

SIN, FORGIVENESS, AND RESTORATION IN THE  
THEOLOGY OF PAUL: AN EXAMINATION OF  
2 CORINTHIANS 2:5-11

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## ABSTRACT

God's quick response to the doom and ruin mankind brought upon itself was the restoration of man's position in the original plan of God through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary and its attendant implications. Thus, against impaired religious bias and legislations as regards the disciplining of a sinner, Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 2:5-11, tried to clarify the expectation of God toward sinful acts in His church. Hence, since there is always a tendency of sin rearing its head amongst God's people, the congregation of believers should act promptly in denouncing it and take appropriate biblical steps in meting out deserved and commensurate disciplinary measures in love. However, such measures should be aimed at carefully, gradually and ultimately restoring the erring believer back to fellowship and service, as it were, under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit in a record time. Consequently, the church should always not hesitate to forgive such repentant individual(s) and reaffirm their love by comforting the individual(s) unto restoration. However, there should be a restoration "package" or programme put in place for repentant sinners. The duration of the restoration will, however, depend on the duration of the restoration programme, and by the unhindered leading of the Holy Spirit.

## 5.2 Conclusion

It has been observed from this work that sin in any guise is an offense against God. Therefore, repentance from sin is the only way out to receive forgiveness. Forgiveness is ultimately God's prerogative and exclusive preserve, and no man has the right to give or withhold forgiveness to a deservedly repentant sinner. The church is a redeeming

cum restoring agency. Having been forgiven in the first place, Christians (in the church) should also forgive, to put a check on the divisive schemes from the 'pit of hell.'

This writer, therefore, submit that acts of sin in the church of Christ should not be tolerated but confronted with adequate disciplinary measures commensurate to the offense. Therefore, the church should ensure appropriate disciplinary measures against sinful acts, which will be devoid of overtly punitive or vindictive disposition; but with redemptive and restorative approach within a record time to be determined by the programme and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

No matter the intensity of the sin committed by any member of the church, a once and for all, sufficient price has been paid for it at Calvary by the Lord Jesus Himself through His vicarious death. Hence, the church should not deny the implications of this sacrifice for restoration when a Christian sins.

It is the opinion of this writer that restoration paves the way for the careful, gradual and ultimate reinstatement of the repentant sinner back to Christian fellowship and service. Thus, the church as a redeeming agency ordained by God has a role to play to ensure that this is done. For pastors and leaders of congregations, their restoration should not be denied upon the establishment of proven repentance. However, due to the sensitivity of their position, there is need for them to temporarily step aside to undergo the restoration programme as provided. This step should be taken, however, by the majority decision of the church. Consequently,

upon the completion of the restoration programme, and as led by the Holy Spirit, the church should reinstate him back to fellowship and service. These, in the opinion of this writer are the implications and applications of sin, forgiveness, and restoration in the theology of Paul prescribed in the book of Second Corinthians 2:5-11.

### 5.3 Recommendations

The church of Christ is becoming complacent in upholding the message of the cross with regard to disciplinary actions being meted out to erring and repentant sinners. Some contemporary disciplinary measures are so hasty and vindictive that the devil has found easy opportunities to divide the church and enthrone diatribe, mudslinging and witch-hunting practices which have rendered the evangelical assignment of the church moribund in some cases. Therefore, the following recommendations are advanced to help the church overcome this pitfall;

1. The church must constantly and consistently seek to rediscover and grasp the biblical understanding of sin, forgiveness and restoration and practice it the way Paul has prescribed in addition to other New Testament writers.
2. The church must not replace discipleship with counseling as is evident today. More so, the discipleship programmes should be a continuous exercise.
3. The church must from its inception inculcate into its polity (constitution) discipleship materials designed primarily for restoration processes, at all levels of church membership.

4. Christian scholars and theologians should write biblically based and theologically balanced study materials on this and other related topics.
5. The church should approve continuous and sustained spiritual renewal programmes and courses for their pastors.
6. Ministers of God should be encouraged to have counselors who are colleagues in the field for spiritual relationship and oversight.
7. Churches should finance the expenses of the fallen pastor during the period of his restoration.
8. Ministers of God should be discouraged from honouring too many invitations for revival and crusade programmes by other churches or denominations.
9. The church should ensure that allowances and perquisites of the pastor are paid promptly and correctly.
10. The church must organize and sustain a prayer chain for their pastor and fellow members.
11. The church must ensure that her pastor is housed in a fenced pastorium.
12. The church must organize sex and sexuality symposia periodically and systematically at all levels.
13. The church should insist that where workable, a male or a married female should be employed as the Pastor's secretary.
14. The church should encourage the Pastor to warn against sensual tendencies and temptations in the church.
15. The church should insist on decent and moderate modes of dressing for all church members.