

Rolling with the Changes

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:12-2:4

I. You roll with the changes by living with godly sincerity.

- A. Paul refers to this godly sincerity in vs. 12. The Corinthians had expected Paul to show up at a certain time, but Paul didn't come. Paul had a clear conscience in his behavior in changing his plans. Paul did not act with duplicity. He wasn't deceitful. Paul told the Corinthians, "With me, what you see is what you get."
- B. The Corinthians were used to dealing with traveling teachers doing stand-up philosophy. These philosophers made their living dispensing earthly wisdom (vs. 12). The philosophers were good at boasting about themselves. We find who Paul boasted about in 1 Corinthians 1:31: "**Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.**" The wisdom of the cross of Jesus accepts weakness and suffering and refrains from taking advantage of others. It gives one's life freely to serve others. Paul wasn't a fake. He truly loved Jesus, and He sincerely loved the church.

II. You roll with the changes by living with dependable flexibility.

- A. When Paul didn't show up in Corinth on his way back from Macedonia, he was accused of vacillating (vs. 17). Why didn't he come? We find the answer in vs. 23: "It was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth." Paul did not want to hurt the Corinthians with more strong discipline. So, instead, Paul went on to visit the church in Ephesus where he wrote a very difficult letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:4).
- B. "As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No" (vs. 18). God is faithful. God is dependable. Therefore, Paul says, I am dependable as one sent by God and by Jesus. You may not be able to depend on me to always keep my travel itinerary to the letter, Paul says. But you can depend on me to put the Gospel of Jesus first. Always. Whatever will help to grow and spread the Gospel of Jesus, you can count on me to do that every single time.

III. You roll with the changes by living with love and joy.

- A. Paul's motivation for seeking reconciliation with the Corinthians is twofold: love and joy. In vs. 24 Paul says, "we work with you for your joy." When you love someone, you want their joy. And their joy brings you joy. But there is something else that goes with love: pain. Paul speaks about pain seven times in 2 Cor. 2:1-5. Love does not avoid the truth. Love speaks truth, not to hurt, but to heal. In order to get to the love and joy we want, we sometimes need to start a conversation with wounds and tears.

Application:

Plans change. But God's promises never change. Trust His promises to roll with the changes.

Sources:

The Bible

Commentaries by Trent Casto, David Garland, Gary Millar.

Sermon Outline Questions

- 1) Why could a change in plans cause relational difficulties? What is the correct response when someone we know and love has changed plans on us?
- 2) What principal caused Paul to change his plans to visit Corinth again? When should we be flexible with our plans, and when must we stick to them?
- 3) What did Paul want for his relationship with the Corinthians? Why does love for another person necessarily mean pain?