

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for July 5, 2009

“A Change in Plans”
2 Corinthians 1:22-2:4
Dale Whitehead

How did Paul respond to the charges against him that he lacked personal integrity in 2 Corinthians 1:12-2:4?

Paul first of all responded to the charges against him by introducing the testimony of his conscience (2 Corinthians 1:12-14).

Paul secondly responded to the charges against him by denying them (2 Corinthians 1:15-17).

Paul thirdly responded to the charges against him by affirming his faithfulness as a messenger of God (2 Corinthians 1:18-22).

Paul fourthly responded to the charges against him by explaining his motivation for his most recent change in travel plans (2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4).

Paul, in calling God as a witness, was in effect swearing that everything that he was about to say concerning the motivation for his recent change in travel plans was true.

Paul changed his plans in order to spare the Corinthians from the rod of discipline that he himself would feel compelled to wield if he visited them while they were still unrepentant (1 Corinthians 4:21).

Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that whatever authority he possessed as an Apostle of Christ, he possessed in order to serve them and to bring them joy as his fellow co-laborers (2 Corinthians 1:24).

Paul was apparently convinced that unless the Corinthians changed, the only thing that would result from another visit to them would be an overwhelming sense of sorrow and an absence of joy (2 Corinthians 2:1-2).

Paul, therefore, in light of his belief that another visit to the Corinthians would have been highly unprofitable, chose to write the “severe letter” instead (2 Corinthians 2:3).

The “severe letter” that Paul wrote to the Corinthians was a very difficult letter for Paul to write but he wrote it because of his great love for them (2 Corinthians 2:4).

The word “anguish” (SUNOCHE) is used elsewhere only once to describe what the nations will experience on the day of the Lord when God will give alarming signs in the heavens and on the earth (Luke 21:25).

Paul spoke of his “anguish” and his many tears not to make them sorrowful, but to communicate his great love he had for them.

May God give us the grace, not only to be grieved when our brothers and sisters in Christ are spiritually struggling, but the grace to serve them unconditionally to the end.