

## 1 Satisfaction

- A Work in Process

## 2 Introduction

- When I was a little boy living in Ashland, Kentucky, I would frequently run outside, whenever I would hear the sound of an airplane flying over head.
- To me there was nothing more amazing than airplanes.
- As Charles Lindbergh once said, in aviation you've got "science, freedom, beauty, and adventure." These are the stuff that pushed the buttons of most little boys of that time—especially me.
- In fact, my hobby was putting together model airplanes and hanging them with tread from the ceiling in my bedroom.

## 3 Introduction

- Adding fuel to my passion for aviation, part of the responsibilities of my father at Ashland Oil was supervising the Aviation Department.
- Frequently, he would take our family down to the local airport and my sister and I would run through the hanger, sit in the company's airplanes, and if we were lucky one of the pilots would take us for a ride.
- Life was good!
- So today, when I take kids flying for the first time and see their eyes as big as saucers when I lift off the ground, I see myself and remember how I felt to fly on wings like eagles.

## 4 Up Up & Away

- Even in those days, flying commercially was an event that was so special that people would dress up and wear their finest clothing.
- All you needed to get on an airplane was a ticket.
- There were no security lines, metal detectors, or the taking off of one's shoes.
- All the airlines treated their passengers with special respect and worked hard to earn everyone's trust and return business.
- And with the advent of Jet aircraft travel time was cut in half and one could fly from New York to Los Angeles in 5 hours and New York to London in 6.

## 5 Modern Marvels

- In those days, jet travel was a modern marvel that caught the admiration of many.
- It was fun, exhilarating, and got you to your destination in record time.
- However, like so many novelties, after a while we start to notice the limitations, flaws, and lack of perfection.

- We see this with aviation, the car that parks itself, smart phones that navigate us to the mall, and hypoallergenic dogs.

## 6 **Consumer Satisfaction**

- Each year, the American Consumer Satisfaction Institute polls thousands of travelers, aiming to get a snapshot of just how happy the average flier is with his or her experience.
- Despite slightly more positive scores in recent years, according to the survey, commercial airlines now rank near the very bottom of the 43 industries on the index, edging out only cable television and Internet providers in satisfaction.

## 7 **Consumer Satisfaction**

- The dissatisfaction with flying is not without merit.
- We've all experienced enough of the cramped seating, overpriced ticketing, cancelled flights and crazy fees to agree that flying is far less fun and much more frustrating than it used to be.

## 8 **Consumer Satisfaction**

- By the way,
  - Television and Video Players were ranked the highest in customer satisfaction.
  - Next were Credit Unions, Soft Drinks, Consumer Shipping, and Personal Care & Cleaning Products.
  - Bottom on the list were Internet Service Providers, Internet Social Media, Subscription Television Service, and Airlines.
  - Among airlines, JetBlue and Southwest were rated the highest, while American, US Airways, and United were at the bottom.
  - Among hotels, the Marriott and Hilton were rated the highest, with Wyndham coming in last.

## 9 **The Church at Corinth**

- So, if the church were one of the 43 industries the ACSI polled regarding satisfaction, how would it do?
- More specifically, what kind of rating do you think the church at Corinth would achieved?
- According to Apostle Paul, the church at Corinth was his most dysfunctional church.
- You've got people fighting for power, issues with sexual immorality, drunkenness at their corporate gatherings, suing each other, and marriages melting down.
- If the truth be known, this church's customer satisfaction index probably was just above the Department of Motor Vehicles and just below jury duty.
- In other words, it was a mess.

## 10 **Sobering Truth**

- The sad but sobering truth is that the same is often true in our churches today.
- When you lift the hood on any and every congregation you'll see leaks and cracks, you'll hear thumps and rattles.
- The church of Jesus Christ is made up of people saved by and yet still desperately in need God's grace.

## 11 Church Troubles

- The truth is that the church in Corinth wasn't all that different from churches then and churches today.
- There will be immorality that comes to light, politics at play, marriages that are messy and a ministries that miss the mark.
- There will always, in some way, be reasons for deep discouragement.

## 12 Paul's Response

- Like all good pastors, the Apostle Paul addresses the issues at Corinth head on.
- He tells the church, Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 6:9–10 NIV)
- Then he goes on to say, And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:11 NIV)
- Implying that since we are saved, how can we act as if we're not?

## 13 Deception

- The key phrase to the passage, I believe is found in verse 9, where Paul says, do not be deceived.
- The source and content of the deception is not necessarily explained in the immediate context, but if we look elsewhere in Paul's writings to Corinth, we find something very interesting in 2 Corinthians 10, where Paul says . . .
- I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. (2 Cor 10:2 NIV)
- So then, who are these "some people?"

## 14 Paul's Heart

- In the very next chapter Paul reveals who these people are but does so after he first reveals his pastoral heart.
- He says, I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. (2 Cor 11:2 NIV)

- But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (2 Cor 11:3 NIV)

## 15 Paul’s Heart

- For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. (2 Cor 11:4 NIV)
- But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those “super-apostles.” (2 Cor 11:5 NIV)
- For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. (2 Cor 11:13 NIV)

## 16 The Super-Apostles

- If you are a student of the New Testament, you’ll recognize that the Super-apostles were everywhere.
- John encountered them in Ephesus, Peter exposes their work among the churches in the north of Asia Minor.
- Jude warned about them, as did James and the writer of Hebrews.
- Titus opposed them on Crete, and Timothy had to deal with them in Ephesus.
- Wherever the true Gospel took root and churches began to flourish, the super-apostles appeared, seeking to gather followers for their own version of the faith of Christ.

## 17 Self Confident Boasting

- According to Paul, a common trait of these super-apostles and probably why Paul calls them “super-apostles” is because they have a tendency to boast in their accomplishments (2 Cor. 11:17) — especially in their mystical experiences (Col 2:18).
- The Apostle Paul boasts too, but not in his accomplishments. He says, If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. (2 Cor 11:30 NIV)
- Moreover, when he shares visions and revelations from the Lord, he does so with great reservation and humility.

## 18 The Letters to the Corinthians

- In the New Testament there are references to four letters that the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth.
  - A Previous Letter that we have no record of but is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9.
  - The Epistle of 1st Corinthians, which was written in response to a misunderstanding from the previous letter and other questions.
  - The Sorrowful Letter, which is probably contained in 2 Cor. 10:1-13:10 and deals with Paul’s struggles with the super-apostles.

- The Epistle of 2nd Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:1-9:15), which was probably written somewhere in Macedonia upon hearing from Titus that the Corinthians received the Sorrowful Letter and reconfirmed their love and loyalty to Paul.

## 19 **Troubled in Heart**

- Sometime after writing 1st Corinthians, Paul visits Corinth but finds things not as they should be. This is referred to in 2 Cor 2:1 as the Painful Visit.
- Paul returns to Ephesus and writes the Sorrowful Letter and sends Titus to deliver it.
- Not wanting to make another painful visit so soon to Corinth, Paul journeys to Macedonia first.
- However, Paul is troubled in heart as he has not heard back from Titus and doesn't know if the Corinthians have come to their senses or not.

## 20 **Good News**

- But when Paul enters Macedonia, he finds Titus and hears good news.
- So encouraged is Paul that for the next 85 verses (2 Cor. 2:14 - 7:1), he writes some of the most inspiring description of God's goodness and grace found anywhere else in the whole New Testament.
- He starts off this section with, But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ . . . (2 Cor 2:14 NIV)
- But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever. (2 Cor 7:6-7 NIV)

## 21 **Godly Sorrow**

- Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it — I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while — yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. (2 Cor 7:8-9 NIV)
- Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, . . . (2 Cor 7:10 NIV)

## 22 **The Corinthian Church**

- The Corinthian church was a mess and customer satisfaction was low mainly because standards had been compromised.
- Nevertheless, the Apostle Paul loved this church and greatly humbled himself before them—telling them what was needed—to win their hearts back from the super-apostles.
- This all was very stressful for the Apostle Paul, as well as for the church at Corinth.

- Despite the immorality, despite the gossip, despite the immaturity and selfishness on display in this church, he says I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. (1 Cor 1:4 NIV)

## 23 Exhortation

- So then in this spirit, please allow me as your pastor to humble myself a bit.
  - Listen and take heed to those who seek to warn you about false apostles and prophets.
  - Not all manifestations are profitable and some people eager for them have been deceived into using shamanistic practices and principles.
  - The goal of our faith should be righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness . . . (1 Timothy 6:11).
  - For the knowledge of God does not come through special esoteric experiences (Gnosticism), but is gained when we add virtue to our faith. (See 2 Peter 1:5-9)
  - And above all else, if anyone tells you that you can have the promises of God without denying yourself and carrying your cross daily, you should run from them.

## 24 Conclusion

- To the Roman church, the Apostle Paul says the following . . .
  - And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. (Rom 13:11 NIV)
- No generation has more justification to believe that the Lord's return is near than this generation in which we live.
- This is why we should make every effort to make our calling and election sure and not allow ourselves to be so easily deceived by the boasting of others.
- As the writer of Hebrews says, Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace . . . (Heb 13:9 NIV)

## 25 Conclusion

- As pastor of this church, I want our hearts to be strengthened by grace, which takes place as we walk out God's word and become imitators of Christ.
- For Jesus has promised us that if we walk in the light (truth), we will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life (John 8:12)—which will reveal to us what is God's good, pleasing, and perfect will (Rom. 12:2)—so that the darkness that is around us in these last days will not be blindness.
- So then, let us allow the workings of God's grace to work in our lives and bring satisfaction to our soul and spirit, as we walk out God's truth together. Amen.