

Week 2 Handout (2 Cor 2:14-3:18)

Summary of Key Theological Points So Far

- Disciples participate in the sufferings of Christ
- Comfort comes from God through Christ (so that) we can comfort others
- Hardships teach us to rely on God instead of self
- Resurrection (a theme from 1 Cor) is central to hope
- The reliability of Paul’s ministry is anchored in promises of God...not Paul
- Paul intentionally remains non-directive expressing confidence in the Corinthians to build them up

(2:14-17) –A Revelation Greater than Moses

- Begins a major section that runs from 2:14-7:4
- Those led in “triumphal procession” are the captives of the victorious army and will be executed after the parade.
- Paul’s ministry announces Christ which is heard as both death and life. DEATH to those who focus only on this world rewards. LIFE to those who see the eternal rewards and the hope, comfort, spirit.
- Men sent from God vs. Men speaking for profit
- Ancient rhetoric books are filled with techniques for deceiving audiences

Discussion

- What is the effect of this life/death image on Paul’s audience?
- What factors affect whether the ministry is the smell of life or stench of death?
- What concerns arise when the speaker is paid by the audience? How does this help/complicate the relationship?

(3:1-18) – Letters of Recommendation

- Letters of recommendation were commonly carried like political endorsements.
- Background texts of Ezek 36:26f; Ex 31:18f; Jer 31:31f
- Contrasting groups of words emerge in this section. Stone-law-death-condemnation-dull-fading vs. hearts-Spirit-life-glory-righteousness-lasting-increasing
- Three “IF” comparisons (vv. 7, 9, 11)

Discussion

- What proof does Paul want the Corinthians to focus on to prove that Paul’s ministry was / is legitimate? (see also 4:14f; 5:12f)
- In what ways are the apostles / Paul like Moses?
- What does Paul mean by saying “we are very bold” (3:12)?