

Dr. Ayo Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 3, 2 Corinthians 2, Paul's Defense

© 2024 Ayo Adewuya and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Ayo Adewuya in his teaching on 2 Corinthians. This is session 3, 2 Corinthians 2, Paul's Defense.

In this session, we will be examining 2 Corinthians chapter two.

Discipline or abuse? Today, we talk about discipline, and we talk about abuse. And apparently, we live in days when the word discipline not only evokes various kinds of images but also elicits various kinds of reactions. It's not only frowned at, it's frowned on at home, and it's always seen as antiquated.

So, we want a society that is able to do what they want to do, whichever they want to do it. Yes, we understand that some disciplines border on abuse, but then discipline is something that is missing in the church. Yet it is one of the key things in a parent-child relationship and is one of the key things in a pastor-congregant relationship.

Because where there's no discipline, things break down. Then, people are able to do as they please. Then what we have is like Corinth, where everybody does what is right in his own eyes, like the end of the book of Judges.

There was so much anguish in Paul's heart concerning the need to discipline the church. So, start with me. Let's look at 2 Corinthians, chapter two, and look at it from verse one. So, I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit.

For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did so that when I came, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I am confident about all of you that my joy will be the joy of all of you. For I wrote to you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

Now, to put this in context, in our last session, we showed the reasons why there was a broken relationship between Paul and the Corinthians. One of the issues was the aborted visit of Paul to them. The matter of Paul's planned and actual itinerary is very complicated, but the reason is not.

It was to spare the Corinthians and himself that pain that he refrained from returning to Corinth from Ephesus after the so-called painful visit. Look at verse one. So, I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit.

Paul visited them, but that visit did not end well. It was painful. So Paul continues to defend his change of plans, and then he gives another reason why he did not come to them as intended.

In verse two, we see that another visit would have provoked much trouble because the Corinthians were still rebellious. There were those who were still opposing Paul, and Paul would have had to take strong disciplinary action. And rather than solve the problem, it would actually have aggravated it.

And so, Paul says, well, let me wait. Let me not go. As such, Paul was not willing to go to Corinth until they changed their attitude.

That's wisdom. His failure to visit them was not a matter of personal interest. It determined not to come again in sorrow and to cause sorrow to his friends who make him glad.

This is where you see the dynamics of Christianity. Paul says you are the ones who make me glad. I mean, that sort of echoes the words of John when he says, I have no greater joy than my children abide in the truth.

As a pastor and as a minister, you derive joy when you see the people who are leading, thriving, and doing well. If they become sorrowful, who else will make Paul glad? Their joy was his joy. His pain was their pain.

So, Paul wrote a letter, the previous letter. Now, this is not 1 Corinthians, and this is not the one mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5-9, but another letter, another sorrowful letter with much sorrow and anguish of heart and with many tears, a letter of tears. One thing is very clear.

In everything, Paul was motivated by his love for the Corinthians. Now, that tells us a few things. Number one, when we must confront friends over something, we should check our attitude toward them.

We should make sure that we have the right mindset when confronting them over issues. That's important. Paul says I didn't want to come because if I come, you'll be sorrowful.

I would have had to confront you about the issue, and I don't think it's right at this point. In other words, we see the second lesson. Confrontation should not come easy for us.

I mean, we should not be confrontational, but we shouldn't run away from confrontation. We're not confrontational in the sense of being or trying to prove

we're right, but when there's a need to confront, you see the word confront almost has a negative pejoration that confront means fighting. No, that's not what it means.

It means we bring things to the front and say, hey, look, let's look at this. It should not come easily for us, and we certainly must not take any pleasure in it at all. Then we'll learn another lesson.

If someone we love is in pain, then our eyes should well up, at least in tears of sympathy. Here was Paul. He said I wrote a letter to you with many tears.

Remember, this is not a young man. This was an old man. This is love in the indeed.

I mean, I should wake up in tears of empathy. Then, number four, it may be necessary that we go ahead and wound our friend because there's no way to remove the veil or the evil. Sometimes, it's necessary, but the friend who inflicts the wound must also feel the pain.

So, you don't pain somebody for the sake of enjoyment. We ourselves ought to feel the pain. So, he says, I wrote to you out of much distress and anguish of art.

I mean, think about that out of much distress. He said of heart out of much pain, out of much tears. I mean, Paul's language is very powerful and very graphic, with many tears, much pain, much affliction, and anguish of heart.

He uses the same word in verse four, and then he says, I mean, it tells you it's right in the heart. It's right in the heart. It feels the pain.

It's like you feel a dagger in your heart, but you've got to do it. That's how much he loved them. And Paul was telling them, this is what is going on.

So, Paul acknowledges his decision not to revisit them because he doesn't want to afflict them. He said because of many circumstances, the letter was born of anguish and produced tears. Many people have tried to suggest that 1 Corinthians 2, 2 Corinthians 6, verses 14 to 7, 1 is that letter, but I don't think so.

It's not. Sometimes, it's been taken to be the sorrowful letter. We'll deal with that again when we get there.

There are others who feel this interpolation, but let's not get ahead of ourselves. But bear that in mind when you watch the next video on chapter six. You'll see more answers there, but just to sound you off at the moment. But something in 2 Corinthians chapter two now happens.

And this section we're going to read is very, very important. 2 Corinthians chapter two, verses five through 11. Here, we see a situation of an offender, but if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me but to some, not to exaggerate it, to all of you.

This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person. So now, instead, you shall forgive and console him so that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So, I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

I wrote, for this reason to test you and to know whether you're obedient in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, I have forgiven. If I have forgiven anything, that has been for your sake in the presence of Christ.

And we do this so that we may not be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs. Now, let's look at this passage. In the preceding section, Paul spoke about feeling pain, causing pain, and avoiding further pain.

All three of these things reoccur in this same passage. There is a particular offender. You see, particularly apparent in this passage is Paul's sensitivity as a pastor.

We need to mention that. Paul's sensitivity as a pastor. You see that in verses 5 to 8. Paul was sensitive.

He recognizes that Christian discipline is not simply retributive but also remedial. Christian discipline is not retributive but is remedial. And here, we need to quickly make a distinction between discipline and punishment.

Punishment is not redemptive. Discipline is redemptive. Punishment is punishing for the punishing.

We punish people, and that's the end of it all. And sometimes we punish them, they don't change. But discipline is redemptive.

Bear in mind that the word discipline itself comes from the Latin root discipulus, which means a learner, a student. That's where we get discipline; that's where we get discipline. The purpose of discipline is that a person may learn, maybe a student, and may come to ease our senses.

So, you see Paul's sensitivity as a pastor. Number one, wait a minute. Do you see that Paul does not mention the name of the offender? He could have.

He could have put that offender to shame. Of course, they probably know him. So, you say, well, they know him. He doesn't have to mention the name.

Well, some of them probably don't know him. But Paul had a loftier goal in mind. It is the restoration of that offender.

And if those who did not know him get to know his name, then they begin to look at him suspiciously. I'm talking about pastoral sensitivity in the ministry of Paul. He was sensitive.

He knew that this person was still going to be part of the congregation. If this person was going to be part of the congregation, then even in disciplining him, things should be done right. You know what? Paul definitely understands the feelings and psychological needs of the penitent wrongdoer.

You see it in verses six to eight. This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person. So now, instead, you should forgive and console him so that he may not be overwhelmed by sorrow.

So, I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. May I say this quickly? Yeah, it's one of the problems we have in the church today. The church does not have a ministry of restoration.

Most churches, or if I may put it that way, discipline people, and we just throw them away. We don't care whether they come back to Christ or not. We just throw them away.

But if you think about this, if you were to think about it in terms of the price that Christ paid, the sufferings that he went through, the agony that he went through, and all the things he did for this one person to come to him, then we wouldn't want to lose that person. Even when that person is wrong, we want to do the best we can and understand the feelings of that person and the psychological needs of that penitent wrongdoer because this person is penitent. And what does he do? He appeals to his own conduct as an example for the Corinthians to follow.

And he's aware of the divisive operation of Satan within the community. And so, he says, we do not want Satan to take advantage. One major question that has always been asked is, who is this offender? What is the identity of the offender? As much as possible, I really don't want to dwell on that for long, but let me tell you some of the things that have been argued.

Most older commentators have argued that this is the man guilty of incest. But I don't think so. It's not.

You see, for various reasons. I mean, because when you look at 1 Corinthians 5, it's not the same thing as 2 Corinthians 2. Evidently, after Paul's painful visit, an insult of

some description has been held against Paul or one of his representatives. This is a personal offense against Paul.

This is not an offense in terms of incest. This is something here when the man, maybe somebody, has been disciplined, and then some people in the church feel that Paul was being too harsh. Paul was being too harsh, and it was difficult; therefore, they rebelled against him.

So, you have some people against Paul in the congregation. I don't think it's the offender because there are so many reasons to argue against that. Evidently, after Paul's painful visit, an insult or some description has been directed against him or one of his representatives, either by a visitor to Corinth or by a Corinthian.

And that's basically the same argument as C.K. Barrett makes in his book, who perhaps at that time headed the opposition to Paul in the church because you'll see later that Paul had so many opponents in the church at Corinth, and that person had to be disciplined. So, Paul discounts the sorrow caused by the unfortunate episode. Paul says, if I am willing to forgive that person, then you should be willing.

So, you know, definitely, this was not just a case of incest or thereabouts. So, Paul shifts his attention. He addresses the one in the congregation who has heard and has not only called sorrow to Paul but, by extension, has called sorrow to the entire congregation.

The best we could say is this: the nature of the offense is not certain. That's number one. The second thing we can say is this: the offense, the type of the offense, does not matter in the context.

What matters to us in this context is what Paul is saying about restoration. What is Paul saying about bringing this person? And this is where we can talk about holiness as restoration. Holiness as restoration. It's quite interesting because when you look at 2 Corinthians, reconciliation and restoration fill the pages, and isn't it true that if you ask me to give a two-word definition of Christianity, this is just me, I will tell you that Christianity is basically restored relationships.

That's all it's all about. Restored relationships. You know what happened in the Garden of Eden.

The relationship was broken, and God did what he needed to do. Why did Christ come? To restore our relationship back to God. Restored relationships.

That's why Christianity cannot just be just; it's your thing. Do what you want to do, just on the Jericho road; there's room for just two, just Jesus and me. I don't believe so. If it is Jesus and me alone, I'm sorry for you, then you're out.

But the road to Jericho is not just, and there's room for more than two. It's not Jesus and me, and it's Jesus and us. Yes, I understand.

Christian experiences, salvation, and Christian experience like sanctification, are certainly personal, but they are not individualistic. It's within the context of the community. We live our lives in the context of the community.

How do I know that I have patience except in the context of the community? How do I demonstrate long-suffering except in the context of the community? How do I manifest goodness? Is it to myself except in the context of the community? How do I manifest gentleness or gentleness with myself alone except within the context of the community? So, Christianity is about relationships, and Paul is about relationships, and he said, look, something has happened. A relationship has been broken. This person has been disciplined, and it is time to restore this relationship to where it was.

So even though we're not certain of the offense, we're very certain of what Paul was trying to do. You see, Paul's words seem to indicate that he had been personally offended, perhaps by someone who had openly challenged his apostolic authority before the church. Paul had previously called on the church to take action, and they did.

Both the report of Titus and Paul's present letter indicate that the church has responded favorably to Paul's instruction. Now, in verse 6, he says, so in now instead you shall forgive and console him so that he will not be overwhelmed with sorrow, but rather they should confirm their love to him. That is very significant and very important.

Now let me say this: when Paul says that they should forgive him, what do we learn? The church must be a place of forgiveness. If the church cannot mirror the forgiveness of Christ, we have lost every right, morally and scripturally, to invite people to come to church to experience forgiveness. If we cannot extend forgiveness to offenders who have repented, then we need to re-examine what holiness means.

So, this is very, very important. This passage is important, and Paul says, I wrote this reason to test you, to test you, I mean so that you may not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So now, instead, you should forgive and console him.

Now, let's look at it a little more. These directives were a test of their obedience, and as I said at the beginning of my introduction to this chapter, I talked about discipline, and I want to make a few points before I leave that section. One must admit that discipline in first-century Christian communities, in cities in which there were few

congregations, is different from discipline in contemporary society in which congregations exist on every corner of the street, particularly in the West.

You see, I live in Cleveland, Tennessee, and the population here is probably between 40 and 50,000, and you wouldn't believe that we have more than 300 churches in a city, about 40 to 50,000 300 churches. So, it is possible for you to go to one church, different churches in a year; by the time the year ends, you would have gone to 52 churches, and then it would take you six years to go to all the churches in Cleveland and then you circle back again to where you started. But it was not like that at the time of Paul.

If you run away from Paul in Ephesus, you meet him in Philippi. If you run away from Philippi, you meet him in Corinth. If you run away from Corinth, you meet the same Paul.

But there are less important lessons for us to learn from this particular passage. Number one, discipline is necessary for the health of the church. It is necessary for the health of the church.

Many churches neglect to discipline members who have sinned. You see, it is always easier to ignore this unpleasant duty with the hope that things will right themselves. Paul did not do that.

It doesn't happen. When this happens, the church becomes corrupted and loses God's blessing and power. So, it is important.

Number two, forgiveness and restoration must be extended to a repentant brother or sister. When discipline is administered, and offenders repent of their sins, then the church must also be willing and quick to forgive and encourage those repentant ones. Listen, the church ought to be a living demonstration of forgiveness in the community.

Number three, it is not an expression of Christian love to remind people of their past sins and to treat them as second-class members of the church. And still view them with suspicion. They should be given an opportunity to make a new start and to make useful contributions to the church's life and ministry.

We have no right to limit them beyond what God does in his word. So, Paul assures the church of his forgiving anyone whom they forgive. Now, learn another lesson.

Paul says, whosoever you forgive, I forgive. So, you forgive, because I forgive, you also forgive. You see, Paul's forgiveness and the Corinthians' forgiveness are intertwined.

You see, Paul could have used his apostolic authority and simply told them, I have forgiven him. Now, take him back. He could have done that.

Since I've forgiven him, whether you forgive him or not, it doesn't matter. Paul knows that he's part of that congregation. Paul exercises authority with humility.

That's what we see in 2 Corinthians 2, verses 5-11. Authority and humility. Remember that the word humility was not cool, the way we say it.

It was not in vogue in early Christianity. I mean, because among the Greeks, if you were humble, you had no spine. Humility was not a virtue.

It was made a virtue by Christians. It's Christians who turned it into a virtue, but for the Greeks, no. Paul exercised authority with humility.

Then Paul says something. We must be mindful of Satan's malicious designs. Sincerely, look at what he says.

We must be careful that we're not outwitted by Satan. What exactly does Paul mean by that? That we must not be outwitted by Satan? Well, probably when we refuse to forgive, and this man is dejected and depressed, and he doesn't want to come to the church anymore, he might end up not interested in things of God again, then who takes advantage? Satan takes advantage, and a member of the kingdom is probably lost. So, we must be careful.

Paul does not explain what it means. What we know is that the adversary is too alert to take advantage of all who do not walk in Christ's love and forgiveness. The enemy is always at alert.

Lastly, Paul understands the sorrow that a congregation feels when a member commits an error. You know, unfortunately, the church sometimes doesn't demonstrate the mind of Christ. When somebody is caught in, I say, well, it serves them right.

That's not a Christian attitude. We told him. No, no, no, no.

That's not a Christian attitude. It should pain you. Even though you told him and he still did it, you don't rejoice.

Yeah, I've been vindicated. I don't think that's the kind of vindication you want as a believer. We must know the sorrow that a congregation feels when a member has, and we must genuinely feel sorrow.

It is difficult to forgive and once again love that person back into the community. So, it becomes a test of obedience. Forgiving that person and having that person come back into the community becomes a test of obedience.

We affirm our love for the brother or the sister in the best way we can to restore them to Christ. Communal holiness is what we're talking about here. Holiness as restoration of the offender.

Very, very important. You see, verse 10 helps us to argue at least clearly that this offense was personally a personal act. Look at it in verse 10.

Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake. The implication of that is it's a personal act of effrontery against Paul or his delegated representative.

So, Paul says, let's forgive and go away. Forgiveness is interesting. Please bear in mind that forgiveness is done in the sight of Christ, in the presence of Christ.

As Christ looked on as a witness, we do the forgiveness in the presence of Christ approved. Christ, who taught us a willingness to forgive, was a condition for forgiveness. You see that in Matthew chapter 5, verse 12, verse 14, and in Matthew chapter 18, verses 23 to 25.

We should be willing to forgive. Forgiveness. Forgiveness.

I mean, that's what Paul is arguing. We can't talk about this too much, and many believers today struggle with it. But when we don't, we play into the hands of the master strategist, Satan, who was bent on creating discord within the church at Corinth, either between the church at large and the dissident minority or between the repentant wrongdoer and his fellow Christians.

So, to withhold forgiveness when the man was repentant was to play into the hands of Satan, who already had gained one advantage when that man sinned. We need to be careful because there's a point at which discipline can become purely vindictive, and the suffering penalty can drive someone to despair. Christian discipline certainly includes punishment when necessary but administered in love.

But bear in mind, not retributive or punitive is remedial or reformatory. It's for the purpose of that person recognizing what he or she has done. It aims at reinstatement after repentance through forgiveness and reconciliation.

Now we go to 2 Corinthians chapter 2. We want to read now from verse 11. 2 Corinthians chapter 2, beginning from verse 11. You see here, Paul continues his journey to Troas.

2 Corinthians 2, we want to read verses 12 and 13. When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord, but my mind could not rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So, I took leave of them and went to Macedonia.

Now, these two verses come to the final section, in which Paul explains his conduct to the Corinthians. If we want to reconstruct the events that led up to the severe letter, let's look at it this way. Titus was sent to Corinth with a letter of tears while Paul continued to walk in and around Ephesus.

So, he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer, the city to which he returned after a painful visit. Paul talks about his departure to Troas. Probably, that was precipitated by Demetrius inciting a riot in Acts chapter 19.

Evidently, he had planned to leave the city for when he sent Titus to Corinth, he arranged to meet him at Troas or, at the very least, in Philippi. So, we may safely assume that Paul actually preached in Troas. Though verse 12 speaks only of his intent, he will recognize that the door of opportunity was opened to him only after he grasped the evangelistic opportunities which the Lord has given him.

So, he said when I came to Troas to preach the gospel. So, he definitely had the opportunity to preach in Troas. So here he discusses his journey.

He explains what happened in Macedonia. He did stop at Troas for the gospel of Christ, and he was welcomed, but not finding Titus, he could not find rest in his spirit and so he took leave. Remember, in the first introduction to the course, we did say that 2 Corinthians, more than any other book, shows the humanness of Paul as a person, a window into Paul's heart.

Listen, a man who talks about the peace of God that passes understanding will establish your heart. That same man says I could not find rest in my spirit because of Titus. You wonder why? Because Titus had not come back, and he did not know how the Corinthians would respond to him.

Were they going to accept him? Were they going to reject him? Were they going to do something wrong to him? He said I had no rest in my spirit. This is love. We have a proverb back in Africa that when somebody is not your child, you can send them a message on an errand and say, you must come back tonight.

When somebody is not your child, you send that person on an errand and say you must be back tonight by all means. But when somebody is your child, you say well now you are going now if it is dark please stay over and come tomorrow. You can stay overnight and come tomorrow.

But when it is not your child, you say by all means, whether it is dark or not, come tonight. But if it is your own child, you say if it is getting dark, I don't want to endanger your life, sleepover, come tomorrow. Can you see the difference between the two? Here is Paul.

He said I find no rest in my spirit because I have not found tithes. It provides us a window into Paul's heart. I mean, it goes into Paul's mind as the NRSV translates it.

His mind could not rest. That is, he found no relief in his spirit from hopes and fears for spiritual children at Corinth. Truly, Paul was carrying the Corinthians in his heart. Though he had the opportunity to preach it to us, he was too restless in his spirit to concentrate on his service.

His foremost thought lay with the Corinthians and with Titus. Would they reject his authority again, or would they listen to him and do what he had written? What a true pastor Paul was. He had genuine love for the people of God, and God has committed to his care, and we need to know that.

Listen, we said this is a pastoral letter that teaches us how to be good pastors. Every minister of the gospel ought to be constrained by such love and concern. We need the love of God for the people to be our motivation.

I'm sure you've heard it before that some people will say well, I love the ministry is the people that I don't love. Love the ministry is the people I don't love. Okay what is the ministry then chairs and microphones? If you love the ministry, it means you love the people of God.

I mean Proverbs 25 25 says like cold water is to a thirsty soul. So, it's good news from a far country. So, Titus's report was good.

Verse 14, but thanks be to God who in Christ always leads us in triumphant procession and spreads through us the fragrance that comes from knowing him in every place. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. The good news that Titus brought to him evoked an outburst of praise.

Thanks be to God. The apostle goes on to compare his ministry by way of analogy to that of a captive who is led in the triumphant procession of a victorious general. Now scholars have debated who is being led here.

Is it Paul who is the captive and quite a number of debates. But it's safe to assume that Paul had in mind a graphic picture of a Roman triumphal parade where a general was going in front and he saw himself as a soldier of the victorious general sharing in

his triumph. For Paul, God was the victorious general who was at the head of the procession.

In every place that Paul reached he gave of the fragrance of the gospel of Christ. Then, in verse 16, he likens his ministry and compares his ministry to the aroma that filled the air during such processions. The gospel is an aroma of life to those who are being saved and an aroma of death to those who are perishing.

Do you know what this verse teaches us? It teaches us or shows us the importance of our reaction to the gospel message. Perhaps we all can think of someone, a relative, or a neighbor, who is known for a particular perfume she wears. The moment she goes and says oh yeah, Auntie so-and-so is here because she has a peculiar perfume.

You know it. Auntie so-and-so is here. Even without seeing her, we know she's nearby.

Without uttering a single word, our fragrance diffuses into the company like that from the broken alabaster box of oil. I say oh yes, Auntie so-and-so, and you'll never miss it. Surely, she's around the corner.

Every Christian, for that matter, should also be known for wearing a particular perfume: a perfume the fragrance of Christ. But listen, but this cannot be bought at a cosmetic counter or sold at the church.

It always rises and only out of an intimate relationship with Christ. Very impossible. Very important, rather.

It rises always and only out of an intimate relationship with Christ and, of course, subtle yet noticeable. I remember the story of John Fletcher, who was called the flaming Fletcher. John Fletcher, that great holiness preacher.

There was the story that he was passing along the street one day and one spot in young Jesus is going along the street and mistaking John Fletcher: his humility, the fragrance. Now, we need to ask ourselves.

Which fragrance are we diffusing? Someone said about a Christian in a small town. Listen to what he says. That man never crosses my pathway without my being better for it.

That man never crosses my pathway without my being better for it. This means that every time this man passes, I'll be a better person. Every time he talks to me I'm a better person.

Another person said of the same man. You only need to shake his hand to know that he's full of God. You only need to shake his hand to know that he's full of God.

What a testimony. What an incredible task such a ministry is. You know what we're talking about? We're talking about victory through suffering.

Victory through suffering. No wonder Paul could ask the question, who is sufficient for these things? Who is sufficient for these things? Let's read it again from verse 15. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who have been saved and among those who are perishing.

To one, a fragrance from death to death. To the other, it is a fragrance from life to life. Then he said who is sufficient for these things? In other words, how can we do this? Listen.

This is where the grace of God comes in. Paul's view of grace is very robust. For Paul, grace is powerful.

The grace of God transforms us. It's not just that we mouth grace, anyhow. Now, this is when we talk about grace, and we're talking about irresponsible grace, not irresponsible grace.

We're talking about irresponsible grace. The grace that transforms your life and helps you and helps us and strengthens us to do the will of God. We can't do the will of God without the grace of God.

We can't be this aroma. We can't be a blessing to everybody without actually having the aroma of God in our lives. You see, God causes us to triumph.

Paul is very clear. Then he says, who is sufficient unto these things? Who is equal to this task? Who can do it? The task of preaching the gospel of Christ. The task of being the aroma of Christ.

The answer may be that we apostles are because he will say later we are not peddlers of the gospel. We apostles are. We are not peddlers of an unadulterated message, or he could say no one is if he depends if he or she depends on his own resources.

I think that another answer will be seen in Chapter 3, that we are not sufficient if we depend on our own resources. And then he goes ahead to say in verse 17. Look at verse 17 now.

Here, he says in verse 17, for we are not many. We are not like so many peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity as commissioned by God in the sight of God, we speak in Christ.

I'm sure you've seen peddlers before. These people hawk their materials when there is a traffic jam. I mean, you see it in Lagos, Nigeria.

You see it in the streets of Manila in the Philippines. You see it in several places even in some places in the United States. You see the hawkers going around once there is traffic.

They go around you. They run, and they want you to buy. Paul says no, we are like so many.

So many may be referring to the numerous wandering teachers and philosophers. You know we have so many wandering teachers and philosophers in the first century. Some of them are the cynics.

They just go around. And these people expected and demanded payment for what they claimed was the word of God. They want to be paid for it.

Some people. Or maybe it was opponents. They were not like some people.

And so Paul appears. He appeals to the sincerity of his motives. He appeals to the sincerity of his motives and the purity of his message.

Now you got something there. Motives and message. Your message and motives go together.

Why do we preach what we preach? We need to check our motivation. Motivation for ministry. This is very important.

Remember, we are going to talk about the marks of an authentic ministry, which we will be looking at when we get to Chapter 3. But Paul is already hinting at where he is going. He said we are not like those who peddle the word of God. We are not hawkers.

But as men of sincerity. Here we go again. Paul's talking about sincerity.

As commissioned by God. Remember we said that when we were talking about 2nd Corinthians chapter 1, verse 1? He said as commissioned by God. In the sight of God so we speak in Christ.

We've learned quite a few things in chapter 2. We've learned about discipline. We've learned about forgiveness. We've learned about pastoral sensitivity.

We've learned about how to deal with people when they are disciplined and how to discipline. We've talked about confrontation. That confrontation is sometimes necessary, but we must do so out of love.

As ministers of the gospel and Christian walkers, whatever we do should be motivated by the love of Christ. And we ourselves should be people of integrity. And don't forget that 2 Corinthians talks about the ministry of restoration.

The church is quick at casting people out. But I think the church we should realize is a hospital where people come, sick people come, where they find healing, where they find forgiveness and all that. By the way, have you ever wondered why sick people are called patients? I'm not sure, but we call them patients.

Maybe because what they need most is patience. Maybe that's the reason that we call them patients because they need patience. At the time of their need, when they need patience, we need to bear with them.

The same thing when somebody asks for the gospel, we need to be able to make sure that we are patient with them and we have their restoration as our goal.

This is Dr. Ayo Adewuya in his teaching on 2 Corinthians. This is session 3, 2 Corinthians 2, Paul's Defense.