

Monday Evening Bible Reading Group: 2 Corinthians 1.15 – 2.4: Some Notes

There is deep theology here, but also pastoral stuff and practical realities. The sort of real life stuff that affects us all, if maybe in more modest ways. Paul had planned more visits, but one visit to Corinth had not gone well; and a tough letter (maybe or maybe not reflected in chapters 10-13 of this letter) had been hard to write and hadn't wholly resolved the problems. "I do love you, but....." Paul has to stand up for what he believes, and has to justify himself with his critics sniping at him. But this isn't about him, it is about Jesus. And he doesn't want the Corinthians switching from self-righteous sectarianism to drowning in guilt: that isn't healthy either. The Corinthians have to focus on faith in the Lord – re-capturing their initial glimpses of glory: "You stand by your faith, not ours". Altogether, "More tears than ink in this parchment."

"Jesus is Yes Yes" is a memorable phrase that needs some thought. Basically, it means that you know where you are with Jesus. Jesus fulfilling the promises is about Jesus fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies; Jesus at the heart of the Hebrew "Amen" to our prayers; Jesus linked with the gifts of the Holy Spirit as a first instalment and a guarantee of the fullness we shall experience at the end of time. Paul is walking alongside and with, not dictating: the power that matters in the Church of Christ is the power of Love.

The geography has been touched on before: 250 miles straight line Ephesus to Corinth; and that straight line visit to be followed by a second visit after going elsewhere. Now a roundabout journey, so a delay as Paul does a long land journey, and only the one visit. This allows time for cooling and reflection, and it reflects the reality that other people and places also matter.

In a "face time" era we can learn from Paul – whatever our place in our church or community. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent. Love the sinner but not the sinner. Truth speaking not the same as fault finding. Help people to think things through; enable and energise not dictate. Servant leadership.