

## Summary of 2 Corinthians 2-5

In 2 Corinthians 2, Paul continues addressing the relational tension between himself and the Corinthian church. He urges the church to forgive and restore the repentant individual who had caused grief, reminding them that discipline is meant to lead to restoration, not destruction. Paul emphasizes the importance of unity, love, and resisting Satan's schemes by withholding forgiveness. He also reflects on his own ministry, describing how God leads him in triumph in Christ and spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ through him—some receive it as life, others reject it, but Paul remains faithful to proclaim the gospel sincerely.

In chapter 3, Paul contrasts the old covenant of the Law with the new covenant of the Spirit. The Law, written on stone, brought condemnation, while the Spirit brings life, freedom, and transformation. Paul explains that believers are living letters of Christ, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God. Through Christ, the veil is removed, allowing believers to behold God's glory and be continually transformed into Christ's image with ever-increasing glory. This transformation is not self-produced but the work of the Spirit.

Chapter 4 focuses on perseverance in ministry despite suffering. Paul acknowledges the hardships he and his companions face—being afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down—but emphasizes that they are not destroyed. He describes believers as jars of clay, fragile vessels that display the surpassing power of God. The purpose of suffering is not defeat but the advancement of the gospel and the glory of God. Paul anchors hope in eternity, reminding believers that present troubles are light and momentary compared to the eternal glory being prepared for them.

In chapter 5, Paul expands this eternal perspective, explaining that believers long for their heavenly dwelling and walk by faith, not by sight. He emphasizes that life is lived with the awareness that believers will one day stand before Christ. Because of Christ's love, Paul is compelled to preach reconciliation: God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Believers are therefore ambassadors for Christ, entrusted with the message of reconciliation. The chapter culminates in the profound truth that Christ became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God.

## Reflection Questions

1. Paul describes believers as spreading the “aroma of Christ.” What does your life communicate about Jesus to those around you—both to those who receive Him and those who reject Him?
2. In chapter 3, Paul says believers are “letters of Christ,” written by the Spirit. What would someone learn about Christ by reading the “letter” of your life?
3. Paul contrasts the old covenant of the law with the new covenant of the Spirit. In what ways do you still drift toward performance or self-effort instead of living in the freedom and transformation of the Spirit?
4. Paul says that beholding the glory of the Lord leads to transformation. What practices or distractions most affect what you are regularly “beholding,” and how is that shaping you?
5. Paul calls present suffering “light and momentary” compared to eternal glory. How does an eternal perspective change the way you interpret hardship, disappointment, or endurance right now?
6. Paul says we walk by faith, not by sight. Where is God asking you to trust Him beyond what you can see, measure, or control?
7. In chapter 5, Paul explains that Christ’s love compels us. What currently motivates your obedience, service, and sacrifice—and how does Christ’s love reshape those motivations?
8. Paul declares that believers are ambassadors of reconciliation. Who has God placed in your life that you are being called to represent Christ to, and how can you intentionally live out that calling?