

2 Corinthians 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

Analysis

Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears—Paul uses three intensifying terms: *thlipsis* (θλίψις, "affliction, pressure"), *synochē* (συνοχῆς, "anguish, distress"), and *dakruōn* (δακρύων, "tears"). This was no casual rebuke but a letter birthed through emotional agony. Paul's tears authenticate his love—he wounded them not as a detached judge but as a brokenhearted father.

Not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you—The contrast is crucial: grief was the means, not the goal. The phrase *perissoteros* (περισσότερος, "more abundantly") suggests Paul's love exceeded normal pastoral affection. His tears demonstrated that correction flows from love, not animosity. This anticipates his statement in 2 Corinthians 12:15: "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you." True spiritual authority weeps over those it must discipline.

Historical Context

Ancient letters often included emotional self-disclosure, but Paul's level of vulnerability was unusual for authority figures. Roman *paterfamilias* (household

heads) typically maintained emotional distance; Paul's tears represent a radically different model of leadership—one rooted in Christ's compassion.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do Paul's tears over the Corinthians model Christ's heart for His church?
2. What is the relationship between loving discipline and emotional investment?
3. How can leaders today demonstrate that correction flows from love rather than anger?

Interlinear Text

ἐκ	γὰρ	πολλῶν	θλίψεως	καὶ	συνοχῆς	καρδίας	ἔγραψα
out of	For	many	affliction	and	anguish	of heart	I wrote
G1537	G1063	G4183	G2347	G2532	G4928	G2588	G1125

ὕμῖν	διὰ	πολλῶν	δακρύων	οὐχ	ἵνα	λυπηθῆτε
unto you	with	many	tears	not	that	that ye should be grieved
G5213	G1223	G4183	G1144	G3756	G2443	G3076

ἀλλὰ	τὴν	ἀγάπην	ἵνα	γνῶτε	ἣν	ἔχω
but	G3588	the love	that	ye might know	which	I have
G235		G26	G2443	G1097	G3739	G2192

περισσότερως	εἰς	ὕμᾱς
more abundantly	unto	you
G4056	G1519	G5209

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 7:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

Psalms 119:136 (Parallel theme): Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org