

Chaos and Amen

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[0 : 0 0] from verse 12 to chapter 2 and verse 4 And for some reason after blasting out the first two Psalms, I'm losing my voice So it may be a shorter sermon than you're expecting. You may want to put the microphone up a little bit so I can whisper Second Corinthians chapter 1 from verse 12 Having looked at the first section last week. Now this is our boast Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world and especially in our relations with you in the holiness and sincerity that are from God We have done so not according to worldly wisdom, but according to God's grace For we do not write to you anything you cannot read or understand And I hope that as you have understood us in part you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us Just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus

Because I was confident of this I plan to visit you first so that you might benefit twice I plan to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia and Then to have you send me on my way to Judea When I plan this did I do it lightly or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say yes yes and no no But as surely as God is faithful our message to do to you is not yes and no For the Son of God Jesus Christ who has preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy was not yes and no But in him it has always been yes For no matter how many promises God has made they are yes in Christ And so through him the amen is spoken by us to the glory of God Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ He appointed us set his seal of ownership on us put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come I

Call God as my witness that it was not that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth Not that we lord it over your faith But we work with you for your joy because it is by faith you stand firm So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you But if I grieve you who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved I Wrote as I did so that when I came I should not be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice I Had confidence in all of you that you would all share my joy For I wrote to you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears Not to grieve you, but to let you know the depth of my love for you Amen, this is the word of God may he bless it to us as we look at it this evening And I want to follow on from last week and from our introduction to

This letter the second letter or this at least the second letter we've got the second letter that's in scripture It's probably the third or fourth letter that he has written to the church Relationships They're all very complex, aren't they?

It's very difficult to get by without having some kind of hassles or difficulties or problems or blessings because of Relationships they can be so chaotic at so many different levels siblings parents Boyfriend girlfriend husband and wife family colleagues neighbors Fellow students, you know, we're all in relationships We're diving headlong into relationships all the time. That is what we are to be human is to be in relationship and We find that Paul here is in relationship with this Corinthian church and there's a whole lot of chaos around these relationships Remember if you saw last week we were talking about it being like a church plant in Nidry or in Crestorfin and there's all these people who have come in Corinth to believe in Jesus Christ and to love Jesus Christ and

[4 : 29] They're out working their newfound faith together and there's all kinds of problems and difficulties and Their relationship with Christ the wrist with each other The relationship with with how they interact the sin getting rid of sin Paul has written them a really hard letter really difficult letter because they're engaged Even as his leader over them and he's authority as an apostle they've the moment he's gone away They've introduced false teachers into the congregation and there's a guy in a congregation who's in an incestuous Relationship and they think that's fine. They haven't done anything about it So Paul writes to them and he makes clear the Lord's way and the Lord's way forward and so they're hurt by that and there's His promised he would come and see them in the passage we read and then he breaks that promise He doesn't come from Macedonia. He misses out the visit and they think he's breaking promises and there's all kinds of

Relationship difficulties going on here. There's some dynamic. Let me tell you there is some dynamic going on here between different relationships and within that Jesus Paul brings Jesus Christ He brings Christ as someone who is true someone who is faithful someone who is solid and strong and peaceable and Paul Brings Christ into this chaos of the relationships in the church and it reminds me of a kind of Jesus in the boat and There's the storm wells up and there's all this chaotic sea Outside of the boat and the disciples are harassed and helpless and Jesus is asleep and they say master Do you not care that we drown and then he stands and brings his words of peace and stability and healing and authority and power into the situation Transforming that situation

Transforming the danger brilliant and so we find that Paul is here and the Holy Spirit here is introducing Jesus and his truth into the chaos of this young church because God knows that it is God who will transform that situation and will bring healing and will bring peace and will bring stability and will change the people themselves and that's really what I want to talk about this evening for ourselves just for a few minutes is the the ongoing transformation that Jesus makes in our lives in our Relationships how we interact with him and also how we interact with each other So I'm going to look at it vertically and I'm going to look at it horizontally in the fact of how Jesus Transforms our life How our life with him is transformed and then how that should affect our lives with each other as Christians

So we see the power of Jesus transforming this church and we're looking for the same power of Jesus and the Holy Spirit to be transforming our church So first of all I'm going to look at Jesus Christ to us and how amazing that relationship is him to us remember context Here of second currently is this letter Paul Here and particularly in the passage as well. We've read he's defending the fact that he hasn't visited them as he promised Initially to do he said I plan to go You know in verse 16 planned on my way to Macedonia and into this in the way back but he didn't do that and he's explaining why and because he hasn't been there these false teachers have come in and they've said Paul doesn't care for you Why do you listen to what he has to say? He thinks he's an apostle. He can't even keep his word He can't even keep his promises. He doesn't love you. He isn't interested in you He's a way of swanning away into Macedonia planting churches there. He's giving up on you guys. He's moved on

So they were encouraging different false teaching And they were questioning the apostolic authority of Paul So Paul comes and writes them here and rather than just defending himself He points them to Jesus Christ and he reminds them who Jesus is He reminds them what it is to be a Christian and how great it is to belong to Jesus Christ In verse 20 he talks about Jesus as the amen the amen God That's a title that's used of Jesus in Revelation in Revelation chapter 22 verse 20 Jesus is called the amen And that is just there is just founding what he's going to say about who Jesus is amen Just really means True we say it's not it shouldn't be just the concluding word of our prayers amen

[9 : 45]

Shariah, it's not that amen goes with it has with it this idea of all that God says and all that we ask We ask of the one who is the amen who is the true one remember Jesus used to speak when we were children some of us anyway We used to read from the authorized version and it spoke about Jesus when he had something important to say He would say verily verily I say unto you that just means amen amen I say unto you truly truly I say to you and When Paul speaks here of Jesus as the amen he's reminding us that Jesus is the promised keeper He is the faithful and true one. He is the rock in the storm He is the voice of authority and the voice who is trustworthy and amen is a great word You know, it's it's a great word that goes right from the beginning of the Bible right to the end It's a Hebrew word that's translated into Greek and then into English Amen, and it reminds us that right through the Bible. We have this trustworthy solid good God

Who is strong and having spoken about him as the amen? He goes on to say this is what God has done for you not just for the Corinthian young baby Christians but every Christian you and me this evening and he uses covenantal language Legal language in verses 21 22. This is the God who makes both us and you stand firm He have knighted us. He set a seal on us put a spirit in our hearts as a deposit guaranteeing what's to come and he's there reminding us what God has done for us as Christians So that we can have the confidence then to go out and serve in mission and the confidence to know we are loved in an amazing way This God who he says is always yes in his promises when he's made promises. There'll always be yes Paul's remembering his own his own frailty and he's saying yeah, no, I broke a promise to come and visit I'm gonna explain why I did that but he says but God never breaks his promises. He needs absolutely yes and true

Yes, he says in Christ we stand firm. He says stand firm in Christ Established in Christ that is in relationship with God shoulder to shoulder with God as it were Sometimes we feel like a piece of straw and the face of a hurricane as Christians just feel gonna keep blown away We need to remember that we stand firm because of what God has promised because he's a man to that and that we will always Stand firm in him As we trust he's done that for us and more than that is anointed us as he goes on his he anointed us And again, these are the important biblical Images that were given here for our own lives in the Old Testament a prophet a priest and a king They were all anointed by God. They were set apart to serve God. They were filled with a spirit in Uniquely in the Old Testament, but every believer is anointed by God

Set apart by God Spirit filled by God in an amazing way so that The anointed one in the Old Testament Could also be translated the Messiah Because it was associated with the Messiah so in a kind of Subordinate sense we're all messiahs Not obviously in the sense of being saviours In the sense of being privileged the sense of being anointed the sense of being set apart to serve God in the sense of Being protected by God to do his work We're anointed By the great God that we are that we have and also yes, we are spirit sealed You know that is a set his seal of ownership on us You know these this is you know the language of covenant a language of legal covenant that God has Justified as he's put us in this place where he owns us and we are authentically his We've spoken quite a lot in the last few weeks about glory the glory of God and that that glory means weight

Well, that kind of fits in nicely with this whole idea of the King's seal. It was this heavy seal that was and imprinted into wax which gave authenticity to the message that was being brought as the King's message or As the person carrying the King's message and so we have this weight of glory on us Because we are sealed by the spirit of God. We have God's Glory reflected in us. These are great truths and they make us stand up on our backs Just to stand up tall because we know who we are in Christ And we're also given as he says the Holy Spirit as a deposit Guaranteeing what is to come the spirit is our down payment He's our deposit. It's the first installment of what we can look forward to in In heaven the best in other words is still to come, you know when you get the first installment There's lots more before

[15 : 06] What you get is paid off and yet we can look forward to a tremendous day When we will have a no God in his closeness and in his Glory in our life. So Paul wants to remind these young Corinthian believers that That their relationship with God has been transformed because of Jesus Christ God's brought them into his His kind of bosom of his love and he has adopted them like children and they are privileged and special even though They're very ordinary people and so are we we have this tremendous position of Privilege that should transform the way we think about ourselves and also the way Therefore we think of our relationship with God So we see first of all what God has done for us through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior How does that then affect our relationship briefly with him? And I want to just point focus on Paul himself here

As an example because Paul knows he's not perfect He's changed his mind and in other places will go on to see in Corinthians He exposes his own weaknesses, but nonetheless He lives differently because he knows These truths about God are true for him We know he lives with a clear conscience verse 12 he says now This is our boast our conscience testifying that we have conducted ourselves in the world and especially in our relations with you in Holiness and sincerity that are from God we have done so not according to worldly wisdom, but according to God's grace Honesty mark his life so does sincerity and the lives of the others with him Timothy and Silas These guys then because they know what God has done because they've been redeemed by God. They live their lives differently from other people They live their lives knowing that God knows exactly who they are and still they are forgiven and

So they've sought to act truthfully and honestly at all times as Christians their conscience is clear not because they're innocent themselves But because they have come to Christ and they have been forgiven by Christ in other words they Because of what Christ has done for them. They're not too faced. They're not hypocrites He's not an apostle and Corinth and then he's Kind of wild living somewhere else He doesn't just ask the Christian acts of Christian when he's with them and then his duplicitous behind their backs are in secret Because he's relying on God because he's a relationship with God because he's the Holy Spirit in his heart his Whole demeanour has changed his conscience is exercised and he is clear His conscience is clear because he's allowing the light of Jesus Christ straight into his heart. It's not a charade It's not an outward religion. It's not just To impress other people. He has a clear conscience because he understands God and understands the truth and he's so his relationship

With God transforms him as a person Not only does it transform him, but he is reliant on God and on God's grace there He says in verse 12 we have done so not according to worldly wisdom, but according to God's grace He's reliant on God's wisdom God's grace in his life and he knows that that's Transforming him with God as we want to see it transforms the way he lives with the church of Christ also When we know what Christ has done for us when we know of his love when we know of his concern for us then We freely go to him for his wisdom and his grace to live our Christian lives We can live with a clear conscience We don't need to speak about being holy some of the time and then just feeding our sinful desires the rest of the time We can serve him with a clear conscience in public or in private on the top of a mountain in the middle of a big crowd

We can do so because we know of the relationship We have with him and we can rely on his grace and his wisdom to take us through life in the same way that Paul did here He was clearly reliant on God and it made such a difference in his life He depended on relied on grace and relied on wisdom and yet There's probably not not been anyone ever who relied so much on God and who was so close to God as Paul who understand God so closely because he'd been in heaven visiting God as it were yet He also Even though he was so close to God had a real sense of personal responsibility Look at verses 15 to 18. I Was confident of this I plan to visit you then I plan to visit you then verse 17 I planned this and then he goes on to say that In verse 23 I call God as I my witness that it was in order to spare you spare you that I did not return to Corinth

[20 : 32] Then in verse 1 so I made up my mind. So here's someone who's close to God He has been transformed by God. He knows what how much God loves him He's depending on God's grace and wisdom and yet it doesn't mean that he spends his life saying well God told me to do this God told me to do that and I feel led by God in this way and I feel God is pulling me in this direction He was able to recognize that God Having given him a clear conscience and having breathed into him the Holy Spirit gave him Responsibility himself to make decisions And he explains here that he made that decision he explains he changed his mind And he decided not to visit them. Why did he decide not to visit them? He says in verse 23 I decided not to do it because I wanted to spare you and Then in verse 1 I didn't want to meet another painful visit his previous visit or at least his previous letter had obviously been a very painful one and he realized on maybe

Spiritual reflection after having made the plans. It's maybe not a good idea just now to go And so he changes my name. He took responsibility for that. He defends himself. He says he's not fickle He's not just saying yes one minute and know the next minute. He's not loveless He's reflective and he's genuine and he's allowing God to Kind of just punctuate all of his thinking but he doesn't blame God And he doesn't deny responsibility for who he is as a Christian with his own responsibility He's spirit led because he's spirit filled But he recognizes he's his own responsibilities as a spirit filled Christian I do sometimes worry when people say oh God told me to do good this God has spoken to me in this way God has guided me in this direction There's a just a whisper of infallibility about it, isn't there?

Whereas he wants us to be spirit filled to be dependent to be under God's wisdom and his grace to be relying on him but also to recognize the amazing God-given responsibility as people to make up our minds and also to be free to change our minds in Christ so he speaks Here about our relationship to God and how amazing that is and how it transforms us in a relationship with God and that then Changes the way that we live our lives as spiritual people knowing this truth about God But lastly and very briefly It also means that because of who God is and because of what Christ has done for us The way we interact with each other is Transformed and that's really what Paul wants to get across That if Christ is our foundation then it affects the way we deal with each other a

Possil to people people to What people to people our relationship is changed? And so again we see it with Paul and with the people of Corinth to whom he's writing Briefly can I point it out?

The fact that he was sensitive to their needs I call on God as I my witness verse 23 that it was in order to spare you that I did not Return to Corinth. I didn't want to make another painful visit. I didn't want to grieve you further so he was sensitive to the needs of fellow believers because God's grace was in his heart his conscience was clear and he was an exercised Christian Christ had transformed him and when Christ is transforming our lives it makes us Less concerned about others More monastic and closer to heaven no It makes us more sensitive to other people sensitive to their needs Sensitive to how we speak to one another Sensitive to when we should act when we shouldn't act when we should react And not when we should pull back when we should move forward because we are aware of what our fellow Christians need

[25 : 09] And we're aware of not being bulls in china shops, and we're aware that it's not always our kind of insensitivity That is needed Paul here recognized having promised to go and visit them That maybe a visit wasn't the best thing So he he pulled back from that and he explains why he changed his mind Because he loved them and because we was concerned not to make their kind of hurt worse he wanted to give them time to think about and pray about the Kind of rebuke that he'd given them so sensitivity, but also of course When we recognize who Christ is for us, it makes us not only sensitive to others But also tremendously loving Paul a love for Martin had to say about manliness and being strong and brave

And I think that's absolutely crucial and also for the women of course to be womanly and sensitive not manly but That we look for Manly Christianity among our men that is also loving big Paul's a great man You know he was a real man's man, and yeah, here he speaks in verse 4 chapter 2 I wrote to you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears not to grieve you But to let you know the depth of my love for you You know he did he did rebuke them. He didn't say look You're crazy that some of the things you're allowing happening in this church. There's a morality here that I'm embarrassed to mention and yet you're just kind of letting it happen and He exposed that and he embarrassed them and he rebuked them strongly and yet he tells them he did it not to lord over them not to be kind of arrogant or

Or authoritarian but because you love them because you're this great depth of love for them that they would not resist or quench or That they would not stand against the spirit and grieve Jesus Christ in their lives and we see that in Paul again and again and so Transformed life is a life where we recognize what Christ has done for us and how much he loves us and we share that costly love In an honest and in a committed way with one another in Christ and that will often cause tears and they will be hurt involved in that because sometimes we are going to have to face up to each other's inconsistencies and downright sinfulness It so speaks against The kind of shallow easily offended fragile Lusty kind of love of today that we find so often

And we need to pray for that deep-seated manly womanly strong honest heartfelt love That marks us and transforms us as a community so that we're not just kind of Passing passing ships in the night. We don't just rub shoulder to shoulder on a Sunday But we have this meaningful deep relationship That is spiritually transforming because we know that we have been transformed by Jesus Christ So that Transforming power of Christ Helps us to be sensitive loving and lastly joyful He speaks a lot in this passage about boasting in the people and in being joyful in service in verse 24. He wants them to have great joy in their faith and we share That joyfulness when we understand That we have been transformed by God

And just to finish there's two little very very little quick things. I want to say that are in this chapter to remind us they're kind of general points and It's very very bad A preachers here potential preachers here don't introduce new material in your conclusion. You shouldn't do that Okay, you're not supposed to do that, but I'm just very quickly introducing to new pieces of information into the Conclusion because I couldn't fit them in anywhere else and they're kind of random And the first is that the gospel is simple. Okay in verse 13 Paul is speaking about What he's shown them and taught them is for we do not write to you anything you cannot read or understand It just stands out really powerfully on its own and it's not necessarily related very deeply to any of the points But he's reminding us and he's reminding his people that the gospel is really, you know, it's simple We make it really difficult sometimes and we love to make it complex But it's not really that complex sometimes we make it complex because it's an excuse for us not to obey it

[30 : 23] But it's really quite simple. Don't get bogged down Keep the gospel simple. Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so He died me no die It's quite simple and the implications of that are quite simple for us in our lives and Sometimes you get all hit up and noted about the complexity of theology and whether this equals that and what happens with the next thing That we lose sight of the fact that we're in relationship with Jesus Christ and it's a simple message preaching should be simple What we share that you fellowship should be simple what we share that the house groups should be simple because it's for our day-to-day living The gospel is clearly simple. You shouldn't read what you don't understand and know With respect to the basics of the faith And then the other thing is just the fact that we all have a responsibility together To allow Jesus Christ to transform us. I love the way he finishes chapter 1 verse 24

But he explains to them as an apostle He's not there to lord over your faith, but we work with you for your joy because it is by faith you stand firm he's reminding the current Corinthian church and The God is reminding us that you mustn't rely on other maybe Christian leaders or Christian teachers and To develop your faith We all have a part to play but It's by your faith that you stand firm It's your faith and you'll stand before God on that day Accountable for your faith not on the faith once removed for someone else or the faith under the preacher of the word and as preachers of the word is leaders We're not to lord over the people either and make decisions for them make your own mistakes We'll advise and warn and we'll look after her own hearts and souls But don't look to the

Leaders of the church to make everything black and white to put the fence around everything for you Don't go to them and say can I do this can I not do that and look for external guidance From those who will lord over you and take an abusive position of power But know your Christ know your Savior know your privileges you're right in there in the family of God You're right in the presence of God himself as a child of God Indwell by God with God as we said this morning. We are all able In Christ as mature believers to teach and encourage one another, but we stand on our own faith You will stand on your own faith on that day You mustn't be a Christian once removed You mustn't rely on just your parents faith or your friends faith or even the faith of those in the youth fellowship or In the house groups however much encouraged you are by these things You need to stand firm

In Christ you have that responsibility, but you have that privilege Because of who God is and what he's given to you So we hope that we too share in the transforming power that Paul Was bringing to the Corinthian church by the Holy Spirit through the preaching and teaching of Jesus Christ that we ourselves will be transformed leaders and People together in the coming days and months Let's bow our heads briefly in prayer heavenly father We ask that you would transform us that we would understand a great Covenantal commitment you have to us that you have redeemed us so that we stand firm and That we are those who are sealed by your spirit and that we have these great privileges in our lives of being anointed by God and Of being filled with God and may that transform our relationship with you taking away a

An oppressive fear replacing it with a godly reverence and love and may it change our relationships with each other as we put grace into practice and focus on what's important and are aware of The evil one who would come in to destroy us So bless us and continue with us as we close in song and may you Remain among us as God Increased through the Holy Spirit Amen