

2 Corinthians 7:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.

Analysis

I speak not this to condemn you—Pros katakrisin ou legō (πρὸς κατάκρισιν οὐ λέγω, "I do not speak for condemnation"). Paul clarifies his self-defense isn't counter-accusation. Katakrisis (κατάκρισις) means judicial condemnation or sentencing—Paul refuses to turn reconciliation into litigation.

For I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you—En tais kardiais hēmōn este (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἐστε, "you are in our hearts"). The phrase eis to synapothanein kai syzēn (εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ συζῆν, "unto dying together and living together") echoes marriage covenant language and military loyalty oaths. Paul's affection isn't sentimental but covenantal—he's bound to the Corinthians in life and death. This pastoral love constrains his correction: he wounds to heal, not to destroy.

Historical Context

Ancient friendship literature (e.g., Aristotle's *Ethics*, Cicero's *De Amicitia*) emphasized loyalty unto death as the highest friendship ideal. Paul appropriates this cultural value but grounds it in Christ's self-giving love. His 'severe letter' (v. 8) risked the relationship but demonstrated true agapē—love that tells costly truth.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do I distinguish between godly correction (that seeks restoration) and ungodly condemnation (that seeks destruction)?
2. Who has God placed 'in my heart' with such covenantal commitment that I'd risk the relationship to speak truth?
3. Do I receive correction from spiritual leaders as evidence of their love or attack on my dignity?

Interlinear Text

οὐ πρὸς κατάκρισιν λέγω· προείρηκα γὰρ ὅτι ἐν
not this to condemn I speak I have said before you for that in
G3756 G4314 G2633 G3004 G4280 G1063 G3754 G1722

ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἐστε εἰς τὸ συναποθανεῖν καὶ
G3588 **hearts** **our** **ye are** **to** G3588 **die** **and**
G2588 G2257 G2075 G1519 G4880 G2532

συζῆν
live with
G4800