

Text: 2 Cor 1.1-24

1 Corinthians: *“the epistle of the cross in its social application.”*¹

2 Corinthians: *the epistle revealing the heart of pastoral application.*

In both epistles, Paul addresses the bad attitudes and actions of an immature church, still much affected by the world from which it is drawn.

A Preliminary Outline of 2 Corinthians:

Opening (1.1-11)

Addressing Corinthian Perceptions and Paul’s Ministry Philosophy (1.12-7.16)

Defending Paul’s Conduct (1.12-2.17)

Exposition of Paul’s Philosophy (3.1-6.10)

Appeal for Corinthian confidence (6.11-7.16)

Instructions concerning the offering (8.1-9.15)

Assertion of apostolic authority (10.1-13.10)

Conclusion (13.11-14)²

“Wick Brommall’s simple, memorable outline is worth noting:

I. The conciliation 1:1–7:16

II. The collection 8:1–9:15

III. The credentials 10:1–13:14”³

I. The opening (1.1-11)

Author: Paul (with Timothy) (1)

Recipients: Church at Corinth; saints of Achaia (1)

Greeting (2)

¹ G. G. Findlay, “St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians,” in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, ed. William Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, n.d.), 739.

² Adapted from Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003).

³ Wick Broomall, “The Second Epistle to the Corinthians,” in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 1262-63, cited in Constable, Introduction.

Opening Blessing (3-7)

What is the most prominent word in this section? **Comfort — *paraklesis*, *parakaleo***

What familiar concept do you connect with this word? Hint: found in John's Gospel **Holy Spirit, the Comforter**

Etymology: called alongside, meaning here: Verb form: "to instill someone with courage or cheer, *comfort, encourage, cheer up*;" Noun form: "lifting of another's spirits, *comfort, consolation*"⁴

The source of comfort is: **God (3)**

The purpose of comfort is: **enabling comfort of others (4)**

The scope of available comfort is: **abundant (5)**

What benefit do the readers gain from the apostle's sufferings and from the apostle's comforts? (6)

They are comforted in the apostle's sufferings and in his comforts

What does Paul hope for his readers? (7)

That as they share in the sufferings, they will also share in the comforts

Opening Testimony (7-11)

What affliction in Asia is Paul referring to in vv. 7-10? Hint: Acts 19

The riot in Ephesus, probably

How extreme was the threat in Asia?

Paul feared for his life

What influence does Paul credit for his deliverance (besides the care of God)? (11)

The prayers of the Corinthians

⁴ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Why do you think Paul starts with this section, as we know the epistle will contain strong language of contention between the church and apostle?

Paul wants to establish as much commonality or connection as possible

II. Addressing Corinthian Perceptions and Paul's Ministry Philosophy (1.12-7.16)

A. Defending Paul's Conduct (1.12-2.17)

Paul's sincerity (12-14)

What characterizes Paul's conduct towards the Corinthians? (12)

Sincere, holy service

How does Paul characterize his writings in v. 13?

Sincere, without ulterior motives or hidden meanings

How does Paul think his writings were received? (14)

With at least partial understanding

Paul's defense over changed plans (15-24)

What is Paul referring to in vv. 15-16?

His travel plans

Note: Paul's original travel plans appear to have altered between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians: "Plan A was to go from Ephesus to Macedonia to Corinth to Jerusalem. Plan B was to go from Ephesus to Corinth to Macedonia back to Corinth and on to Judea. What Paul actually did was to go from Ephesus to Corinth back to Ephesus then to Macedonia and back to Corinth."⁵

What does it seem the Corinthians were criticizing Paul about? (17-18)

They were saying Paul was untrustworthy because his plans changed

⁵ Constable, *Expository Notes*, 2 Cor 1.15.

When Paul says, “as God is faithful” in v. 18, what is Paul invoking?

His word as an apostle is the same as God’s word to men

What testimony does Paul give to the Father and Son in vv. 19-20?

God is always Yes and Amen to his people, absolutely trustworthy

What is the source of Paul’s position with the Corinthians? (21-22)

God himself established him with the Corinthians, and sealed him for the ministry

What is the reason Paul decided against an extra visit to Corinth? (23)

To spare them from another personal confrontation

How does Paul qualify his leadership, even as an apostle? (24)

Not lording it over them, a co-worker with them