

The  
New  
Testament  
in a Year

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Week 20

1 Corinthians 16 to  
2 Corinthians 4

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This week's reflections were written  
by **Drew Maxwell**,  
one of the ministers at  
Calvary United, St. Jacobs.

Drew really resonates with 2 Cor 4:7 –  
God uses crack-pots to show his love.

### General Questions for Reflection

You might pick one part of each chapter  
and think about these questions.

- What does this tell me about God  
(including Jesus and the Holy Spirit)?
- What does this tell me about our world?
- What does it tell me about me?
- What does it say about following Jesus?
- Is there something here I'd like to learn  
more about?

Why not use these thoughts to shape your  
prayer today.

Monday

1 Corinthians 16

With so many requests for worthy causes, it's hard not to get weary. Paul was convinced that the church was the hope of the world. Hence, he asked the early church to prioritize supporting other struggling congregations. And, he asks us to plan ahead to be able to give (above and beyond the tithe. Wow!!)

*Some questions to consider:*

- *How do you feel about supporting churches world-wide?*
- *Do you find yourself turning off as soon as you receive another request for donations?*
- *Are you able/willing to listen for what God may be asking you to give?*

Paul finishes asking the church to be ready to receive leaders from other churches – including himself. Some little tidbits: Paul did follow through with his promise to return and winter there (2 Cor); Timothy obviously struggled to be authoritative and was not well received by the church in Corinth – hence the admonishment (1 Tim 4:11).

Tuesday

2 Corinthians 1

### Overview of 2 Corinthians

There's debate over whether this is one letter or the compilation of two or more letters – Especially chapters 1-9 and 10-13 seem separate.

Paul's focus is to defend his authority as an apostle, to call the church to focus on being representatives of Christ (rather than squabbling) and to encourage them to give to support other churches.

1:3-4 summarize the tone of the letter. Paul has endured great pain – even from the church in Corinth. But he reminds us that even painful things are meant to point us to God and be turned into ministry.

*For reflection:*

- *In what ways have you been comforted by God?*
- *Is there an area you could use God's comfort.*
- *How are you 'comforting others in the same way you've received comfort'*

Wednesday

## 2 Corinthians 2

Painful relationships. Inappropriate acts. Being hurt by the church. It's all here at church's beginning. Paul was wounded by factions in the Corinthian church that rejected his leadership. So, it's helpful to watch how Paul seeks to restore relationships and point the church towards being examples to the world.

In Chapter 1, he begins explaining why he failed to visit previously. Now, he seeks to lead the church towards forgiveness and unity with him and those who caused such division. What does it mean to love like Jesus?

Vs. 5 – forgive, comfort, reaffirm love. And, it's important because we represent Jesus to the world: we are the aroma of Christ! (Note the great line “to one we are the smell of death” vs. 16. To represent Christ, as Paul exemplifies, can be painful.

*For reflection:*

- *How is your church at modelling love and forgiveness?*
- *Are there any relationships you can ask God to help you bring comfort, forgiveness, love?*

Thursday

## 2 Corinthians 3

Do you ever wonder if you've made a difference? If God has worked through you?

Paul reminds us that we were made to make an eternal impact on others: "you yourselves are our letter - written on our hearts"

*Take some time to reflect and pray for those who God used in your lives; and for those God loves through us. and to thank God who works in us, sometimes despite ourselves.*

God's glory accompanies God's presence. When Moses appeared before God (bringing the ten commandments written on stone tablets, or other times he would go to meet with God - see Ex 34,( 40:34, Lev. 9:22), he would be glowing from the encounter with God's glory. But the glory faded until the next time he 'met' with God. The veil hid the fading glory, just like the tent.

*For reflection: Remember some 'glory' moments – time you felt God at work. Are you more glowing? Or fading?*

Friday

## 2 Corinthians 4

If representing Christ to the world is our purpose, the temptation is strong to cover up our faith on the one hand, or make it seem more palatable on the other.

Sometimes we cover up our faith because we don't feel like good enough examples. And for those, Paul writes: God gave us this ministry “in his mercy”. And, using the example of rough clay pots, reminds us it's not about us: we don't preach about ourselves, we point people to Christ. We have “a treasure”, the same power that raised Christ from the dead”, “his light shining” in us. God chose us!

Yet, speaking for Jesus has its cost: Paul was persecuted and suffered for Jesus' sake. His secret? By focusing on Jesus calling, his spirit keeps getting renewed though his body suffers. Instead of focusing on the trials, he focuses on his purpose – to make Jesus evident everywhere..

*Today, pray for those who suffer for Jesus' sake: [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com)*