

2 Corinthians 1: 1 – 22

'Paul's reliability'

Introduction ...

St Paul was in trouble. And I'm not meaning his 'usual' trouble that came from being an Apostle ... the affliction he refers to in **verse 8** of our reading.

No – cast your eyes down to later in our reading in **verse 17** – he writes:

'was I vacillating ...?'

You see, Paul had promised to visit the Corinthian Christians again and he hadn't turned up.

Those Christians, that church, felt that they'd been messed around. First being told one thing and then another.

Background ...

Paul was in Ephesus – and it was a relatively straight forward sea crossing to Corinth. But instead, he'd chosen to go the long way round, by the land route.

We're not quite sure why.

We know that his last visit to Corinth wasn't an easy one – in **Chapter 2** of this letter, Paul writes:

'I made my mind up not to make you another painful visit'

And in our passage tonight, Paul links his message to the Corinthians to God's faithfulness and the centrality of the Gospel:

Verse 18: As surely as God is faithful our word to you has not been 'yes' and 'no'

Verse 20: For in him (Christ Jesus) everyone of God's promises is a 'yes'

For us ...

Now – this might well seem somewhat convoluted to us ... and indeed bring certain contemporary politicians to mind ... but ... this is **Tom Wright's** conclusion:

Paul has moved from the Corinthians' puzzlement about his travel plans to the very centre of the Gospel and the hope it brings. He doesn't want the Corinthians to think of him, his travels and his forthcoming visit in purely human terms. He's anxious that they should learn to think of him, as they should learn to think of everything in the light of God's great 'yes' in the Gospel and the Spirit.'

This can perhaps help us when we feel let down. Not necessarily that the person letting us down **PTO**

claims that God has told them to – and in this letter Paul implies it eventually – but rather not to allow the ‘letting down’ to affect, cloud, undermine our response to our commitment to the God who wonderfully loves us and gives us life.

St Paul is pointing them back to God’s faithfulness and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Disappointment can sour relationships and also become a poison that spreads within us ... when we sense that happening let’s ask God to remind us of the last 2 verses of tonight’s reading:

**It is God who establishes us with you
in Christ and has anointed us, by
putting his seal on us and giving us his
Spirit in our hearts as a first instalment.**

With God, there’s always more to come!

Amen.