

NEW TESTAMENT



GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Lesson 35: "Be Ye Reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians)

- Overcoming tribulation
- Forgiving others
- Feeling godly sorrow for our sins
- Becoming reconciled to God

A study of this lesson will encourage us to be true disciples of Jesus Christ through applying Paul's counsel in 2 Corinthians .

Introduction



If someone you trust handed you sand with the promise that it contained gold, what would you do?

Elder Henry B. Eyring spoke about receiving counsel from prophets: *"Don't discard the counsel, but hold it close. If someone you trusted handed you what appeared to be nothing more than sand with the promise that it contained gold, you might wisely hold it in your hand awhile, shaking it gently. Every time I have done that with counsel from a prophet, after a time the gold flakes have begun to appear and I have been grateful"* (Ensign, May 1997, 26).

The book of 2nd Corinthians contains prophetic counsel that applies in our day. Paul's teachings in this letter are similar to the teachings we often hear in general conference. Elder Eyring observed, *"When the words of prophets seem repetitive, that should rivet our attention [on them]"* (Ensign, May 1997, 25).

We are encouraged to receive the counsel in this lesson and "hold it close."

Overcoming tribulation (2 Corinthians 1:3-11; 4; 6:1-10; 11:21-33; 12:1-10)

Paul's letter to the Corinthians was written after a time of great persecution when Paul and Timothy *"despaired even of life"* (2 Cor. 1:8).

2 Cor. 1:3-5; 2 Cor. 4:5-15 Paul and Timothy were able to avoid despair despite being troubled, perplexed, persecuted, and cast down because they were comforted of God. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are also our best sources for comfort.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell assured us that Jesus Christ will help us through our afflictions: *"When we take Jesus' yoke upon us, this admits us eventually to what Paul called the 'fellowship of [Christ's] sufferings' (Philip. 3:10). Whether illness or aloneness, injustice or rejection, ... our comparatively*

small-scale sufferings, if we are meek, will sink into the very marrow of the soul. We then better appreciate not only Jesus' sufferings for us, but also His matchless character, moving us to greater adoration and even emulation.

"Alma revealed that Jesus knows how to succor us in the midst of our griefs and sicknesses precisely because Jesus has already borne our griefs and sicknesses (see Alma 7:11-12). He knows them firsthand; thus His empathy is earned. Of course, we do not comprehend it fully any more than we understand how He bore all mortal sins, but His Atonement remains the rescuing and reassuring reality" (Ensign, May 1997, 12).

Take a moment to consider how Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ

have helped you during adversity.

2 Cor. 1:4 Paul expressed a desire to help others receive the same comfort he had received from God. On a personal basis, think of how you can help others receive comfort from God.

2 Cor. 1:11 Paul thanked the Saints who had prayed for him and Timothy in their time of adversity. It is important for us to pray for each other and most of us can remember instances when the prayers of others have blessed us or someone we know. In addition, we are blessed when we pray for others as our faith is strengthened.

NEXT WEEK:

#36 "Beloved of God, Called to Be Saints" (Romans)

2 Cor. 4:17-18 These teachings help us keep an eternal perspective during tribulation. (See also D&C 121:7-8.) It is helpful to see our trials from an eternal perspective because we can more easily see their true size and importance in the plan of salvation.

2 Cor. 6:4-5; 2 Cor. 11:23-33 Paul told the Corinthians of the trials that he and many of the Saints endured because of their belief in Je-

sus Christ.

2 Cor. 6:4, 6-7 Paul taught that we should develop the characteristics of patience, pureness, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, reliance on the Holy Ghost, love, the word of truth, the power of God, and the armor of righteousness to help us endure trials.

2 Cor. 12:7 Paul said that the Lord gave him an infirmity—a “*thorn in the flesh*”—so that he might retain

humility.

2 Cor. 12:8-10 Paul learned, when the Lord did not take away his “*thorn in the flesh*” as he had asked, that he could be strong by developing his reliance and faith in Christ.

Ether 12:27 Our weaknesses can help us receive strength from Jesus Christ. Ponder how you have seen the truth of Paul’s statement that “*when I am weak, then am I strong*”.

Forgiving others (2 Corinthians 2:5-11)

2 Cor. 2:5-8 Paul admonished the Saints to forgive each other.

Matt. 6:14-15; 2 Cor. 2:7-8; D&C 64:9-10 These passages teach that it is important that we forgive others. Ponder how you are affected when you are forgiving and when you are unforgiving.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “*We see the need for [forgiveness] in the homes of the people, where tiny molehills of misunderstanding are fanned into mountains of argument. We see it among neighbors, where insignificant differences lead to undying bitterness.*”

We see it in business associates who quarrel and refuse to compromise and forgive when, in most instances, if there were a willingness to sit down together and speak quietly one to another, the matter could be resolved to the blessing of all. Rather, they spend their days nurturing grudges and planning retribution. ...

“If there be any who nurture in their hearts the poisonous brew of enmity toward another, I plead with you to ask the Lord for strength to forgive. This expression of desire will be of the very substance of your repentance. It

may not be easy, and it may not come quickly. But if you will seek it with sincerity and cultivate it, it will come. ...

“... There is no peace in reflecting on the pain of old wounds. There is peace only in repentance and forgiveness. This is the sweet peace of the Christ, who said, ‘blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.’ (Matt. 5:9)” (“Of You It Is Required to Forgive,” Ensign, June 1991, 2, 5).

Think seriously about what you can do to become more forgiving.

Feeling godly sorrow for our sins. (2 Corinthians 7:8-10)

2 Cor. 7:8-9 After hearing that one of his epistles had “*made [the Corinthians] sorry,*” Paul rejoiced.

2 Cor. 7:9-10 Paul responded this way to the Corinthians’ sorrow because it motivated their repentance when they had “*godly sorrow*” for their sins. As we ponder the difference between godly sorrow and “*the sorrow of the world*” and why godly sorrow is an important part of repentance, we have this instruction...

President Spencer W. Kimball explained: “*If one is sorry only because someone found out about his sin, his repentance is not complete. Godly sorrow causes one to want to repent, even though he has not been caught by others, and makes him determined to do right no matter what happens. This kind of sorrow brings righteousness and will work toward forgiveness*” (*Repentance Brings Forgiveness* [pamphlet, 1984], 8).



Becoming reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

2 Cor. 5:20 Paul and Timothy counseled the Corinthians to “*be reconciled to God*”.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught

what it means to be reconciled to God: “*Reconciliation is the process of ransoming man from his state of sin and spiritual darkness and of*

restoring him to a state of harmony and unity with Deity. ... Man, who was once carnal and evil, who lived after the manner of the flesh, be-

comes a new creature of the Holy Ghost; he is born again; and, even as a little child, he is alive in Christ" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols. [1965-73], 2:422-23).

2 Cor. 5:17-19, 21; 2 Nephi 25:23; Jacob 4:10-11 teach us how we can become reconciled to God.

Conclusion

In his second epistle to the Corinthians Paul has taught many important truths, including dependence on the Lord in times of difficulty, seeking to forgive others, truly repenting of our sins by having Godly sorrow, and reconciling ourselves to God. In the Back To The Future series, at the end of episode three, Marty's girlfriend asked Doc if their future had been altered by certain events. Doc replied something to the effect, "Your future has not yet been written, so make it a good one." Where we are today is dependent on our past actions, but our future has not yet been written. We can make it a good one by following the counsel of Paul.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

- Consider your life. Where might you have been had you not made proper choices when faced with adversity?
- What blessings have you received because of challenges in your life?