

Comfort the Downcast

2 Corinthians 7:2-16

For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn – fighting without and fear within. **But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him,** as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.

2 Corinthians 7:5-7

Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

Isaiah 49:13

Not only were we encouraged; how happy Titus made us with his happiness over the way in which all of you helped to cheer him up! I did boast of you to him, and you have not disappointed me. We have always spoken the truth to you, and in the same way the boast we made to Titus has proved true. And so his love for you grows stronger, as he remembers how all of you were ready to obey his instructions, how you welcomed him with fear and trembling. How happy I am that I can depend on you completely!

2 Corinthians 7:13b-16

Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it – I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while – yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

2 Corinthians 7:8-10

There is, in the world, a great deal of sorrow on account of sin which is certainly not repentance and never leads to it. Some transgressors are sorry for sin for a time—they are convicted of guilt with a transitory conviction, which soon passes away. Many are sorry for sin because of its temporal consequences—and many more because of its eternal consequences. They are afraid of Hell. If there were no Hell, they would like to continue to live in sin... They are as fond of sin as ever they were, but they sorrow because they see that it is bringing them down to the gulf of Perdition (Hell). Now, that kind of sorrow is not repentance!

A moth may burn its wings in the candle and then, full of pain, fly back to the flame. There is no repentance in the moth, though there is pain—and so, there is no repentance in some men, though there is in them a measure of sorrow on account of their sin. Do not, therefore, make a mistake in this matter, and think that sorrow for sin is, or even necessarily leads to, repentance.

Charles Spurgeon