem. And I didn't come myself and then start being in a disciplinary manner again and mourning it over you as it were.

Because he'd said in no uncertain terms, 1 Corinthians 4, verse 21, What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, with a whip, or in love and in the spirit of meekness?

[5 : 32] So he has held off. If I make you sorry, who is he there that maketh me glad? But the same which is made sorry by me. And what he is referring to here is the mutual joy that he desires them to have in him and him and them.

They make him glad when they prosper and flourish and grow in the Lord. And he makes them glad when he comes in a spirit of blessing and of joy.

But he can't do that if they're not dealing with the sin in their midst. But they have done. This is clear from this second chapter. And also if we were to look ahead into chapter 7.

I wrote this same unto you. Lest when I came, he wrote what we now have as referred to as 1 Corinthians. He wrote, you know, laying down the law in no uncertain terms.

I wrote this same unto you. Lest when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice. Having confidence in you all. That my joy is the joy of you all.

[6 : 32] That you want this joy. You want to deal with the problem. You want to put right what is wrong. I trust you that that's the case. That's why I wrote what I did. Now what's better to have an unpleasant part of a letter than you get?

Or for him to turn up in person and deal, you know, in a severe or disciplinary manner with them all. He wants their joy to be his joy. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears.

Not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. Now what does he mean here? He means that it is more difficult for one who loves them to actually speak the truth in love when it is harsh.

When it is difficult. It is more difficult to do that than it is to say, no, no, that's fine. Yeah, yeah, fine. No, just you do what you like. That's not love. If there's a real problem, that's not love.

If you're about to go out the door and somebody in your family says, oh, wow, you really need to take some mouthwash because, oh, your breath is really bad. Now you might be slightly offended, but you'd rather know.

[7 : 45] You'd rather know than go breathing toxic fumes over everybody else. You'd rather be told. Because that's love. Love will tell you, James, you really need to get some deodorant or you really need to take some mouthwash or whatever.

Love tells you that. Because love doesn't want you to go and make a fool of yourself in front of a wider audience. Love tells you when something is wrong. Love seeks to put right the thing before worse damage is done.

And Paul says, this is what I did in love. And it's not an easy thing to do in love. That they were at fault in tolerating that which we find in 1 Corinthians 5, there can be no doubt.

If we go back to that chapter, it is reported commonly that there's fornication among you. And such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

And he had puffed up and have not rather mourned that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I barely as absent in the body, but present in spirit have judged already.

[8 : 52] As though I were present concerning him that had so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. He's invoking God's own name. When you are gathered together and my spirit with you with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To deliver such an one unto Satan. For the destruction of the flesh. That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Now we can unpack a whole lot about that. We looked at that when we dealt with 1 Corinthians 5.

It's not about killing anyone. It's rather in so far as Satan, when somebody is in sin. Satan claims that person. And what is happening, we said, to deliver them to Satan.

It's to let him have his way. Just as if you like, although Job hadn't done anything bad. Satan says, you know, well, of course he's doing good. You've blessed him in every way.

And the Lord says, okay, you're allowed to do what harm to him you like. But you don't take his life. So he takes away all his goods and all the things that he holds bare. And still he holds to the Lord.

[9 : 54] And Satan says, well, skin for skin. You know, let me deal with his own bodily health. And then we'll see how faithful he is. And the Lord allows him to do it. When Satan seeks to inflict damage.

And he has a greater hook to do damage when we are guilty of sin. This is what it means here. To deliver such in one to Satan. Let sin have him for that time.

For the destruction. Not of the body. Because if we are saved, the body partakes in that resurrection and joy and so on. But of the flesh. That is those evil desires and sins and so on.

Which must be corroded. It must be worn away, as it were. Either by a punishment of the church. Here as it speaks about there. Or, almost certainly what is meant here as well.

Is that these kinds of sins bring with them usually their own particular problems. By way of illness or disease or things which are directly related to them.

[10 : 54] But this particular sin is of course explicitly denounced in Leviticus 18 at verse 8. A nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover.

It is thy father's nakedness. To have one's stepmother. Not his biological mother. Of course his stepmother is still a crime against God. Still a sin. And this is what Paul is writing to them about.

And he had said, you know, it's because I loved you that I was so severe with you. The Bible tells it. Psalm 141 verse 5. Let the righteous smite me.

It shall be a kindness. Let him reprove me. It shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head. For yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.

Proverbs chapter 27 verse 6 says. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. It's no use just speaking to us smooth things.

[11 : 55] If what we need is to be taught the right way. If what we need is a word in season. Which is a word that may be difficult to hear. May be harsh and say.

Look everything is not a right in college. You should not be tolerating this. You should not be going along with that. Because it's a sin. And because it's against the word of God. You ought to have dealt with that.

Out of much affliction and anguish of heart. I wrote unto you with many tears. Not that you should be grieved. But that you might know the love which I have. More abundantly unto you.

It is more difficult. To speak the harsh word in love. It is more difficult to exert discipline in love.

And the objective of discipline in the church. Is not to crush the offender. But to reclaim him. To show him the error of his ways.

[12 : 51] To yes have the destruction of that which is sinful. But that he himself or she herself. Might be reclaimed and brought back. And this clearly is what is happening here.

And what Paul encourages them to do. If any have caused grief. He hath not grieved me. But in part. He only grieved me partially. That I may not overcharge you all.

Now what that means is. If I were to say. Well he has really grieved me. He has really done me damage. Oh yes the burden is so great and terrible. Then when he says.

I may not overcharge you all. On whom is that burden of guilt laid? It's not laid simply on the guilty individual. It's laid on the whole church. It's laid on the whole Corinthian church.

Because they can hide at it. They went along with it. They did nothing about it. And so their guilt will be huge. And so if he says. If he's caused grief.

[13 : 48] He's not grieved me. But in part. That I may not overcharge you all. And there is a sense here in which. Grief that has been caused. Has been caused.

Not merely to Paul. But rather has been caused. To the wider Corinthian church as well. They have been wounded. By this action.

They have been grieved. By this sin. And because they are bearing. Part of the grief. Part of the wound. And causing of the grief. It is shared.

Between Paul. And Ben. They feel it. They carry this burden. So he bears only a part of it. That I may not overcharge you all.

Sufficient to such a man. Is this punishment. Which was inflicted. Of many. In other words. By the majority. Is what it means. By many.

[14 : 43] And this indicates to us. That church discipline. As exercised there in Corinth. And by extension. In the wider New Testament. Is not at the whim. Of an individual.

It is not merely. Some episcopal priest. Or bishop. Or whatever. Who sends down. Some magisterial rule. But rather. It is the church as a whole.

Perhaps acting through. Chosen. A group of leaders. Or whatever. As we have in our own. Presbyterian system. Or maybe it is the congregation. As a whole. Which sat as it were.

In judgment. On this individual. But the point is. That Jesus. Specifically. Gave such power. Into the hands. Of his church. Matthew 18.

Of course. If we read from. Verse 16. If he will not hear thee. Then take with thee. One or two more. Then in the mouth. Of two or three witnesses. Every word. May be established.

[15 : 38] And if he shall neglect. To hear them. Tell it unto the church. But if he neglect. To hear the church. Let him be unto thee. As a heathen man. And a publican. Verily.

I say unto you. Whatsoever. Ye shall bind on earth. Shall be bound in heaven. And whatsoever ye shall loose. On earth. Shall be loosed in heaven. Now Jesus is not talking to an individual there.

He's not addressing really. Peter. Or one of the other. Apostles. He speaks to Peter. Explicitly in Matthew 16. But in Matthew 18 here. Where the authorised version.

Helpfully distinguishes. Between the individual. The and thou. And the collective grouping. You and ye. So he says. I say unto you. Collectively. The disciples.

Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth. Shall be bound in heaven. Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth. Shall be loosed in heaven. What the church collectively. Authoritatively.

[16 : 34] Decides. And determines. God in heaven. Will respect. That decision. Albeit of his juniors. Albeit of his subordinates. It's as though if you like.

If let's say you're in the army or something. And you've got a gripe against your sergeant major. As he always seems to be doing something low or bad to you. You don't like the way he treats you. And you go to the officer. You go over his head.

And the officer may listen to your grievances. And he may say. Well yes. You'll take it in hand. But what he is never going to do. Is say. You know. You're absolutely right.

What a terrible guy that sergeant major is. You know. I'm going to take another. And I'll have it out. And I'll sort him out. And I'll tear him off a strip. And bring him down a peg. He's never going to say that.

Because if he does that. He completely subverts the whole system. Of authority. Which is essential. In the armed forces. You have to have a chain of command. He may speak to the sergeant major privately.

[17 : 31] And say. Look. Some of the men are a wee bit upset. About some of the things you're doing. Perhaps you could do this. Or that. But as far as the men are concerned. He is going to uphold his sergeant major. All the way.

Even if he doesn't agree with them. He is going to back. The decision of his subordinate. He is going to uphold. The rigor. Of the chain of command. And authority.

Even if there may be things. That need to be put right. And I would suggest to you. In all reverence. That this is for this man. When the Lord says. Whatsoever you shall bind on earth. Shall be bound in heaven.

Whatsoever you shall loose on earth. Shall be loosed in heaven. Is that. With that in phrase. That has been so much misused. Disused by other churches in the past. Dependent on the promised guidance.

Of the Holy Spirit. That when the church of God. Takes a decision. With regard to discipline. Or the binding. Or using of particular sins. In church discipline.

[18 : 26] That God in heaven. Will uphold that decision. Will respect that decision. For the sake of upholding. The officers.

And the command. As it were. In his church on earth. If there are mistakes. That have been made. Yes. They will need to answer for that. And yes. They must give an account. For every decision.

They have taken. But God himself. Will uphold. And will bind. Or loose. According to what they themselves. Have done. Yes. They have to give an account of it.

But God in heaven. Will uphold it. If any have God's grief. He's not grieved mean. But in part. Sufficient to such a man. Is this punishment. Which was inflicted. Of many. The majority.

Sat in judgment. On the offender. And he was duly punished. Or excommunicated. Or suspended. Or whatever. So that contrary wise. Ye ought rather.

[19 : 21] To forgive him. And comfort him. And it must be the case. That there has been repentance. It must be the case. That the man has seen.

Nearer of his ways. That he has turned from it. Because it makes reference here. Lest you know. He should be. Swallowed up. With over much sorrow. He wouldn't have sorrow. If he wasn't penitent.

He wouldn't have sorrow. If the fact of either. Being suspended. Or put out in the church. Wasn't grieving his heart. If he hadn't perhaps. Broken off. The incestuous relationship.

He was in. And had repented of it. So that is why. He must forgive him. Comfort him. Lest perhaps. Such a one. Should be swallowed up. With over much sorrow.

Now the root of this word. Swallowed up. It's used. Different times. In different places. In the New Testament. It's. It's the word. That is translated. In Hebrews.

[20 : 15] 11. Verse 29. It's translated. A different way. But it's the same root. In the Greek. It says. You know. By faith. They passed through the Red Sea. As by dry land. Which the Egyptians. As seen to do.

Were drowned. It's the same root of the word. Overwhelmed. Submerged. Drowned. 1 Peter. Chapter 5. And verse 8. Be sober. Be vigilant. Because your adversary.

The devil. As a roaring lion. Walketh about. Seeking whom he may. Devour. And it's the same root. Devour. Submerge. Drown. Overwhelm. That's the word that we've got here.

We're swallowed up. With over much sorrow. You can't have him. Drowned. In his sorrow. The objective is not to destroy him. The objective is to reclaim him.

That having had his error pointed out. Having been punished for his error. Having now a sense of grief. And penitence. And sorrow. He then ought to be forgiven. And brought back.

[21 : 14] And comforted. Wherefore. I beseech you. That you would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write. That I might know the proof of you.

Whether ye be obedient in all things. Now what he means when he says did I write. He means this is one reason I'm writing now. I now know that you will obey me.

And be faithful in terms of the discipline. In terms of the severity. Now I need to know. If you'll be faithful to the loving side of discipline.

To the forgiving side. To the welcoming him back in. This is one reason why I wrote. For this end did I write. That I might know the proof of you. Whether ye be obedient in all things.

To whom ye forgive anything. I forgive also. But if I forgive anything. To whom I forgive it. For your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ. Now notice there's a sort of a reflection here.

[22 : 14] Of what we saw in 1 Corinthians 5. When he was speaking in judgment. 1 Corinthians 5 verse 4. He says in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. When you're gathered together.

And my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. To deliver such in one of the sick. So he's talking. Bringing in the authority of Christ. The king and head of the church there.

And now he's bringing in that same authority. For forgiveness. To whom ye forgive anything. I forgive also. But if I forgive anything. To whom I forgive it.

For your sakes. Forgive I it in the person of Christ. If they are binding it. It is bound. Christ acknowledges it. If they are now to loose that sin.

Loose that discipline. And let the person back in. Then Paul says I forgive them too. And Christ also. In his name. Will likewise have him loosed.

[23 : 10] And brought back it again. For gave I it in the person of Christ. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us. For we are not ignorant of his devices.

You see it said in 1 Corinthians 5. About delivering such in one to Satan. For the destruction of the flesh. For those fleshly lusts. And desires. And evil things.

That drew that person into sin. In the first place. These things. Would be corroded. Undermined. By the discipline. And perhaps by the illness. Or disease. That may have attended him.

But Satan is greedy. He wants to have the soul as well. Nothing will please him more. Than this disciplined soul. Should then be so greed. That he considers it so hopeless.

That he gives up altogether. Turns away from the gospel of grace. Turns away from Christ. And just sinks in despair. Satan wants that to happen. But he says.

[24 : 04] We don't want Satan to get an advantage over us. We want this soul to be purged. To be purified. To be reclaimed. We are not ignorant of his devices.

He likes to crush poor souls. He likes them to feel hopeless. He likes them to think. There is no means of salvation in Christ. Drag them down to hell.

He would have been delighted. When somebody like Judas. Betrayed the Lord. And then thought there was no hope. He is delighted with every soul that is lost. He has no pity.

On those who may serve him. However inadvertently. In this world. He desires to grab. And devour. And work well. We are not ignorant of his devices.

We don't want him to have. The advantage over us. How do we stop that? We forgive. We receive back again. The one who is penitent.

[24 : 59] If there is that which it must be sustained. By way of pain or loss. We take it. And we forgive. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us. Just furthermore.

When I came to Tross. To preach Christ's gospel. And a door was opened unto me of the Lord. I had no rest in my spirit. Because I found not Titus my brother. But taking my leave of them.

I went from then to Macedonia. Now the thanks be unto God. Which always caused us to triumph in Christ. Well. What's he on about here? What did he on? Is he talking about Tross?

When he sent him over to Macedonia and help us? He said no. This must be a separate occasion. An occasion not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. To begin with. When he came down to Tross. He wasn't allowed to stay there.

Because the spirit immediately beckoned him in that dream. Over into Macedonia. To come to Philippi. And then down into southern Greece. To Achaia. So he's talking about a subsequent occasion.

[25 : 54] A door was opened unto me of the Lord. He was able now. To proclaim the gospel in Troas. But he had no rest in his spirit. Because he didn't find Titus. What's the big deal about finding Titus?

Well. If you turn on a couple of pages into chapter 7. You'll see the clue. The unlocking of this. If we take from verse 5. For when we were coming to Macedonia.

That's what he makes reference to here. Verse 13 of chapter 2. I went from thence into Macedonia. Clearly. If he couldn't meet up with Titus and Troas. They had agreed beforehand.

To meet up in Macedonia. When we were coming to Macedonia. Our flesh had no rest. Chapter 7 verse 5. But we were troubled on every side. Without were fighting. Within were fears.

Nevertheless. God that comforted those. That have cast down. Comforted us. By the coming of Titus. Okay. Great. Titus. He cheers them up. How? Not by his coming only.

[26 : 52] But by the consolation. Wherewith he was comforted. In you. When he told us. Your earnest desire. Your mourning. Your fervent mind. Toward me.

So that I rejoiced them more. For though I made you sorry. With a letter. I do not repent. Though I did repent. For I perceive that the same epistle. Have made you sorry.

Though it were but for a seizure. In other words. Clearly. Titus was the messenger. With the letter that we now have. As 1 Corinthians. Titus was to take it to them.

And to see. How they would react. How they would respond. To Paul telling them. What they must do. And until he knows. How they are going to respond.

He comes to show us. The appointed meeting place. No sign of Titus. And it's not just. Oh dear. Titus isn't here. It's if I haven't got Titus. I haven't got news. I don't know how you and Corinth.

[27 : 47] Have received it. And so that's why. No rest in my spirit. Chapter 7 tells us. And then Titus comes. It's not. Oh great to see Titus. He's cheerless up. No way. But he brings news.

Of how they in Corinth. Have received. 1 Corinthians. What they have done. About it. When they told us. Your earnest desire.

Your mourning. Your fervent mind. Toward me. So that I rejoice. The more. They have made him glad. By receiving. In the spirit.

In which it was given. His admonition to them. His direction. How they must behave now. What they must do. They have received it. Titus brings the news.

And now. Paul rejoices. I had no rest. In my spirit. Because I found not Titus. My brother. By taking my leave of them. I went into the Mass. And I went. Now.

[28 : 41] Thanks be unto God. Which always. Causeth us. To triumph. In Christ. And maketh manifest. The savour. Of his knowledge. By us.

In every place. Now. There's a sense. In this verse 40. What he's describing here. Is. Like in the Roman Empire days. When they had won a great victory. Or a general had won a great victory.

Then he would be given a triumph. In other words. A great big parade. He rides in the chariot. And everybody's throwing. Laurel reeds. And flowers never had. Everybody's chariot. And all the legions march behind him.

And they would bring with them. A display. Of prisoners. From whoever they had been fighting against. So it might be the king of some Pictish tribe.

Or the leader of the Gaulish nation. Or whatever. And there they would be in chains. Coming behind the victorious child. This is our victory over them. This is our triumph. Look who we have defeated.

[29 : 39] And he says. Rather than being the one. Who is trudging along in chains. Defeated by Christ. He always causes us to triumph. In Christ.

In other words. Christ is the victorious king. But when we are made one with Christ. And in Christ. It's rather. Instead of being a prisoner. Trudging along behind him in chains.

We are up there in the chariot with him. His victory becomes our victory. His triumph is our triumph. Now thanks be unto God. Which always causeth us to triumph.

In Christ. And maketh manifest. Makes a display. It's like the great parade. He is showing to the world. Not. Oh look. We are the poor prisoners. Following Christ.

Look at the victory he has given us. We are up there in the chariot with them. His victory is our victory. He maketh manifest. He makes a big display. Of the triumph that he gives us.

[30 : 34] The savour of his knowledge. By us. In every place. Now. What do you mean by the savour? It means the sense. The fragrance. The fragrance. And part of the parade. When the Roman general would come through.

Would be that girls or servants. Or whatever. Would be going beforehand. Throwing out handfuls of incense. And rose petals. Or whatever. Remember in the ancient world. You know.

With basic sanitation. Shall we say. And all this sort of stuff. That would be in the open air. The stalls. And the raw meat. And everything. Everything would pretty much stink. The whole of society in a city.

Would have a stench about it. So when the big victor comes. They are throwing out insects. And they are throwing out rose petals. And they are throwing out that. Which will prepare the way.

With a fragrance. A sweetness. Of expectation. So that before the big victor. Comes along in his chariot. People have this aroma. This fragrance.

[31 : 28] This scent. Of victory. As it were. Coming. So they know he's coming. Long before they can see him. Because there is this savour. This fragrance of his knowledge.

By us in every place. For we are unto God. A sweet savour. A sweet fragrance of Christ. In them that are saved. And in them that perish. It's the same savour.

The same fragrance. You know. Remember it says in the Psalm of Solomon. Because of the savour of thy good ointments. Thy name is this ointment poured forth. Therefore do the virgins love thee.

And in them that perish. To the one who are the savour of death unto death. To the other the savour of life unto life. And he is sufficient for me. Now what does that mean? Is the gospel different for some people.

Than it is for others? No. The difference is not in the gospel. It is the same regardless. The difference is in those who receive it. Now if you live up above the ground.

[32 : 25] And you are used to the fresh air. And open spaces. And you see a bracing breeze. First thing in the morning. The dawn breaking. And a light of red over the hills. And what a beautiful day this is going to be.

And you inhale the freshness of the breeze in the morning. And you see it. And you love the light and so on. But if you have been spending most of your life. Let's say you've been a prisoner kept in a cellar.

Underground. Trap door. Pitch dark everywhere. Where your eyes have become accustomed to the gloom. To the dark. So if somebody suddenly throws open the trap door. Picks you up into the light.

Then your first thought isn't. Oh great. Brightness. Fresh air. Sunlight. Isn't this wonderful? Your first thought is. Oh. It's hurting my eyes. It's really sore. I can't see.

Because the brightness means I can't see. It is hurting my eyes. Not because there's anything wrong with the light. But because I have been so accustomed to the darkness.

[33 : 20] Therefore it is painful to me. Once many years ago I was in hospital for a week. And then off work for a couple of months. And when I was so ill in hospital.

People would come and visit me. And bring all the lovely bottles of iron blue. And bars of chocolate. And so on. And I would just look at it and think. No. I don't want to look at it.

I don't want to taste it. I don't want to touch it. I just can't face it. Nothing wrong with the products. The iron brew going defective. Is it going sour? Is the chocolate going first? You know. Nothing wrong with it.

It's just indicative of how. I am so ill. So I don't want these things. My condition. Is what is the problem. Not the condition of the product.

They are perfectly good. They are fine. And once I recovered of it. I was very glad. Of the iron brew. Of the chocolate. Of the grapes. Whatever else was brought. But in the midst of my misery and illness.

[34 : 16] I couldn't face it. Nothing wrong with the product. Nothing wrong with the savor. Nothing wrong with the light. How we receive it. Is indicative. Not of the goodness or badness.

Of the product itself. The gospel. The word of God. The savor of life unto life. Is always good. Rather it is indicative. Of our condition.

Have I become so accustomed. To the darkness. That the light hurts my eyes. Am I so sick in my soul. That I cannot receive. That which is sweet and good.

And intended for my blessing. And encouragement. Is it I who am the problem. The gospel of grace. Is always going to be the same. It is always going to be.

Goodness. And truth. We are not. Says Paul. As many which corrupt. The word of God. We're not going to water it down. To make it more palatable. We're not going to make it more bitter.

[35 : 13] Just so that it shines in. With the bitterness. Of how you're feeling. When you're so ill. We're not going to darken the sun. Just so it doesn't hurt your eyes. When you've been so used. To the cellar underground.

It's going to be the same gospel. Regardless. We're not going to corrupt. The word of God. We're not going to twist it. Because ultimately. It is for your good. Ultimately. The sunshine will be.

For your healing. And your blessing. And the vitamin B. Will be good for you. And the brightness. Will help your eyes. To adjust. And the fullness of time. And all the things. People bring. When you're ill in hospital. They will be to your good.

To your blessing. To your sweetness. To your encouragement. We are not as many. Which corrupt the word of God. And many did then. And many do now. And they think they're being kind.

By corrupting it. They think they're being kind. By twisting it. Or watering it down. And making it more palatable. To the unbelieving world. But if somebody is sick.

[36 : 10] It doesn't matter. How good the product is. That somebody brings. That they can't face it. Because they are so sick. And it doesn't matter. How much the church. May strive. To make itself.

Like the unbelieving world. Or how much they may. Water down the claims. Of the gospel. So the unbelieving world. Will like them. It doesn't mean.

That they will ever. Be converted by it. It doesn't mean. That they will ever. Be more accepting. Of this watered down gospel. Than they were. Of the full blooded version. All you've done.

Is lost your own soul. In the process. We are not. As many. Which corrupt. The word of God. But as of sincerity. But as of God.

In the sight of God. God sees what we do. He hears what we say. He judges the truth. Of all that we declare. And all that we do. We do in his sight.

[37 : 06] There is no hiding from him. In the sight of God. Speak we in Christ. Friends. All that we do. We do in the sight of God. He sees every action. We undertake.

[38:00] So it was in the first century. So it is in the 21st century. The same God. And the same gospel. And the same need. That we all have.