

Sermon Notes on II Cor. 1:18-22, Trinity XIX

1. Some of the Corinthian Christians accused Paul of being fickle, of changing his mind and purpose without reason and cause. Originally Paul had planned to visit the Corinthians on his way from Ephesus to Macedonia. Then, after visiting Macedonia, he planned to visit the Corinthians a second time after which they were to provide him companions for further journeys. But, owing to changed conditions in Corinth and also for the Corinthians' own good, Paul went directly to Macedonia and thereafter visited Corinth only once. Paul's adversaries in Corinth seized upon this change in plans and accused Paul of fickleness.
2. When Paul's integrity was called into question, he did not argue nor did he have hurt feelings. He simply appealed to the Son of God, the promises of God in Christ Jesus and the wonderful and eternal activity of the Triune God in behalf of him, his helpers and all the Corinthian believers. Paul, in this text, is quietly asking: "If I am fickle, what about God Himself and His message which I have been preaching?" This is the way the maligned pastor should answer his parishioners. That's the way Paul did it when he was falsely accused by the Galatians and the Corinthians.
3. Vs. 17 which precedes our text means: "Does this change in plans make me fickle and unreliable?"
4. Vs. 18 means: "God is faithful in that our word toward you is not a wavering between 'yes' and 'no'." This means that God's faithfulness is THE cause of the integrity of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. If Paul was guilty of fickleness then also his helpers were guilty of the same sin because they all preached the same message. On the thought of "God is faithful" compare Deut. 7:9; I Cor. 10:13; 1:9; I Thess. 5:24; II Thess. 3:3; II Tim. 2:13; Heb. 10:23; 11:11; I Jn. 1:9; Rev. 1:5. It is a constant theme in the Bible.
5. Vss. 19-22 give us three reasons for what is said in vs. 18. Vs. 19 gives us reason # 1. His first reason for his own integrity is no less than Jesus Christ, God's Son. Paul feared that the accusation of fickleness would be extended to what he and his helpers had preached. We translate: "The Son of God, Jesus Christ, the One Who was preached among you through us, namely through me, Silas and Timothy, was not an ambiguous One (yes and no) but One Who is reliable (yes)." The word for "was" here in Greek means "was and always is." If his accusers had been right then Paul's Gospel would have been uncertain.
6. Vs. 20 gives us the second reason. We translate: "For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why we utter the Amen through him, to the glory of God." Christ fulfills all the promises no matter what they are. Why does the sun rise every morning? Because of the promise at Gen. 8:22. Why does the rainbow appear after a shower of rain? Read Gen. 9:12-16. Because of Christ Jesus. He is the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God." Rev. 3:14.
7. Vss. 21-22 give us Paul's third and final reason. We summarize: God has done four things for His people: He has confirmed them, He has annointed them, He has sealed them, He has given them His Holy Spirit as a down-payment. What do the means of grace give us? Read I Jn. 2:27: "And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for any one to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."
8. Who makes God's ministers reliable in all that they say, even about traveling from one place to another? The Triune God Who is eternally faithful. What convinces the hearers about the faithfulness of God and the integrity of His ministers? The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Sermon Outline on II Cor. 1:18-22, Trinity XIX

Theme: THE RESULTS OF THE PROPER USE OF THE GOSPEL

Introduction: Hebr. 3:1-6 compares Christ and Moses. Christ is the Lord and Moses only the servant of the Lord. But they are alike in the fact that they are faithful. Both can be relied upon to do the will of the Lord. Christ is faithful because He is true God. Moses was faithful because God made him faithful. Likewise God and Paul were faithful and reliable to the congregation of Corinth. But some of the members accused Paul of being unreliable because he changed his plans of travel. Paul defended his own reliability so that his teaching of the Gospel would not be undermined.

I-The Gospel Reveals God as a Truly Reliable God.

- A-The Word shows us that God is reliable. Vs. 18. His Word does not waver between "yes" and "no". For example, I Cor. 10:13 assures us that God will not permit us to be tempted beyond our ability. God is faithful. I Jn. 1:9 tells us that Christ is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. See also I Cor. 1:9; I Thess. 5:24; II Thess. 3:3; II Tim. 2:13; Heb. 10:23; 11:11; Rev. 1:5. It is a constant theme in the Bible. God's utter faithfulness to us makes Him reliable to us.
- B-All of God's promises find their "yes" in Christ. Vs. 20. There are many hundreds promises of God in the Bible. Each and every one of them are true and fulfilled in Christ. He takes away the sin of the world. Jn. 1:29. He is preparing a place for us in heaven. Jn. 14:3. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life. Jn. 14:6. He is with us until the end of the age. Mt. 28:20. The sun rises every morning because of the promise at Gen. 8:22. The rainbow appears after every shower of rain because of the promise at Gen. 9:12-16. These are only a few of the hundreds of promises of God in the Bible, fulfilled by Christ.
- C-The faithful God has done four things for His people. Vss. 21-22. These vss. tell us that God, the Triune God, has confirmed us, anointed us, sealed us with the Holy Spirit and given us the Holy Spirit as a down-payment of everlasting life. This is what the means of grace do for us. I Jn. 2:27 tells us: "And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for any one to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."

II-The Gospel Makes God's Servants Reliable

- A-Moses and all Christians are faithful. We mentioned above that Hebr. compares Christ and Moses. They are alike in their faithfulness. Both did God's will. At Mt. 25:21,23 on judgment day God calls Christians "good and faithful". Only God is good. Mt. 19:17. In Mt. 25 "good and faithful" means "good, namely, faithful." Christians are not morally good enough to save themselves but God Himself makes them faithful to do His will. He forgives man his sins. He gives man a new heart and spirit. He makes the sinful man willing to do God's will. Faithfulness is listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit at Gal. 5:22,23.
- B-God and His Word made Paul faithful. God's faithfulness was THE cause of the integrity of Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. He had integrity in all he said, whether he was preaching the Gospel or planning another journey. Some of the Corinthians accused Paul of being unreliable. If that were true, reasoned Paul, then his message also would be unreliable. Therefore, Paul would not allow anyone to call him unreliable because it would have been a direct attack on God.
- Conclusion: In this world of sin people do not trust each other. They call each other liars and cheats. They don't even believe that God is reliable. The only cure for all of this is the preaching and teaching of the Gospel.