

Bible Study Series on.....

*The 2nd Letter
To the*

CORINTHIANS

(#2)

13 Lessons

**Produced by:
PAUL E. CANTRELL**

2005

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Lesson One

“THE CALL FOR PURITY”

(II Cor. 6:11-18)

INTRODUCTION

1. The 2nd Corinthian letter is considered the more personal letter of all that Paul wrote by the inspiration of God.
 - a) In the very process of defending himself, he reveals a great deal about himself.
 - b) But, his defense of himself is far more important than he was.
 - c) The whole Christian system was at stake in this matter, as well as the salvation of innumerable souls.
 - d) It had to be done, and done well....and it was!
2. Two things that are emphasized here in these few verses:
 - a) It is important how they feel about each other (Paul & Corinthian church).
 - b) It is important that their lives be pure from the old idolatry & its vices.
3. It continues with the concept of receiving the grace of God in vain! (to be turned from the Lord).

DISCUSSION**I. PAUL’S CONCERN THAT HIS LOVE BE RECIPROCATED. (6:11-13)****A. He appeals to their heart by expressing what was in his heart!**

- 1) *“O ye Corinthians”*.....unusual way of expressing his concern.
- 2) *“Our mouth is open unto you”*
 - a) *“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”*
 - b) His mouth had to speak what a loving heart feels.
- 3) *“our heart is enlarged”*
 - a) Stressing the strong affection he had for them.
 - b) The mind is enlarged by ideas.
 - c) The heart is much increased by love.

B. He points out their lack of love towards him.

- 1) *“Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.”*
- 2) You are narrow, limiting your love to us.
- 3) You do not occupy a narrow, limited, place in our heart, like I do in your heart.
- 4) Your limited feelings for me are seen by your failure to vindicate me.
- 5) Any distressful feelings you have towards me arises more from yourself than from me.

C. He calls upon them to be open in expressing their love to him.

- 1) *“Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.”*
- 2) Be enlarged in heart towards me.
- 3) Open your heart to me as I have done towards you.
- 4) This request comes from their spiritual father in the Lord.

II. THE CHALLENGE NOT TO BE UNEQUALLY YOKED WITH UNBELIEVERS.**(6:14a)****A. “Unequally yoked”**

- 1) A yoke was used to control two animals so that they could be worked.
- 2) Deut. 22:10 states that animals of different kind were not to be yoked together.
- 3) Used here in a metaphorical sense after the same concept.
 - a) Two different kinds of persons.
 - b) Two persons going in different directions.
 - c) Thus, an ill-advised union.
- 4) Close & binding contracts or associations were not to be formed with those so different.
- 5) Idolatry, Marriage, Friendship, Business.
- 6) In Marriage:
 - a) Consent is asked of earthly fathers, but not of the heavenly Father.
 - b) Such a union usually does not lead to paradise on earth, but to misery & the divorce court, or apostasy.
- 7) Even friendships may need to be changed where it is unequal in nature.
- 8) As well, in the business world.

B. What is the concern being expressed?

- 1) Can be pulled into or influenced into wicked principles & practices again.
- 2) Can cause misery, loss of peace, loss of holiness, loss of what was once prized.

C. Not to be unequally yoked with “unbelievers”.

- 1) “Those who reject the faith”
- 2) “Those who refuse to believe the gospel”
- 3) I Tim. 5:8---Infidel

III. HE ILLUSTRATES THE PRINCIPLE WITH SIX THINGS. (6:14b-16)**A. What does righteousness & lawlessness have in common?**

- 1) Righteousness---desiring to always do right.
- 2) Unrighteousness or lawlessness---no moral standard to hold to.
- 3) Fellowship---joint sharing, things in common.

B. What communion hath light with darkness?

- 1) Light---truth, correct way to walk.
- 2) Darkness---error, wickedness, ungodliness, wrong way to walk.
- 3) Communion, fellowship---They are the opposites of each other.

C. What Concord has Christ with Belial?

- 1) Christ---The perfect Son of God
- 2) Belial---The wicked one, worthless person, son of wickedness.
- 3) What can a follower of Christ have in common to share with such a son of wickedness?

D. What part has he that believeth with an infidel?

- 1) What portion, things do they share in common?
- 2) A man who believes VERSUS a man who does not believe.
- 3) One guided by Jesus, the Son of God.

- 4) The other guided by the impulses & desires of the flesh.

E. What agreement has the temple of God with idols?

- 1) In I Sam. 5:2-4:
 - a) Ark was placed in the Temple of the idol, Dagon.
 - b) The next morning, the idol was prostrated on the ground.
 - c) The two cannot co-exist together.
- 2) Never is a man so blinded than when he can see no difference between the Living God and an idol.
 - a) They have nothing in common to share.

F. Ye are the Temple of the living God!

- 1) God is not a dumb idol, He is living!
- 2) And Christians are the dwelling place of Deity today.
- 3) Not a material building, but within the hearts and lives of His children.
- 4) He dwells in, walks among, and wants to be our God, and we his people.
- 5) But it is a choice that we make!
- 6) I Cor. 3:16-17

IV. ADMONITION IN VIEW OF THESE THINGS. (6:17a)

A. "Wherefore"

- 1) Upon the basis of these self-evident facts....
- 2) You should easily see the responsible course to pursue....

B. "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord..."

- 1) He quotes Isa. 52:11, possibly, in which instructions are given to the Jewish people coming back from being captives in Babylon.
- 2) Don't bring back any of the evils of Babylon.
- 3) For the Christian who has left the bondage of a sinful world....
- 4) Don't bring over with you any of these evils.
- 5) Avoid those entanglements with unbelievers.
- 6) Obey the Lord, listen to Him, be guided by His wisdom, not the world.
- 7) Rom. 12:2---"***And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind....***"
- 8) Avoid the contamination of Idolatry and its evils.
- 9) Separate yourself from any sinful practices you have formerly engaged in.
- 10) But also, be separated from an unequal yoking situation that could influence you back into idolatry.

C. "Touch not the unclean thing"

- 1) We cannot go out of the world, but we can put the world out of us.
- 2) We do not adopt the world's principles & practices.
- 3) We do not yield to their fashions or seek their ends.
- 4) Touch not the unclean or forbidden thing.
- 5) Leave such behind...don't try to hold on to it.
- 6) Such are out of harmony with the purity of God.

V. THE OUTCOME OF SUCH ACTIONS (REWARD). (6:17b-18)

A. "I will receive you"

- 1) Cleaning up our lives must be done to be received by God.

- 2) In order to associate personally with God.
- 3) To follow God calls for sacrifices, but we gain far more.

B. “I will be a Father to you”

- 1) Give you my affectionate care, love, education, protection, and provisions.
- 2) Only obedient children can have this relationship.

C. “Ye shall be my sons & daughters”

- 1) What a great blessing to be known as the children of God.
- 2) We can be....because we show an obedient spirit like true children should do.
- 3) We prove our sonship by:
 - a) Breaking free from worldly things;
 - b) Separating from the unclean things;
 - c) By perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

CONCLUSION

1. “Saith the Lord Almighty”

- a) This promise was originally given to Israel under the Old Testament.
 - b) Now, it is renewed to us under this New Testament.
 - c) Emphasizes the certainty of its truthfulness.
2. Is God a Father to us?
 3. Are we his obedient children?
 4. He can be and we can be....if we make the decision to obey his gospel.
 5. Have we kept the promise we made to Him....to die to the way of Sin?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. Paul’s defense of his Apostleship was critical to the furtherance of the Gospel.
- ___ 2. Paul challenged the Corinthians to reciprocate his love.
- ___ 3. The term “unequally yoked” is critical to Paul’s challenge to the Corinthians.
- ___ 4. Unbelievers are those who reject Christ.
- ___ 5. Paul illustrates this principle with 8 different illustrations.
- ___ 6. God dwells in his temple today also.
- ___ 7. Paul quotes from the Old Testament about the concept of coming out from among them.
- ___ 8. To touch not means to live the unclean and forbidden things behind.
- ___ 9. We prove our Sonship by breaking free from worldly things.
- ___ 10. It is important that we keep our promise to let Jesus be Lord of our lives.

Lesson Two

“MARKS OF TRUE REPENTANCE”

(II Corinthians 7:1-16)

INTRODUCTION

1. The church at Corinth had many problems.
 - a) Divisive spirit among them.
 - b) Incest among them, not dealt with.
 - c) Brother going to law with brother.
 - d) Problems with marriage & divorce.
 - e) Questions of eating meat offered to idols, and Christian freedom.
 - f) Recognizing the Leadership-Submissive roles among them.
 - g) Misuse of miraculous gifts....showing a lack of true love.
 - h) Teachers questioning the resurrection.
2. The very fact that a church established by an apostle had problems makes us realize that probably no church is without problems to deal with.
3. But, the church at Corinth became another kind of an example for us.
 - a) After Paul’s letter to them to help straighten out the problems.....
 - b) He waited to see what their reaction would be.
 - c) This section shows us what a good example the church was also.

DISCUSSION**I. CHALLENGES IN VIEW OF SUCH GREAT PROMISES. (7:1)****A. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved”**

- 1) Promises based on their actions:
 - a) If we separate from sinful practices
 - b) If we stop forming unequal alliances with unbelievers.
- 2) God’s promises:
 - a) He would receive us and be a Father to us.
 - b) We can be His sons & daughters.

B. “let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit”

- 1) In view of these promises....do what we should in putting off the old man.
 - a) Filthiness of the flesh: Lasciviousness, gluttony, drunkenness, etc.
 - b) Filthiness of the spirit: Idolatry, Malice, Lying, Anger, etc.
 - c) Both outward actions, and things of the heart.
- 2) Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
 - a) Maturing, growing in holiness, purity of heart & life.
 - b) Consecrating our whole being to doing God’s Will.
 - c) To be done out of great respect & reverence towards God.

II. PAUL EXPRESSES HIS AFFECTION FOR THEM, AGAIN! (7:2-4)**A. He appeals to them:**

- 1) “Receive us”---open your hearts to us.
- 2) “we have wronged no man”---Done injustice to no one there.
- 3) “we have corrupted no man”---Mistaught anyone.

- 4) “we have defrauded no man”---Taken money under false pretense
- 5) “I speak not this to condemn you”
 - a) His actions & teachings were not just to condemn them.
 - b) His desire was to help them, make sure of their salvation.
- 6) “For I have said before, ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.
 - a) If possible, he could remain among them the rest of his life.
 - b) Whatever their fate....he would be by their side.

B. His expression of affection overflows towards them.

- 1) He had spoken freely to them because of his great concern.
- 2) Now, he can speak freely about his boasting about them to Titus.
 - a) Because they had proven themselves worthy of Paul’s boasting about them.
- 3) He is so relieved to hear about how they had reacted to his letter.
 - a) I am filled with comfort.
 - b) I am exceedingly joyful, even in the midst of tribulations.

II. PAUL IS GREATLY COMFORTED BY THE COMING OF TITUS.(7:5-7)

A. He describes his condition before his coming.

- 1) He had gone to Macedonia, hoping to find Titus, but didn’t.
- 2) While waiting, he said:
 - a) His flesh had no rest, and he had troubled on every side.
 - b) He had fightings without and fears within.
- 3) Probably describing:
 - a) The external problems he was facing in the work in Macedonia.
 - b) And his internal problems over the church at Corinth.

B. Paul describes the great comfort that Titus brought.

- 1) It was a great blessing from God, Himself, who is the great comforter.
- 2) God comforts those who are cast down, troubled, humbled by circumstances.

C. Titus’ report:

- 1) Titus was greatly relieved over how they received him & the letter from Paul.
- 2) He told of the Corinthians’ earnest desire to see Paul.
- 3) He told of their mourning, regretfulness, over their failure to uphold Paul.
- 4) He told of their warm affections for Paul.
- 5) ALL OF THIS BROUGHT MUCH REJOICING!!

III. THE MARKS OF TRUE REPENTANCE. (7:8-11)

A. Paul tells them of his feelings about the first letter he wrote them.

- 1) He did not repent that he made them sorry with his first letter.
 - a) It obviously was inspired of God.
 - b) Paul wrote things the Spirit of God gave him to write.
 - c) He wrote things that God knew they needed.
- 2) But, at first, he did repent.
 - a) The human side is now being expressed.
 - b) He was fearful of what the outcome might be.
- 3) But now that he has seen the good results, he was happy.
 - a) It had brought not only sorrow, but repentance!

b) True repentance!

B. We have a contrast between worldly sorrow & godly sorrow.

1) Sorrow of this world:

a) It is sorrow---Such is neither good or bad in itself.

---It depends upon what is done about it.

b) This sorrow can be over:

1—losses, disappointments,

2—Shame, ruin, sickness, etc., sins!

c) But this sorrow brings death.

1—Brings eternal death because no true repentance takes place.

2—It can bring physical death also.

3—Excessive grief can cause them to kill themselves (Judas).

2) Sorrow after a godly sort:

a) It is sorrow towards God, Himself.

b) Such leads to repentance unto salvation.

c) A reformation that ends in salvation.

d) This sorrow has no regrets about actions taken.

C. The results of godly sorrow.

1) Caused carefulness in them.

a) Careful to comply to the Will of God written by Paul.

b) Earnestness to comply.

c) “See how earnest this God-given pain has made you”

2) Caused a clearing of themselves.

a) Eagerness to clear yourself of blame.

b) Eager to prove your innocence in the matter.

c) Renunciation of evil....turning from wrong.

d) Dissatisfaction for wrong conduct and for being so foolish.

3) Caused Indignation.

a) Strong feelings about the sin they allowed in their midst.

b) Their stated hatred for sin.

4) Caused fear.

a) Of the outcome of their actions.

b) Or of Divine wrath for sin.

5) Caused vehement desire.

a) For approval of God, Paul, righteous people.

b) To be obedient in all things.

6) Caused zeal.

a) Acting quickly, concisely with sinful person in their midst.

b) Zeal to do God’s will, uphold Paul’s apostleship.

c) To vindicate themselves.

7) Caused revenge.

a) They showed determination that the offender be punished.

b) Such sin deserves to be discipline, if repentance is not there.

c) It was done.

8) Caused a clearing of themselves.

a) Cleared yourself from every stain of guilt in this matter.

- b) Wiped away reproach from yourselves in this matter.
- c) At every point, you have cleared yourselves.
- d) Showed a humble, teachable spirit on their part.

IV. REASON FOR WRITING SUCH A STRONG FIRST LETTER. (7:12)

A. It was not just to correct the actions of the one who had sinned.

- 1) This was the incestuous person in I Cor. 5.
- 2) He was living with his father's wife.
- 3) His correction was needed, but not only reason.

B. It was not just for the one who had suffered wrong.

- 1) The father had been greatly wronged, and nothing had been done.
- 2) He needed to be considered in this matter.
- 3) But this was not the only reason for the letter either.

C. It was written to express his care, concern for them.

- 1) He wanted them to discharge their duty before God.
- 2) He wanted them to go to heaven.
- 3) The whole church, in reality, was involved in this matter.
- 4) It was for the benefit of all.

V. PAUL STATES THAT HE WAS COMFORTED ALSO IN THEIR COMFORT. (7:13-16)

A. Exceedingly so, in their treatment of Titus.

- 1) They had evidently received him well.
- 2) Reassured him of their reception of the letter.
- 3) They set his mind at ease.
- 4) This was a great encouragement to see them do this with Titus.

B. Paul was also comforted because they lived up to his boasting about them to Titus.

- 1) Titus may have been reluctant to take the letter.
- 2) Paul must have reassured him of their receptivity.
- 3) Sure enough, Paul's boasting about them was correct.

C. He was comforted because they had done to Titus what they had done to Paul.....Impressed Titus!

- 1) With their obedience to God's Will.
- 2) How they received him with fear & trembling....showing great humility of spirit.

D. He was comforted because he could have even greater confidence in them as a family of God at Corinth.

- 1) He rejoiced because of their actions.
- 2) His letter had been well received & acted upon quickly.

CONCLUSION

1. True repentance is called upon to do some hard things.....but they will be done.
2. True repentance will lead to eternal life, not death.
3. God is calling upon all men to come to true repentance, or perish.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. It is significant that a church established by an Apostle had many problems.
2. We need to be cleansed of filthiness of the body as well as the spirit.
3. The Christian is to strive for perfect holiness in his life.
4. Paul had boasted about the Corinthians to Titus.
5. Worldly sorrow is sinful.
6. Godly sorrow turns one back to God.
7. Paul not only wanted the sinful man to straighten up, but that this father could be blessed by his repentance.
8. The News from Titus relieved Paul's concern about the Corinthians.
9. The Corinthians evidently greatly impressed Titus with their response to Paul's letter.
10. Paul could have greater confidence in the Corinthian church now that they had showed their efforts to conform to God's will.

Lesson Three

“A CHALLENGING EXAMPLE OF CHARITY”

(II Cor. 8:1-6)

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul’s boasting to Titus about the church at Corinth had been proven truthful.
2. But there was another area of boasting about them that Paul wanted to deal with.....THEIR PROMISED GIFT FOR THE POOR SAINTS IN JERUSALEM.
3. On this trip (3rd journey), Paul had been collecting money from churches to carry back to Jerusalem for the poor saints there.
4. Somehow, before Paul’s first letter, the church at Corinth had promised to give to this worthy work.
5. So, in the first letter Paul sent, he reminds them of this collection (I Cor. 16:1-4).
 - a) He wanted them to be ready with their gift when he came.
 - b) He even urges them by the example of the Macedonia churches.
6. Remember, Paul is writing this 2nd letter from Macedonia.
 - a) He was among them and knew first hand what he was writing to the church at Corinth.
 - b) They also knew this fact as well.

DISCUSSION**I. THE VALUE OF THE DEDICATED EXAMPLES OF OTHERS. (8:1)**

A. “Moreover, brethren, I want you to know of the grace (favor) of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia”

- 1) Grace had been bestowed upon the Christians in Macedonia.
- 2) They showed that grace by acting like God.
- 3) God is a gracious giver unto His creatures.
- 4) So, we become gracious givers as well.....as we act like God.

B. Churches of Macedonia

- 1) Known:
 - a) Philippi---The one that helped Paul so much.
 - b) Thessalonica---The one that underwent persecution.
 - c) Berea---The one that studied to see if message was true
- 2) Could have been others established by now.
- 3) These churches had suffered for their beliefs.
- 4) But, they still had a gracious disposition towards their poverty-stricken brethren in Jerusalem.
- 5) Paul wanted the Corinthians to be aware of their actions.

II. THE CONDITIONS AND SPIRIT UNDER WHICH THEY WERE GIVING. (8:2)

A. They gave out of a great trial of affliction.

- 1) A time of much trouble, or hardship.
- 2) I Thess. 2:14---“*Ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews*”

- 3) They were still be testing by afflictions, to see the sincerity of their commitment to following Christ.
- 4) How easy it would have been for them to ignore the pain of others because of their own pain.

B. They gave with an abundance of joy.

- 1) In spite of the trials of affliction, they had the “Joy” that comes as a fruit of the Spirit.
- 2) Their joy overflowed their afflictions.
- 3) The joy of the Christian has great power.

C. They gave out of their deep poverty.

- 1) Persecution, trials, had evidently brought them to poverty...bare existence.
- 2) They could have easily said: “*Charity begins at home*”
- 3) They could have thought: “*How inconsiderate of Paul to ask us to give in our condition.*”
- 4) But they gave in spite of their deep poverty.
- 5) “*One forgiven much, loves much*”
- 6) Their giving was self-sacrificing.
- 7) It was like the Widow’s mite that Jesus praised.

D. They gave out of a spirit of liberality.

- 1) It was liberal, coming from a liberal spirit.
- 2) Their liberality overflowed their poverty.
- 3) Like the Widow. Mk. 12:44
- 4) Their danger was not to give too little.
- 5) It was to give too much....”Beyond their power, ability”
- 6) Afflictions & poverty could not cramp their large-heartedness.
- 7) They did not see how little they could give, but how much.

III. THEIR GREAT DESIRE TO GIVE EMPHASIZED. (8:3-5)

A. Their desire was to give bountifully.

- 1) They gave beyond their power, their ability.
- 2) Gave beyond what could rightfully, justly be expected.

B. Their heart went with their gift.

- 1) They gave willingly.
- 2) Compulsory kindness is of little worth to the giver.
- 3) They did not have to be entreated to give.
- 4) Paul mentioned the need & reason.....they responded!
- 5) They even did the entreating.

C. Their entreaty convinced Paul.

- 1) Paul seems to have been reluctant to accept such a gift from them.
 - a) He could see their need.
 - b) He may have even thought about discouraging such a bountiful gift.
- 2) But they insisted, they begged, they were in earnest.
- 3) They evidently had speedily gotten their gift together.
- 4) Giving was not a thing to be avoided, but a thing to be sought.
- 5) “*More blessed to give than to receive.*”
- 6) They wanted to be a part of sharing with the saints in Jerusalem.

- a) The church continually suffered from poverty conditions.
- b) They needed help.
- c) But Paul also had another thing in mind...he mentions it later.

D. Their giving was preceded by a greater gift.

- 1) They first gave themselves to the Lord.
 - a) They had dedicated themselves to following in the footsteps of Christ.
 - b) They had given themselves...all.....to the Lord.
- 2) Thus, it was an easy thing then to give a part of what they had already wholly surrendered to the Lord.
- 3) They did not use their poverty as an excuse not to give something.
- 4) And then, to us (God's servants).
- 5) They did not give as much as Paul had expected, but gave more.
- 6) They surpassed Paul's expectations.
- 7) They had allowed the will of God to work in their lives.

IV. TITUS TO BE SENT AGAIN TO FINISH THIS WORK. (8:6)

A. Titus had already begun this work among them.

- 1) When he delivered the first letter. (I Cor. 16:1-2)
- 2) But, it evidently had not been finished.
 - a) Since he did not bring the contribution back with him.....
 - b) Nor did he indicate such.
- 3) The Macedonian churches had so encouraged Paul, he wanted Corinth to know of it.

B. So, hopefully, Titus can complete it when he returns with this letter.

- 1) To finish collecting your gift for the poor saints in Jerusalem.
- 2) To see if you will be as liberal in your giving as the Macedonians.
- 3) To see if this same gracious giving is found among you.

CONCLUSION

- 1. If we allow God's graciousness to fill our hearts.....
 - a) We, too, can follow the example of the Macedonians.
 - b) We, too, will be liberal in our giving.
 - c) We, too, will want to have fellowship in the greatest work on earth.
- 2. The greatest gift we can give is ourselves.
- 3. Are you a gracious giver?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Corinth had promised a year earlier to give to help the poor saints in Jerusalem.**
- 2. Paul used the example of the Macedonian churches to encourage Corinth to follow their example.**
- 3. We become gracious givers because we have been the recipients of God's gracious giving.**
- 4. We know of only three churches in Macedonia at this writing of this letter.**
- 5. The Macedonians gave even though they were under much affliction.**
- 6. Paul said that their heart went with their gift.**
- 7. Paul seems to have been reluctant to accept the gift of the Macedonians.**
- 8. The Macedonian's gift was preceded by a greater gift.**
- 9. Titus was sent back with the 2nd letter to Corinth to finish the collecting of the money for the poor saints in Jerusalem.**
- 10. The greatest gift we can give is ourselves.**

Lesson Four

“THE HOW OF GIVING”

(II Cor. 8:7-15)

INTRODUCTION

1. Giving is one of the great concepts of Christianity.
2. Paul is challenging the Corinthians to seek a high degree of excellence in giving.
3. He has already set before them the great example of the Macedonians.
4. Now, he challenges them to follow their example.
5. He gives instruction on “HOW” they are to give!

DISCUSSION**I. ABOUND IN THE GRACE OF GIVING. (8:7)****A. Previous reasons given for abounding in giving:**

- 1) Upon the basis of God’s gracious gifts to us.
- 2) Upon the great example of the Macedonians.
- 3) And in the fact that you abound in everything else.....
 - a) He points out that they abound much more than the Macedonians.
 - b) In their Faith, Utterances, Knowledge, and Diligence.
 - 1—Miraculous gifts???
 - 2—They prided themselves on their diligence to do their duty to God.
 - c) And even in their love for Paul.
- 4) If all of this is true of you, then.....

B. See that ye abound in this grace (of giving) also.

- 1) Be as imminent in your gracious giving as in the other graces.
- 2) Don’t be slack in the area of gracious giving.

II. GIVE OUT OF LOVE, LIKE THE LORD. (8:8-9)**A. I speak not by commandment.**

- 1) In a sense, Paul is commanding them.
- 2) Giving obviously is a duty of the child of God.
- 3) This is that special phrase again....not, but!
 - a) The emphasis is not on the command, but on something else.
 - b) “I speak not by way of commandment only....”
- 4) There is a higher motivation for giving than duty.
- 5) Love is the greatest of all spiritual principles.
- 6) Their giving needs to flow out of a loving & joyous heart.

B. His appeal to them is now given:

- 1) On the basis of the forwardness of others.
 - a) See what others are doing....and how they are doing.
 - b) Imitate them....their example is worth following.
 - c) Observe their earnestness, diligence, love.

- 2) To prove the sincerity of your love.
 - a) Our love for the Lord is tested in many ways:
 - 1—To see if we will put him 1st before all. (Matt. 10:37)
 - 2—To see if we will obey His commands. (I Jn. 5:3)
 - 3—I Cor. 1:26-29
 - b) Jesus said that “Love for God” and “Love for Neighbor” encompasses the whole Law & Prophets. (Mt. 22:36-40)
 - c) Rom. 14:8—**“Love fulfills the law of God”**
 - d) Paul looked upon this request as a means of testing their love.
 - 1—To show the genuineness of their love.
 - 2—To show love unfeigned.
 - 3—To show love that is without dissimulation.
 - 4—I John 4:20-21
- 3) The challenge to be like Christ Jesus.
 - a) Just like the Macedonians’ example of being like Him.
 - b) Jesus voluntarily exchanged riches for poverty for us.
 - 1—He gave up Heaven to live on Earth.
 - 2—From the form of God to the form of man.
 - c) His poverty was not compulsory, it was a grace.
 - 1—He had all within His power, but never used them for his own self.
 - 2—He became poor for our sakes.
 - d) He did this so WE could become wealthy spiritually.
 - 1—By sin, we lost everything spiritually.
 - Lost Divine Favor
 - Lost our hope for the future.
 - Made poor deservedly because of our sins.
 - 2—Christ’s humility made it possible for us to regain our spiritual wealth.
 - Became partakers of the Divine Nature.
 - Adopted as children of God.
 - Became heirs of God.
 - Gained present & future joy.
 - Became sharers in Christ’s glory.
 - 3—Through Christ’s poverty, we can become rich.
 - e) He did it out of love for us

III. GIVE OUT OF A READINESS OF MIND. (8:10-12)

A. “And herein I give my advice”

- 1) He offers a suggestion to them about how to show that love.
- 2) What he is suggesting he believes is expedient, proper, best at this time.
- 3) And besides, his advice was all that would be needed in this situation.
- 4) You have already shown a willingness to make this contribution.
- 5) You have already begun setting it aside.
- 6) So, why not speedily finish it without any further delay.

- 7) Unless the willingness to give is put into action, it is worthless.
- 8) It is generous deeds that bless, not just a willing mind.
- 9) Your reputation could be at stake in this matter.

B. Both the willingness & the doing is emphasized.

- 1) There first must be a willing mind.
 - a) Giving needs to come from a generous, gracious heart.
 - b) Not forced, nor coerced, but willing.
 - c) The motive for giving is important.
 - d) I Cor. 13:3---“*And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*”
- 2) Then, there needs to be the doing of the deed!
 - a) Our giving is to come out of what we have, not what we do not have.
 - b) The poor widow gave a very small amount, but %-wise, it was great.
 - c) This act has probably been a great encouragement to God’s people to give over the years.
 - d) It is not the magnitude of the gift, but the proportion compared to what one has or doesn’t have.
- 3) Both are necessary to make it acceptable with God.

IV. GIVE OUT OF A SENSE OF EQUALITY. (8:13-15)

A. Paul now clarifies himself....so he will not be misunderstood.

- 1) He had no desire for others to be eased and them burdened.
 - a) Not relief to others & afflictions for them.
 - b) Distress themselves to set others at ease.
 - c) To impoverish you in order to provide luxuries for others.
- 2) He emphasized the concept of equality in giving.
 - a) It is a mutual thing.
 - b) Each provides for the other when the occasion calls for it.
 - c) Each look for ways to help one another with what they have.

B. Abundance versus Want.

- 1) At the present, your abundance can supply their needs.
 - a) Corinth was a prosperous city.
 - b) Had not been persecuted & their goods spoiled like Macedonians.
- 2) At another time, their abundance may be a supply for your needs.
- 3) It is not stated here, but there was another concept involved in getting them to give to poor saints in Jerusalem.
 - a) Rom. 15:25-28
 - b) This was written possibly 3-6 months later.
 - c) To draw Jew & Gentile closer together in the church.
- 4) The Macedonians, in deep poverty & trials.....
 - a) Reaches out a loving hand to bless their poverty-stricken brethren in Jerusalem.
 - b) This would help to cement the relationship between them.
 - c) Make it one holy brotherhood.
 - d) Such was due to the grace of God through Christ.

- e) This spirit of grace was being reproduced in the hearts of these Macedonians & Corinthians.
- f) And us too!
- 5) The example from the O.T. that he uses deals with collecting of Manna in the wilderness.
 - a) Those able to gather more could share with those who had need.
 - b) Those who gathered little would then have no lack because of help from brethren.

CONCLUSION

1. Poverty is not being advocated as a virtue.
 - a) Possessions are given to us by God.
 - b) We are to use them wisely.
 - c) Both rich & poor can be in the church.
 - 1—With their own separate duties & responsibilities.
 - 2—Having their own special temptations to deal with.
 - 3—Both servants of the living God.
2. But there is a need to set our affections on things above, not on things below.
3. To use what we have to willingly bless others, especially those of the household of faith.
4. In all of this, follow the great examples of our Lord.
5. If you are not a child of God.....
 - a) Your sins have robbed you of your spiritual wealth.
 - b) Turn to Christ, to be rich again spiritually.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. Paul stated that Corinth abounded in more things than the Macedonians.
- ___ 2. Giving is a test of one's love for God or his fellowman.
- ___ 3. Paul challenges them to give as Christ gave.
- ___ 4. Giving must be willing to be acceptable.
- ___ 5. A willing mind without deeds is worthless.
- ___ 6. The magnitude of the gift is what really matters.
- ___ 7. Mutual giving when the need is there can bind people together.
- ___ 8. One reason for helping the poor saints is to bind Jew and Gentile together as one in the church.
- ___ 9. The church can be made up of both rich and poor.
- ___ 10. Poverty is a virtue.

*Lesson Five***“ANTICIPATING CRITICISM”****(II Cor. 8:16-9:5)****INTRODUCTION**

1. Paul is still writing about the offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem.
 - a) The churches in Macedonia were still under persecutions.
 - b) The church at Corinth was struggling with internal troubles agitated by the Judaisers & false teachers.
 - c) And Paul himself was greatly afflicted.
 - d) Yet, in the midst of all of this:
 - 1—Paul had a strong faith in God
 - 2—And a strong faith in people whose hearts had been turned to Christ,
 - 3—That they would be concerned about their brethren in Judea.
 - e) Macedonia had done nobly.
 - f) Now what about Corinth?
2. He is encouraging the Corinthians to show this same kind of love as Macedonia had done.
3. But, he also anticipated possible criticism of his efforts from an element there.
4. So, he is making every effort to anticipate & avoid giving them room for criticism.

DISCUSSION**I. ANTICIPATING & AVOIDING CRITICISM. (8:20-21)****A. Paul did not want to give an occasion for someone to blame him in this collection he is taking back to Jerusalem.**

- 1) He wanted to take care that no one should find fault with him.
- 2) Paul could have supposed that as an apostle of Christ, he was beyond suspicion.
- 3) But instead, he gave no opportunity for anyone to suspect him in this matter.
- 4) He took precautions because it was a sizable sum of money.
 - a) Abundance...rich...large sum.
 - b) The larger the amount, the greater the temptation.
 - c) And the more caution that should be taken.
- 5) His actions were taken, not to secure man's approval, but to command that approval by his actions.

B. His efforts were to provide unquestioned honesty.

- 1) “He insisted on having his accounts audited.”
- 2) Business like and honorable.
- 3) So an arrangement was worked out so he & others would be above suspicion.
- 4) He got the churches to choose from their midst the most trustworthy to go with their gifts to Jerusalem with Paul.
- 5) Also, in regards to Corinth...He sent 3 men on ahead of him to make arrangements about their gift, where Paul would not be involved.

C. Now, concerning the men he was sending to them:

- 1) Titus. (8:16-17)

- a) He had proven himself to them on his first visit.
 - b) And thankfully, God had put the same earnest care for them in his heart as Paul had.
 - c) Titus had also taken it upon himself to start them on collecting their gift for Jerusalem.
 - d) And was now willing to go to them again and finish that task.
 - 1—In fact, Paul said he was more zealous for their welfare than Paul had anticipated.
 - 2—He had stirred up in them a genuine concern for others.
 - 3—Quote: *“It is not he that gives me a good thing, but he who stimulates me to do a good thing, that is my greatest benefactor.”*
 - e) Titus also took this 2nd letter to the church as well.
- 2) Another brother sent with Titus. (8:18-19)
- a) Whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches.
 - 1—Whose worth is praised wherever the gospel is preached.
 - 2—A man of character & integrity, trustworthy.
 - b) He would help to care for their contribution, if desired.
 - 1—Chosen by the churches to travel with Paul to help in this work.
 - 2—An assurance of the safety of the money.
 - c) Concerning this grace (gracious gift):
 - 1—It is administered by us to the glory of the Lord.
 - 2—And a making known your readiness to give that glory to Him.
- 3) A third brother is sent. (8:22)
- a) Another one, evidently chosen by the churches as well.
 - b) He has oftentimes proved diligent in many things.
 - 1—He is very dependable
 - 2—He has proven himself to the churches & Paul.
 - 3—His eagerness & zealousness to serve is unquestioned.
 - c) But to go to Corinth, he is even more enthusiastic, because of the confidence he too has in you, along with us.
- 4) Now, concerning these brethren: (8:23)
- a) If any do inquire:
 - 1—If they want to ask questions about them.....
 - 2—Paul seems to want these men to be met with due respect, affection, and esteem.
 - b) Titus is my partner (associate) & fellow-helper (fellow-worker) concerning you.
 - c) The other two are “Messengers” (Apostaloi), sent by the churches.
 - 1—Chosen to represent them.
 - 2—Chosen to take their contribution as well.
 - d) And they are a glory to Christ in their lives & works.

II. THE CHALLENGE IS ISSUED AGAIN. (8:24; 9:1-5)

A. Show the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf. (8:24; 9:1-2)

- 1) Upon receiving a letter from the church at Corinth about the conditions there:
 - a) Paul wrote his 1st letter to them.
 - b) Sent it by the hands of Titus.
 - c) But felt that the church there would be willing to collect a sizable amount of money for the poor saints in Jerusalem.
 - d) Based evidently upon the testimony of those that brought the letter from Corinth.
- 2) Paul had evidently boasted of Corinth to the Macedonians.
 - a) Stated that they were ready a year ago....so Paul was given to understand.
 - b) Corinth's zeal in this matter had provoked very many to give also.
 - c) When others give who seemingly are not able.....it encourages others in the same position to give as well.

B. Why he had sent these brethren on ahead of himself. (9:3-4)

- 1) Less our boasting was in vain on your behalf.
 - a) "Confident expectations" may be better word.
- 2) So that your contribution can be collected and ready upon our arrival.
- 3) So that when the brethren from Macedonia who will be coming with Paul will not find you unprepared.
 - a) Such would be a great embarrassment to me.
 - b) Paul takes blame along with them.

C. So, Paul encouraged Titus & the two brothers to go ahead of Paul. (9:5)

- 1) To encourage the church at Corinth to get their collection together before Paul & the others arrive that will be with him.
- 2) To fulfill what Paul had understood as a promise made in behalf of the church at Corinth.
- 3) So that your offering will be out of a gracious spirit of love, and not something grudgingly given.
 - 1—Be as a blessing, not as an extortion.
 - 2—As a free gift, not something wrung out of you.
 - 3—Might appear in truth as freely given, not as something forced out of you by my presence.

CONCLUSION

1. What a great concept.....to give to needy brethren that you haven't seen, yet have a love for.
 - a) This was unique in the world at that time.
 - b) The great gift of God in His Son has changed many lives in respect to giving.
2. How about your giving?
 - a) Have you 1st given yourself to the Lord?
 - b) Until you do, giving is something extorted out of you, rather than a grace.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. Paul had to deal with possible criticisms of his efforts in regards to the collection.
2. Paul felt that an Apostle should have been above suspect in the matter of the collection.
3. Paul insisted on having his account “audited.”
4. Paul sent four reliable men ahead of him to Corinth to get the money from them.
5. Titus is the only one named that was being sent to Corinth ahead of Paul.
6. These messengers were called “apostoloi.”
7. Paul did not want to be embarrassed upon arrival and the money not be ready.
8. One reason for sending these men on ahead, so that his boasting would not be seen as being in vain.
9. Paul wanted their giving to be one of willingness, not coercion.
10. This was a unique idea for that time—to give to needy people who you haven’t seen, but love.

Lesson Six

“THE GIVER THAT PLEASES GOD”

(II Corinthians 9:6-15)

INTRODUCTION

1. II Cor. 8-9 is God’s great appeal to get His people to give, and give properly.
 - a) He used examples to instruct & motivate:
 - 1—Of God’s gift & Jesus’ gift
 - 2—Of the Macedonians’ gift
 - 3—And even the example of the Corinthians promising a year earlier.
 - b) He appeals to:
 - 1—Principles from the Old Testament;
 - 2—Promises God makes to the Giver.
 - c) He also shows the great value of such giving:
 - 1—In the lives of the giver;
 - 2—As well as the one given to.
 - 3---And most of all....the glory it gives to God.
2. We have entitled this lesson....”The Giver that Pleases God”.

DISCUSSION**I. THE GIVER THAT PLEASES GOD. (9:6-7)****A. A bountiful Giver. (6)**

- 1) Paul does not set a % to be given, but states a principle of giving.
- 2) The principle is obvious:
 - a) If you sow little, you get little.
 - b) If you sow much, you get much.
- 3) What is true in the natural realm is also true in the spiritual realm.
 - a) The stingier we are, the less we have.
 - b) The freer we are, the more we have.
 - c) Withholding only tends to poverty.
- 4) Prov. 11:24—***“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”***
- 5) Prov. 22:9—***“He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed.”***

B. Purposeful giver. (7)

- 1) Look into your heart;
- 2) Examine your & the other’s circumstances;
- 3) Make a decision upon the above.
- 4) Give what is proper, what ought to be done.

C. A Cheerful Giver. (7)

- 1) Prov. 11:25—***“The liberal soul shall be made fat.”***
- 2) Out of a full, open, and generous heart.
- 3) Be happy to give, as God was happy to give His Son for us.
- 4) A cheerful gift enhances the gift to the recipient.
- 5) It causes one to think more of the giver than the gift.

- 6) It says the Lord loves this type of giver....for He sees his own character in the person that gives cheerfully.
- 7) It is to be:
 - a) Not grudgingly---Out of grief or pain, ungraciously.
 - b) Not of necessity---Out of constraint, compulsion.
 - c) *“He who gives reluctantly, never gives at all.”*

II. HOW GOD BLESSES SUCH GIVERS. (9:8-11)

A. God is able to make all grace abound toward you”

- 1) God has the power & the disposition to bless you abundantly.
- 2) He is able to give an over-flowing measure of all good gifts.
- 3) God is able to supply you with ample means:
 - a) To supply all your needs at all times;
 - b) To give you sufficient to meet every need each day.
 - 1—No need to worry. (Matt. 6:33; Phil. 4:6)
 - 2—The man that puts his trust in God is at peace.
- 4) And in addition....He gives enough to also give to others about us.
 - a) He so blesses us that we do not feel the loss of our generous gift to others.
 - b) God will see that no man is injured by his goodness.
 - c) Sufficient to be involved in many good works.
 - d) His resources & opportunities are enlarged to give.
 - e) God gives, expects us to give, so he can give us more.
- 5) He quotes from Ps. 112:9 to illustrate his point.
 - a) A liberal man generously gives to the poor.
 - b) And God continually blesses him.
 - c) Good deeds live on, continually producing fruit.

B. God is able to multiply our seed sown. (10)

- 1) It is God that provides the seed in the first place for us to use.
- 2) This process provides food for all of mankind.
- 3) The same concept is true spiritually:
 - a) He is the one that has blessed us with what we have.
 - b) As we use it righteously, he will multiply the good that comes from our righteous deeds.
 - c) And give us even more to do greater deeds.
 - d) The fruits of righteousness will greatly surpass the deed done, just like the seed is multiplied when planted.

C. God enriches us. (11)

- 1) He makes it possible for us to do more and more good because of our righteous use of what we have.
- 2) He will bless our deeds bountiful, abundantly.
- 3) We never know how far reaching our gifts will go & do!

D. Through us, God is thanked. (11)

- 1) Such actions will bring thanksgiving to God.
 - a) From people who see our good works. (Matt. 5:16)
 - b) From those who are helped.

- 2) What joy it would bring to the poor saints in Jerusalem.
- 3) **NOTE: Conditions in Jerusalem: (A.D. 57)**
 - a) Loneliness of saints in Jerusalem;
 - b) Large sacrifices of property after Pentecost;
 - c) Loss of jobs, destitution, persecutions;
 - d) The growing disturbances with Rome, increase strife among Jews in Judea.
 - e) The darkness of Jesus' prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem.
 - f) The "Poor Saints" subjected to all kinds of insults & grievances without reprieve.
 - g) How welcome would be Paul's bringing of gifts from the Gentile churches (he hoped).

III. THE VALUE OF THIS RELIGIOUS SERVICE. (9:12-14)

A. It will supply the needs of the Saints in Judea. (12)

- 1) It will help their sorrows.
- 2) It will relieve their distresses & poverty.
- 3) It will let them know that there are brethren far away that do care.

B. It will bring abundant thanksgiving to God. (12)

- 1) This gift will also overflow into many thanks to God.
- 2) In seeing your love & concern, it will constrain them to pour forth thanksgiving to God.
- 3) It yields, besides, a rich harvest of thanksgiving in the name of the Lord.

C. It will bring glory to God. (13)

- 1) When your service to others like this is seen:
 - a) It causes them to praise the God of heaven:
 - 1—Not only because of your original obedience to the Gospel of Christ;
 - 2—But for your liberal contribution to them & others.
 - b) Their giving was a sign of their sincerity in obeying the gospel.
- 2) The results is....Glory given to God because of your actions!

D. It will cause a like concern on their part for you. (14)

- 1) As they join in prayer on your behalf:
 - a) Their hearts will go out to you....will be drawn to you.
 - b) They will be concerned for your happiness as well.
- 2) They will be thankful to God because of what His grace has done in your lives.
- 3) **NOTE:** Some Jewish Christians looked upon the Gentiles as unclean until they were circumcised!
 - a) Paul was not sure how they would respond, but hoped it would be very favorable.
 - b) He wrote the Roman brethren, asking them to pray that Judea would accept the gift graciously. (Rom. 15:31)

IV. PAUL'S OVERWHELMING THANKSFULNESS. (9:15)**A. Paul was not only thankful to God for:**

- 1) His own salvation;
- 2) But the salvation of the Gentiles;
- 3) And what it was doing in their lives;
- 4) And the cementing together both Jew & Gentile in one body.

B. But most of all, he was thankful to God for Jesus.

- 1) For it was God's gift of His Son that has made all possible.
- 2) God's gift is an unspeakable gift....beyond imagination!

CONCLUSION

1. What a note to end on.....**THANKFULNESS FOR GOD'S UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.**
2. Have you stopped to think:
 - a) The greatest thing in this universe is the MIND.
 - b) The Greatest thing in the mind is LOVE.
 - c) The greatest element in love is GOOD DEEDS.
3. God Loves not only in word, but in deed & truth.
4. What about our Love for God?
 - a) Is it all talk, and no do?
 - b) Or, is it one of deeds as well?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**True or False**

- ___ 1. Paul appealed to principles in the Old Testament to encourage their giving.
- ___ 2. Paul stated the % that is expected of the Christian in his giving.
- ___ 3. The Stingier we are, the less we have.
- ___ 4. Paul stated that the liberal soul shall be made fat.
- ___ 5. "Grudge giving" and "necessity giving" is acceptable with God.
- ___ 6. Paul said that "God has a bigger shovel than we have."
- ___ 7. God multiplies the seed sow, as well as what is given.
- ___ 8. Conditions in Jerusalem were bad for all, especially in view of the coming destruction of Jerusalem as Jesus had foretold.
- ___ 9. Paul wanted their willing giving to bring glory to God.
- ___ 10. Paul said that God's gift of His Son is an unspeakable gift.

Lesson Seven

“WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE”

(2 Corinthians 10:1-7)

INTRODUCTION

1. This 2nd letter to the church at Corinth:
 - a) Had primarily been addressed to those who recognized his apostleship, up to this point.
 - b) Now, he turns to address his antagonists.
 - c) To deal with those who question his apostleship.
 - d) To those who had falsely & maliciously accused him.
2. Again, we emphasize:
 - a) Paul is writing by inspiration of God;
 - b) He is upholding his apostleship;
 - c) Not for his own glory or exoneration;
 - d) But, because of how critical it was to uphold the gospel of Christ and not to let it be watered down or Judaized.

DISCUSSION**I. PAUL APPEALS TO HIS OBJECTORS. (10:1-3)****A. Paul briefly mentions the way his objectors viewed him:**

- 1) “Being based in their midst”
 - a) Lowly, meek, humble when in their midst.
 - b) Feeble.
- 2) “But being absent I am bold toward you”
 - a) Outspoken & brave in writing to you.
 - b) Sent threatening letters to you.
 - c) In other words, a coward.
- 3) ***“The Paul who is so humble when face to face with you, but so bold in dealing with you when he is far away.”(Goodspeed)***
- 4) Their actions at Corinth: (more in detail later).
 - a) Had introduced new teachings. (11:4)
 - b) They had been boastful of their work. (10:7)
 - c) They were insolent, disrespectful. ((11:20-21)
 - d) Dangerous in their influence. (11:3)
 - e) Had succeeded in alienating the minds of some from Paul. (10:18; 11:8, 20; 12:13-14)
- 5) Their accusations:
 - a) That Paul was base in appearance. (10:1, 10)
 - b) He was untutored in speech. (11:6)
 - c) Bold at a distance, but cowardly when present. (10:1)
 - d) A man of mere human motives (10:2)
 - e) Not really sound in intellect. (11:16, 17, 19)

- 6) There are indications that a teacher from Jerusalem may have been causing the problems at Corinth.
 - a) He had letters to recommend him.
 - b) Seeming backing of the other apostles.
 - c) He had evidently caused quite a stir.
 - d) Evidently trying to Judaize the Corinthians.
 - e) Which would invalidate the Gospel of Christ!

B. Paul beseeches them:

- 1) “By the meekness & gentleness of Christ”
 - a) Mildness & sympathetic considerations of Christ.
 - b) He is appealing to them:
 - 1—Not in his own spirit;
 - 2—But in the spirit of Christ, Himself.
 - c) Paul wanted to deal with them in the spirit of Christ.
 - d) He does not want to be “bold,” but may be forced to when he comes.
- 2) “that I may not be bold when I am present with (you)”
 - a) “Don’t forced me to use stern measures to deal with you.
 - b) It rests upon your shoulders to avert the necessity of personal severity.
 - c) He entreats them to make that decision.
- 3) ”wherewith I think to be bold against some”
 - a) Unless there was a change of attitude, Paul was confident that he would have to use strong measures in dealing with them.
 - b) He doesn’t want to be, but has resolved that he will be, if necessary.
 - c) “Against some”
 - 1—11:13-14 defines who these are.
 - 2—Deal with later.
- 4) “which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.”
 - a) They had falsely accused him of carnality in his way of acting.
 - b) A charge of insincerity.
 - c) That his conduct was determined by fear of man or desire to please men.
 - d) Influenced in his conduct by earthly motives.
- 5) “Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.”
 - a) We are in a fleshly body with its infirmities & weaknesses.
 - b) Even though fleshly, it is no worldly warfare we are waging.
 - c) He does not use fleshly weapons, but spiritual weapons to wage his warfare.

II. THE WEAPONS OF THE CHRISTIANS’ WARFARE. (10:3-6)

A. Paul briefly side-tracks to bring out great spiritual truths.

- 1) The thought of fighting a war triggered these next 4 verses.
- 2) He clearly points out that the War Christians are waging is:
 - a) Not one that is carnal, using carnal weapons;
 - b) But one that is spiritual, using the spiritual weapons God has given.

- c) The weapons we use are mighty, powerful, potent to do the great spiritual work that needs doing.
- 3) What are those weapons?
 - a) The inspiration & revelation of the Gospel he preached.
 - b) The miraculous powers he used to confirmed that message.
 - c) The ability to pass on these gifts to other Christians to use.

B. What these weapons are able to do:

- 1) “the pulling down of strongholds”
 - a) “The pen is mightier than the sword.”
 - b) Gospel can overthrow well-fortified places.
 - c) The battle is for the hearts and minds of men.
 - d) The greatest victory is in the mind.
 - e) The world fortifies itself to hold on to its idolatry, infidelity, immorality, wickedness.
 - f) The gospel is able to tear down these strongholds of the mind.
- 2) “casting down imaginations”
 - a) Imaginations—disputations or reasonings.
 - b) The ability to refute human reasoning & philosophies.
 - c) To correct the corrupt thinking & understanding of the mind.
 - d) To deal with the pride of man’s intellectual powers.
- 3) “and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.
 - a) Gospel deals with the anti-God concepts.
 - b) Deals with men’s proud & haughty attitudes.
 - c) Deals with his active opposition.
 - d) To pull down every barrier raised against the knowledge of God.
- 4) “to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”
 - a) Bringing the mind of men into a perfect understanding and surrender to the mind of God.
 - b) Our thinking brought into the control of Christ’s teachings.
 - c) To make our every thought subservient to the obedience of Christ.
 - d) All the world was learning of the powerful weapons Paul & others had to destroy heathenism & infidelity.
 - e) Because they boldly & constantly proclaimed Christ, the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.
- 5) “and having in a readiness to avenge all disobedience”
 - a) Paul stood ready to see justice done to these people.
 - b) Even spiritual punishment, if necessary.
 - c) Upon his coming, he would use these weapons to deal with the unrepentant.
 - d) But, he also stood ready to defer justice when assured of their willing obedience to Christ.
 - e) Or, when he confirms those who are completing their obedience to Christ.

III. MISTAKES OF PAUL’S ANTAGONISTS. (10:7)

A. They were looking at things after the outward appearance.

- 1) Warned them, don't be fooled by what you see with the eye.
- 2) They evidently judged men by:
 - a) Their birth, education, fluency of speech
 - b) Beauty of person, rank, wealth, etc.
- 3) Upon this basis had judged themselves superior to Paul.
 - a) Therefore, they should be listened to.
 - b) Not Paul.

B. Presuming they were of Christ, and Paul was not.

- 1) Claiming a superior relationship to Christ.
- 2) They claim to belong to Christ, to be his ministers.
- 3) But, so was Paul...and even more so!
 - a) His works attested to his claims as a minister & apostle.
 - b) The miraculous powers exercised in their midst.
 - c) His endowing them with miraculous gifts.
- 4) All these will be dealt with in following chapters.
- 5) Paul was Christ's just as much as anyone was, regardless of his outward appearance.

CONCLUSION

1. The very things that Paul's opponents were accusing him of...they were guilty of.
 - a) Their motives were carnal.
 - b) They used carnal weapons in their battle to win converts to their false teaching.
 - c) They were more concerned for their pride & ego than in the saving of souls.
 - d) They preyed on others' converts...to win them to their views.
2. This letter will get much stronger as he deals with these people.
3. The power of the gospel is great!
 - a) It can enlighten the mind & heart.
 - b) It can turn a man's life around for the better.
 - c) It can give him purpose for living & hope for eternity.
4. But it can only do so, when men are willing to open their minds to hear the message and respond to it.
 - a) Is your mind open to the Word of God?
 - b) Are you willing to surrender your Will to His Will?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. Paul was concerned that the Gospel would be watered down by the Judaisers.
- ___ 2. Paul was accused of being bold in his letters but weak in presence.
- ___ 3. These Judaisers were not teaching false, but were also thinking carnally.
- ___ 4. Paul's approach to the false teachers was in the "spirit of Christ."
- ___ 5. Paul said we walk in the flesh, but we do not war after the flesh.
- ___ 6. Paul stated that his spiritual weapons could pull down strongholds of Satan.
- ___ 7. Paul was accused of acting out of carnality.
- ___ 8. Paul was ready to see that justice was done to these teachers if they did not repent.
- ___ 9. These teachers felt they were superior to Paul in every way.
- ___ 10. The very things that these teachers accused Paul of, they were guilty of.

Lesson Eight

**“THE PROPER VIEW
AND USE OF AUTHORITY (POWER)”**
(2 Corinthians 10:8-18)

INTRODUCTION

1. This section of 2 Corinthians deals with the apostle Paul’s vindication of himself as an apostle of Christ and of his actions.
 - a) There were still some who opposed Paul, even after the 1st letter.
 - b) This part of the 2nd letter is now dealing with them & their wrong views.
 - c) He was hopeful that this letter would be sufficient to clear up the matter.
 - d) But, if not, he would come and face them with the Authority of Christ behind him.
2. The church at Corinth had a lot of talented persons.
 - a) Too much boasting over men had brought on division.
 - b) Paul also deals with the proper view and use of Authority (Power).

DISCUSSION**I. PAUL’S AUTHORITY AND HIS PROPER USE OF IT. (10:8-9)****A. He was constrained to bring up and talk about it (boast of it).**

- 1) It was necessary that his apostolic authority be upheld in the eyes of the Corinthians.
- 2) Their souls were at stake in this matter.
- 3) His apostleship should have been obvious to them, but some had been deceived & misled.
- 4) It was for their benefit that he deals with this matter.

B. His authority came from the Lord, not from men.

- 1) Authority---power---What is meant?
 - a) Apostolic authority over the churches?
 - b) The miraculous gifts that had been given to him?
 - c) The power to lay hands upon others to impart the gifts?
- 2) Hard to separate authority and power in this situation.
- 3) But such was not Paul’s doings, it came from the Lord!

C. The proper use of this authority or power!

- 1) Even though Paul had been forced into telling of his authority from the Lord.
- 2) He did not feel that he had done wrong in the matter.
- 3) Nor does he feel that he has misused his authority as an apostle.
- 4) He had used this power or authority properly:
 - a) To build up and edify God’s people, not to destroy them.
 - b) To bless, not to tear down.
 - c) To promote truth, virtue and human happiness.
- 5) He had no desire to terrify them by his letters.
 - a) This was not his aim.
 - b) Rather, he wanted to assure them by these letters of what the truth of God was and that he would abide by that truth.

PAUL NOW DEALS WITH HIS OPONENTS' ACCUSATIONS.(10:10-12)**A. What they said about Paul:**

- 1) His letters are weighty & powerful.
 - a) In his boasting and threatening.
 - b) He had spoken sharply in the letter to the offenders.
 - c) He had threatened to take action when he came.
 - d) And...his letter had produced immediate & righteous results.
- 2) But his bodily presence is weak.
 - a) Indicating that face to face, he was weak, weakly, cowardly.
 - b) That he would not dare say the same to their face.
- 3) And his speech is contemptible (despised).
 - a) How would they know....had they heard him?
 - b) The greater the gifts....the more envy and abuse by little people.
 - c) Christ is an example!

B. Paul's assurance to them:

- 1) Let me straighten out your thinking about me!
 - a) Don't continue thinking a falsehood about me.
 - b) Believe the truth.
- 2) When I come:
 - a) I will be just the same as I am in my letters.
 - b) I will be no different.
- 3) And, I shall not put myself in the same boat with those who commend themselves.
 - a) They measure themselves by themselves.
 - 1—They hold a high opinion of themselves.
 - 2—Because they are using the wrong standard of measuring.
 - b) They use their own little circle to measure everybody by.
 - 1—Not the true measurements of God.
 - 2—By such, they showed Phariseeism, conceit, and self-centeredness.
 - 3—If they had looked outside of their own little circle, they would not have been so inflated with their own importance.
 - c) It would seem that these false teacher or teachers had:
 - 1—Intruded into the church at Corinth;
 - 2—Assumed authority to straighten out Paul's bad work among them;
 - 3—With no justification for their actions.
 - 4—And felt themselves superior to Paul & others.

III. PAUL CLARIFIES ABOUT HIS BOASTING. (10:13-16)**A. He will not boast without his measure (His God-given rule of action).**

- 1) Paul had been called by God to preach to the Gentiles.
- 2) God had guided Paul in his travels to the various places that he preached.
- 3) Paul said that he will not boast or glory beyond what God has given him to do.
- 4) All the apostles had evidently been so directed by God.
 - a) To go to places in the world to preach.

- b) To set up churches from converts.
- c) To pass on the gifts to enable the churches to continue growing.

B. And the reason why Paul had come to preach to the Corinthians was by this measure or rule.

- 1) He did not assume someone else's work or place.
- 2) He did not boast in someone else's labor.
- 3) He had come to Corinth:
 - a) Established the church & endowed it with gifts to sustain itself.
 - b) But these false teachers had come in and disrupted this God-given process.
- 4) Paul preached to them by Divine appointment, not as an intruder.
- 5) His boasting was based on his carrying out this God-given work.
- 6) His boasting was not in other men's labors.
 - a) Like his opponents....who boasted in other men's labors.
 - b) Taking the credit for the church at Corinth.

C. Paul's hope for the church at Corinth was:

- 1) That their faith would be enlarged!
 - a) The division would be healed;
 - b) The false teachers silenced;
 - c) They would be established in the true faith;
 - d) So, the church could be about its business of self-edification and preaching to the lost.
- 2) If so, then Paul could himself be enlarged!
 - a) That is, his influence among them, and beyond them.
 - b) That Paul would be freed from concern over them, and put his energies to further preach the gospel beyond them.
- 3) So then, Paul's boasting would not be like his opponents' boasting.
 - a) To boast in another man's work that he has done.
 - b) To take credit away from another man's work.

IV. THE RIGHT KIND OF BOASTING. (10:17-18)

A. Two approaches to boasting:

- 1) One who boasts about himself, what he has, what he has done.
- 2) Or, one who boasts about what God has made him, blessed him with, and has accomplish with him.

B. The right boasting is in the Lord.

- 1) What the Lord has done.
- 2) The more we boast of what the Lord has done, the better.
- 3) There is no danger of excess.....we don't touch the hem of the garment of what Glory really belongs to God.

C. The true measure is:

- 1) Not, how much I excel others or praise myself;
- 2) But, whether we are measuring up to our God-given responsibilities.
- 3) God commends the worker & his works when done to the glory of God and according to His Will.
- 4) "Man's life, not his lips, should do his boasting for him."

- 5) The false teachers at Corinth:
 - a) Had evidently boasted of their works.
 - b) But their boasting involved lying about themselves.
 - c) “The braggart has no restraint when it comes to lying.”

CONCLUSION

1. The apostles were evidently appointed by God to preach the gospel where it had not been preached before.
2. The reason would be obvious:
 - a) They had the highest degree of inspiration & understanding of God’s truth.
 - b) They possessed the greatest miraculous powers.
 - c) They, alone, could confer miraculous powers to converts.
 - d) These gifts would enable the churches, in the apostles absence, to:
 - 1—Continue to build up & edify themselves;
 - 2—Reach out to the unconverted around them.
3. These false teachers had interfered with this process and needed to be dealt with quickly before the church was destroyed.
4. This church must recognize the Authority of the apostles’ message, as recorded in the Scriptures.
 - a) False & divisive teachers need to be corrected.
 - b) Or, the church here will suffer the same as the dangers to the Corinthian church.
5. If you are not a child of God....you need to hear & heed the apostles’ teaching.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. Too much talent in a congregation gives opportunity for jealousy and division around them.
- ___ 2. Paul’s Apostleship had to be upheld for the over-all good of the church.
- ___ 3. Paul emphasized that his Apostleship and his powers came from Christ.
- ___ 4. Paul’s opponents said that his speech was contemptible.
- ___ 5. Paul said that when he came to Corinth he would be just like he was in his letters.
- ___ 6. Paul said that he was not in the same boat with those who measure themselves by themselves.
- ___ 7. Paul’s measure or rule was to preach where no one else had preached.
- ___ 8. Paul wanted the church at Corinth to be back in the business of edifying itself and reaching out to the lost.
- ___ 9. There is no right way to boast.
- ___ 10. The church must recognize the authority of the Apostles as those who have given us the word of God.

Lesson Nine

“THE VIRTUE OF FAITHFULNESS”

(2 Corinthians 11:1-15)

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul had preached the gospel at Corinth and many responded!
 - a) After leaving to go elsewhere to work, other workers came in among them and were causing grave problems.
 - b) They were falsely accusing Paul in order to undermine him in the eyes of the church.
 - c) They were making pretensions of being apostles of Christ when they were not.
2. Paul's concern for them has been expressed now in two letters!
 - a) In the first one, he dealt with a lot of problems among them.
 - b) Then, in the 2nd, he deals with the false teachers.
 - c) In Ch. 11, he gets stronger in his identifying & characterizing these false teachers.

DISCUSSION**I. PAUL REQUEST OF THEM TO BEAR WITH A LITTLE FOOLISHNESS. (11:1)****A. These false teachers had certainly sounded off their praise of their work.**

- 1) Then, turned around and denouncing Paul for upholding his actions.
- 2) If the Corinthians can put up with their folly, surely they can with Paul's?

B. Their estrangement from him had caused Paul alarm.

- 1) He needed to explain, justify, uphold his actions to them.
- 2) So, he request their indulgence a little longer.

II. PAUL EXPRESSES GRAVE CONCERN OVER THEM. (11:2-4)**A. Most of all, he wants their purity & faithfulness to Christ.**

- 1) *“I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy”*
 - a) Expresses strong affections that was good, not bad.
 - b) Not a vile jealousy, but a kind God has over his people.
- 2) *“I have espoused you to one husband.”*
 - a) Espoused or betrothed.
 - b) This term is almost as strong as marriage itself.
 - c) Paul had brought them into a special relationship with Christ as they were baptized into Christ.
 - d) It is a public promise to be faithful to Christ until he returns for his bride to take her home to heaven!
- 3) *“That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”*
 - a) So the marriage can be finalized in heaven.
 - b) So they would not be rejected as one who was unfaithful.
 - c) As one that is loyal and pure as a bride should be.
 - d) Their affection belonged only to Him...no one else!
 - e) **What a virtue, faithfulness is!!**

B. He expresses his fear for them.

- 1) That you may be beguiled as Eve was by the serpent.
 - a) The serpent & Satan are tied together in Scripture.

- b) Jn. 8:44—*“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”*
- c) Rev. 12:9—*“that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world...”*
- d) He used cunning craftiness, deception to cause Eve to sin.
 - 1—He told a lie, but made it sound like truth.
 - 2—He deceived her into believing a lie!
- e) Paul was afraid that the Corinthians had been so deceived as well.
- 2) *“That your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”*
 - a) Corrupted...turned from Christ.
 - b) Simplicity---Integrity of affection which belongs to Christ.
 - c) Single-minded devotion, sincere & pure devotion to Christ.
- 3) *That they no longer were respecting Paul’s efforts among them.*
 - a) These new teachers come among them were undermining this respect for Paul’s work.
 - b) If they had had something greater than what Paul had preached, he could understand why they would turn to these new teachers away from Paul.
 - c) But this wasn’t the case!
 - d) They had no new message or blessings to offer!!

III. PAUL NOW OPENLY UPHOLDS HIS APOSTLESHIP. (11:5-6)

A. He firmly states his apostleship was not inferior to any one.

- 1) *“Not a whit behind the very chiefest apostle.”*
- 2) Gal. 2:9—*“When James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars.....”*
- 3) His opponents may have compared him to those who were so highly regarded in Jerusalem.
- 4) Paul was inferior to them...not really a genuine apostle.
- 5) But Paul stated he was in the front ranks with the best of them.
- 6) He was forced by accusation to say such things.

B. So, my speech may be rude.....

- 1) Rude, uneducated, not polished like the Greek orators.
- 2) The orators had been trained in “How to speak”.
- 3) The people at Corinth had been exposed to such orators.
- 4) But Paul did not come to Corinth *“with excellency of speech or of wisdom (of men), declaring unto you the testimony of God.”* (1 Cor. 2:1)

C. But what really matter was.....His knowledge was not lacking as an apostle.

- 1) His knowledge compared to that of the other apostles.
- 2) He was just as knowledgeable as they.
- 3) This had been openly demonstrated everywhere Paul went!
- 4) Even in his discussion with the apostles, he was not found inferior.

IV. PAUL NOW DEALS WITH ANOTHER VERY TOUCHY PERSONAL MATTER.**(11:7-11)****A. Paul had preached the gospel to them without any support from them.**

- 1) Was this wrong?
- 2) Is this what his accusers were saying about him?
- 3) Had he wronged the church at Corinth by not allowing them to support him as he worked among them?
- 4) It was not unusual for a teacher to take support of those he teaches.
 - a) Then or now!
 - b) Common practice among all!
- 5) Then, why didn't Paul take support from the Corinthians?
- 6) His accusers gave a sinister motive to Paul!
- 7) But Paul makes it clear....it was for their good that he did it!
 - a) It was for their exaltation....their help....so they would not have a hindrance to hearing & obeying the gospel.
 - b) Thus, he was judged wrongly!
- 8) His desire was to preach the gospel to them without any charge!

B. In fact, he "robbed" other churches in order to continue doing so!

- 1) Robbed---strong term---ravaged---Why?
- 2) Their false accusations, misjudgment of his motives hurt.
- 3) As well as the Corinthians' ingratitude for what Paul had done.
- 4) He took money from other churches as payment for his work, so that he might preach to them without charge.
- 5) The most precious message ever preached.....
 - a) They received it free....no charge for the teacher!
 - b) Someone else paid the bill!!
- 6) Even when he was in need of help.....he made no request of them!

C. The principal Paul was following!

- 1) To go into a city, preach, start church....without them having to pay a cent!
- 2) He would not be a burden on them.
- 3) It was wise....it would not hinder them from listening to the message.
- 4) Could not be accused of...."just wanting their money".
- 5) He had proven his right of support in the first letter.
- 6) But with new churches, he would not be chargeable to them.
- 7) Only after he left them would he receive voluntary support like the Macedonians.

D. He also made it clear that no one would stop him from boasting about this in the regions of Achaia.

- 1) Neither the church or those falsely accusing him would stop him from being proud of this independence in Achaia.
- 2) Neither would they stop him from continuing to do the same elsewhere.

E. Was it a question of whether Paul loved them or not?

- 1) He may have been so accused.
- 2) They could have said, "He doesn't want to be obligated to you."
- 3) or, "He is trying to act like an apostle, but he really isn't. He is not doing this out of love for you."

- 4) But, Paul said, “God knows, and that is all that counts.”
- 5) Not taking support had nothing to do with his lack of love for them. (If anything, it was the very opposite).

V. NOW, HE TURNS TO HIS OPPONENTS AND SAYS SOME STRONG THINGS.

(11:12-15)

A. He first gives a reason for the above actions.

- 1) “He wanted to cut off occasion from them which desire occasion”
 - a) He did not want to give any opportunity for criticism.
 - b) Or, just criticism!
- 2) So, if his critics boast, they will have to act like he acts!
- 3) Because he plans on continuing to do as he has done before:
 - a) To preach the gospel without charge to new churches.

B. Now, he characterizes his opponents.

- 1) “For such are false apostles”
 - a) Apostle or messenger.....PROBABLY APOSTLE!
 - b) They are spurious, sham apostles.
 - c) They are counterfeits, masquerading as such.
 - d) They are apostles by their own appointment.
 - e) Paul now calls a “spade, a spade.”
 - f) Man has the power to misrepresent himself...and many do!
 - g) Men should present themselves truthfully...not deceptively.
 - h) These were “deceitful workers”.... Dishonest!
 - i) They pretended to be something they were not!
- 2) They are doing what Satan has done & is still doing!
 - a) He appeared to Mother Eve as a Serpent & deceived her.
 - b) He transforms himself into an angel of light....good person or good thing.
 - c) He appeared to want to do good, but had ulterior motives.
 - d) So, man copies after Satan’s devices!
- 3) His ministers transform themselves into ministers of righteousness.
 - a) They mix evil with good.
 - 1—**“Beware of wolves in sheep’s clothing.”** (Acts 20: 29; Matt. 7:15)
 - b) They are called his ministers because they do his bidding.
- 4) These false apostles, ministers, will be rewarded:
 - a) Not by what they pretend to be,
 - b) But, by what they really are.

CONCLUSION

1. How important it is to make a clear cut distinction between the true and the false.
2. How dangerous it is to allow ourselves to be deceived like Mother Eve.
3. What a terrible end for those who deceive and are deceived!
4. How wonderful to see those betrothed to God being faithful in their devotion to Christ!
5. Are you ready to make that decision to be married to Christ....to be faithful to Him till death!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- 1. Paul indicated that Corinth had put up with the foolish boasting of these false teachers.**
- 2. Paul stated that he had espoused the Corinthians to one husband (Christ).**
- 3. He wanted them to be chaste virgins for their husband.**
- 4. Paul was afraid that the church would be turned from the simplicity that is in Christ.**
- 5. Paul said that he was only a little behind the chiefest apostles.**
- 6. Paul said his speech may be rude, but not what he preached.**
- 7. Paul did not take any support from Corinth while he was in their midst.**
- 8. These teachers were saying that Paul didn't love them by not taking support from them.**
- 9. Paul states that these teachers were false apostles and deceitful workers.**
- 10. A clear distinction needs to be made between the true and the false.**

Lesson Ten

“GLORY IN INFIRMITIES”

(2 Corinthians 11:16-33)

INTRODUCTION

1. When a person talks about himself:
 - a) It is easy for people to say he is bragging on himself.
 - b) And, often look upon such as foolishness.....
 - c) Or, as weakness, or unwise.
2. Yet, in certain situations, it becomes a necessity.
 - a) This was one of those occasions with Paul
 - b) God’s Spirit directed the writing of these boastful things.
3. And how blest we are to learn of these things!
 - a) He evidently did not feel comfortable telling all of these things about himself.
 - b) But, thankfully, the Spirit directed him to give at least much of what he had endured for the cause of Christ!

DISCUSSION**I. PAUL AGAIN ASK THAT THEY BEAR WITH A LITTLE BOASTING. (11:16-21)**

- A. He didn’t want to appear to be foolish in their eyes.**
 - 1) What he is about to say will appear to be foolish, though.
 - 2) But He didn’t want them to take it as foolishness.
- B. “But if such, please accept me.”**
 - 1) If you must think of me as a foolish person for what I am about to do.....
 - 2) Then, accept this foolish one in spite of his actions, please!
- C. Allow me the opportunity to boast a little.**
 - 1) Because he needed to say some things about himself that they were probably not aware of.
 - 2) And, also, he had to uphold his work as an apostle.
- D. “What I am now speaking, it is not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confident boasting.”**
 - 1) Paul was inspired by the Spirit of God.
 - 2) But this is not normally what the Lord would inspire him to speak.
 - 3) It is foolish boasting like carnal men do.
 - 4) But the Lord wanted Paul’s apostleship thoroughly vindicated.
- E. “Seeing many glory after the flesh, I will glory (after the flesh) also.”**
 - 1) As these teachers had done when they came among them.
 - 2) Paul said, I will do a little of what they have done.
 - 3) His purpose....to show them up for what they were---false!
- F. “For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.”**
 - 1) Paul used irony here.
 - a) The church had suffered these men to come in and use such tactics.
 - b) “You have suffered these foolish ones.”
 - 2) So, in your wise ways.....surely you can suffer a little more foolishness.

G. Paul now gives a list of how they had suffered (allowed) these men to act among them: (presumably)

- 1) *“If a man bring you into bondage”*
 - a) They were misleading the people.
 - b) Bringing them into bondage again.
 - c) Gal. 2:4—*“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.”*
- 2) *“If a man devour you.”*
 - a) Rom. 16:18—*“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”*
 - b) They shear the sheep instead of feeding them.
- 3) *“If a man take of you”*
 - a) Takes you in, deceives, and entraps you.
 - b) Really more interested in your money than you.
- 4) *“If a man exalt himself”*
 - a) If he raises himself above you.
 - b) Assumes superiority, arrogant, domineering. (III Jn. 9)
 - c) Lordship over human souls.
- 5) *“If a man smite you on the face.”*
 - a) Treats you roughly when you do not comply with his will.
 - b) They brought their insolence with them from Jerusalem.
- 6) **NOTE:**
 - a) The Corinthians tolerated this kind of people.....
 - b) But were jealously suspicious of the gentle & humble apostle Paul.

H. *“I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak.”*

- 1) I am speaking in answer to the reproach cast on me!
- 2) Namely, that I am weak....cowardly.
- 3) Let it be known that:
 - a) Whereinsoever any is bold among you.....
 - b) I am just as bold as they!
 - c) Adds....”I speak foolishly.”
- 4) Paul had not mistreated the Corinthians as these false teachers had done.
 - a) But, if he was considered weak because of such, so be it.
 - b) He didn’t want to be like them in his actions, but he could be.

II. PAUL COULD BOAST OF HIS PEDIGREE. (11:22-23a)

A. *“Are they Hebrews? So am I.”*

- 1) Both of his parents were Hebrews, but lived in Tarsus.
- 2) But he was educated by Gamaliel, one of their great Rabbinical teachers in Jerusalem.

B. *“Are they Israelites? So am I.”*

- 1) He was not a proselyte, but a pure Jew.
- 2) His decendency went back to the 12 sons of Jacob.

C. “Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I.”

- 1) Fleshly and spiritually!
- 2) Spiritually.....those who believe in the Messiah, as Abraham believed in God’s promise of the Messiah.

D. “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool), I am more.”

- 1) Up to this point, the similarities were there!
- 2) But at this point....a wide difference enters into the picture.
- 3) Paul far exceeded them as ministers of the gospel.
 - a) Not looking at his apostleship, but as a preacher of the gospel.
 - b) In reality, no servant of Christ has surpassed Paul through the ages.
- 4) He adds....”I speak as a foolish person,” saying these things.
- 5) And now, he gives the reasons why he made such a “foolish statement.”

III. PAUL’S EFFORTS & SUFFERING AS A MINISTER, (11:23b-28)

A. Paul labored more abundantly than they all.

- 1) This may be a reason why Paul’s life was recorded by Luke.
 - a) Keep in mind, Acts was not written until 62-63 AD.
 - b) This letter was about 57 AD.
- 2) Paul preached mostly to new places.
 - a) Where the gospel had not been preached before.
 - b) And having to support himself most of the time.
- 3) These teachers had not done this at all.

B. Paul had had to endure much in his preaching of the gospel.

- 1) “*In stripes above measure.*” (He exceeded them all).
- 2) “*In prisons more frequent*” (More than anyone)
 - a) Luke only mentions one up to this time in Acts.
 - b) But much is not recorded!
- 3) “*In deaths off*” (In dangers of death....facing death).
- 4) “*Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*”
 - a) Punished as a criminal.
 - b) 39 was the maximum for Jews to administer.
 - c) 3 cords....13 strokes equals 39!
- 5) “*Thrice was I beaten with rods*”
 - a) This would be by the Romans.
 - b) One time is mentioned in Acts 16:20-23.
- 6) “*Once I was stoned.*”
 - a) Probably with reference to Lystra.
 - b) Where Paul was left for dead outside the city.
- 7) “*Thrice I suffered shipwreck.*”
 - a) None is mentioned in Acts up to this point.
 - b) On the way to Rome would have been a 4th time.
- 8) “*A night and a day I have been in the deep.*”
 - a) Nothing miraculous seems to be indicated.
 - b) He was probably found by another ship & saved.
- 9) “*In journeyings often.*”

- a) He did a lot of traveling from his conversion in Damascus until his possible death in Rome.
- b) All was fraught with perils, fatigue, hardships, discomforts.

C. Perils in general:

- 1) *"in waters"* (rivers... dangers of drowning).
- 2) *"of robbers"* (Always looking for someone to rob in desolate areas)
- 3) *"of mine own countrymen"* (Jews persecuted Paul everywhere he went).
- 4) *"Of the heathen"* (gentiles).
- 5) *"In the city"* (from mobs trying to kill him).
- 6) *"In the wilderness"* (Wild beasts, food & shelter).
- 7) *"In the sea"* (Storms & Pirates).
- 8) *"Among false brethren"* (How much this hurt him).

D. Things he endured:

- 1) *"Weariness & Painfulness"* (The continual drain on his body & mind) (Toils & Travails).
- 2) *"Watchings often"* (Sleepless nights...loss of sleep).
- 3) *"Hunger & thirst"* (Endured much here).
- 4) *"Cold & Nakedness"*

E. As if these things were not enough, he adds one more to the list:

- 1) Besides those things that are without....Listed above.
- 2) That which comes upon him daily....constantly.....
- 3) The care of all the churches.
 - a) Many churches had already been established by this time.
 - b) Paul was concerned for their survival & growth.
 - c) When they had problems, they would send word to him.
- 4) Concerned about:
 - a) All the dissensions, heresies,
 - b) Immoralities,
 - c) And false teachings that came into the churches.
- 5) All was a constant concern of Paul's.

IV. PAUL NOW COMES BACK TO TALK ABOUT HIS WEAKNESS. (11:29-33)

A. Who is weak, and I am not weak?

- 1) Paul was not a super-human...he was a man like all others.
- 2) But, from all he had suffered, he could easily identify with the weaknesses of others.
- 3) *"Who is offended, and I burn not?"*
 - a) He is hurt when others are hurt.
 - b) He is offended when others are offended
 - c) He becomes indignant as he sees others being hurt.

B. But, if I must boast:

- 1) It seems that Paul had no choice but to boast of these things.
- 2) But...I will boast of those things which display my weakness.
- 3) He had rather boast of the things that shows how weak he was, not his strength!

- 4) If you noticed....all of these things were not his accomplishments, but what he had to endure...his infirmities...his afflictions.
- 5) Infirmities, afflictions, are something to be accepted as burdens to be borne.
- 6) But, also tolerated as something providentially ordained to be borne.
- 7) And now....a higher experience....things to be boasting in!!

C. "God knows that I lie not."

D. And to further illustrate his point he gives an example.

- 1) After his conversion he was in the city of Damascus.
- 2) The governor tried to apprehend Paul with many soldiers.
- 3) This was his first peril after his conversion.
- 4) But the beginning of a long line of persecutions and things to be endured for Christ.
- 5) Luke records the Lord saying to Ananias, when sent to Paul, that,
"I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."
(Acts 9:16)
- 6) Paul was able to escape with his life thru a window in a basket by the wall.
 - a) Not a very dignified way to leave a city.
 - b) Especially for a former Jewish Rabbi.

CONCLUSION

1. For one with Paul's station & education.....To endure what he did is amazing.
 - a) To submit to such a long course of suffering in particular.
 - b) Sufferings that brought him to a condition of poverty.
2. The only answer is....He thoroughly believed in Jesus!
3. Do you believe as he did?
4. How willing are we to endure as he endured for Christ's sake?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. The boasting that Paul did in this letter was not inspired by the Spirit of God.
- ___ 2. Paul requested that they accept him even if he appears foolish in his boasting.
- ___ 3. Paul said what he was doing in boasting was to act like carnal men.
- ___ 4. Paul indicated that these teachers had "taken them in."
- ___ 5. Paul was not of pure Hebrew Decent.
- ___ 6. It was Paul's efforts at preaching that made him stand out above these teachers.
- ___ 7. Paul claimed to have labor more than they all had done.
- ___ 8. Last on his list of concerns was his concern for the newly established churches.
- ___ 9. Paul said he was beaten 3 times with rods.
- ___ 10. Paul escaped from Damascus through a window in a basket down the wall.

Lesson Eleven

“A MESSENGER OF SATAN”

(2 Cor. 12:1-10)

INTRODUCTION

1. The Spirit of God is guiding Paul in upholding his apostleship.
2. At his conversion & call to apostleship he was told **“how great things he must suffer for (Christ’s) name’s sake.”** (Acts 9:16)
 - a) He has successfully endured all of these great things up to this point.
 - b) The Spirit has guided him into revealing many of the trials & sufferings he had endured.
 - c) His growth in Christ had brought him to the point where he could even glory in his infirmities, etc.
3. Now he turns to a great experience that supports his apostleship.
 - a) The apostles were like the prophets in the Old Testament.
 - b) They were in direct contact with God in receiving power to perform miracles.
 - c) They also received visions & revelations of the will of God.
 - d) Paul had received all of these, but something more!
 - e) He had received something special that no other apostle had evidently received up to this point of time.....A VISION OF PARADISE.
 - f) But this brought on additional sufferings, as we shall see.

DISCUSSION**I. THE UNDESIRABILITY OF BOASTING. (12:1)****A. It is not expedient to glory or boast of these things.**

- 1) It is not profitable.
- 2) It is out of place.
- 3) But seemingly necessary at this time.

B. So, I will pass on to visions & revelations.

- 1) He is going to reveal something now that has not been revealed before to anyone, evidently.
- 2) To soften the boldness of his glorying, he takes a different approach in talking about visions & revelations.

II. VISIONS & REVELATIONS. (12:1-4)**A. Defined:**

- 1) Visions:
 - a) Supernatural insights to spiritual things.
 - b) Zacharias (Lk. 1:11); Mary (Lk. 1:76); and Cornelius (Acts 10:3) all had visions of angels.
 - c) But Paul’s vision was different that he describes.
 - d) Things perceived in a state like a trance.
 - e) Revelations: Knowledge given to be spoken for God to the people.

B. Paul now described the special Vision-Revelation he received.

- 1) When? (Above 14 years ago)

- a) If dates are correct that we use....would be 44 AD.
 - b) This was before he began his Missionary journeys.
 - c) Possibly while in Tarsus.
 - d) He had evidently never told anyone of such.
- 2) Condition?
- a) Whether in or out of body, he did not know.
 - b) Reason why it was like we call a trance.
 - c) Only God knew fully what the condition was.
- 3) Caught up to 3rd heaven.
- a) In mind, spirit, body....He was aware of it all.
 - b) He also refers to it as “Paradise” (v. 4)
 - c) Where redeemed saints are to await the Resurrection.
 - d) Concept of a place!!
- 4) What did he see & hear?
- a) He heard unspeakable words.
 - 1—Words that could not be expressed in human language.
 - 2—Not lawful to utter.
 - b) Our curiosity craves to know, but we do not need to know.
 - c) It doesn’t say what he saw, only what he heard.
 - d) But John’s later Revelation can give us some idea.
- 5) Why was such a Vision-Revelation given to Paul?
- a) We can guess, but an educated guess.
 - b) It was given to be an encouragement to Paul in his labors and sufferings he would endure.
 - c) To give a glimpse of what the unseen world was like.
 - d) To see the joy of the redeemed ones.

III. THE QUESTION OF BOASTING AGAIN. (12:5-6)

A. Of such a one I will glory.

- 1) This man, Paul describes was given a high honor.
- 2) Such an honor was worthy to be boasted over.
- 3) Of such an experience, one would want to glory in.

B. But Paul had made up his mind to do his boasting in something else.

- 1) He could have boasted of this great vision....because he was obviously the man.
- 2) But he would only boast in his infirmities.
- 3) That for which they ridiculed him, he would boast in!
- 4) His enemies had said: ***“rude in speech, bodily presence weak, speech contemptible.”***
- 5) They probably exaggerated these to their advantage.
- 6) But Paul says, I will glory in these things....WHY?

C. While Paul might desire to glory, he would not of these things.

- 1) The desire to press home this exalted privilege was restrained.
- 2) *“See what God has done for me, what about you?”*
- 3) But, it would be foolish, vanity, for him to do this.

- 4) But if he did boast of this, he would be truthful about it all.
- 5) Thus, he restrains himself from what he could have done in boasting.

D. Reason: “lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.”

- 1) He doesn’t want to be exalted by men.
- 2) He doesn’t want to be anymore than he really is.
- 3) He is a man with weaknesses and infirmities.
- 4) This hits at measuring a teacher by his LOOKS, WELL-ARRANGED WORDS, OR THE PLEASINGNESS OF HIS SPEECH.....
- 5) Rather than, what he is in the sight of God!

IV. WHAT GOD DID TO HELP PAUL. (12:7-9)

A. God gave him a thorn in the flesh.

- 1) Many things suggested as to what it is.....BUT NOT TOLD!
- 2) Could have been:
 - a) That which they looked upon with contempt.
 - b) Something his opponents could ridicule.
 - c) Something that may have affected his looks, gestures, speech, etc.
- 3) Gal. 4:14—“*And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*”
- 4) It was also called a “*messenger of Satan*”.
 - a) Used of Satan to hinder Paul in his great work.
 - b) When one attacks Satan’s kingdom, he will fight back.
 - c) Suffering & Satan were under God’s control & direction.

B. Why was this thorn in the flesh given?

- 1) To buffet him....to humble him, to keep him from being puffed up.
- 2) Lest he should be exalted above measure.
- 3) Too much elevation....lifted up with pride.
- 4) Not to let this great honor go to his head.
- 5) Thorns can be great teachers of humility!
- 6) Good men also have great temptations to pride...
- 7) Must be guarded against!
- 8) God gives afflictions as gifts to help us deal with sin!

C. At first, Paul desired to be released from this Thorn in the Flesh!

- 1) He prayed 3 times for its removal.
 - a) Afflictions should drive us to God in prayer.
 - b) It was painful to bear up under, evidently.
 - c) He felt it would hinder him in his work.
 - d) He did not grumble, make himself a nuisance, or find fault with God, or sit down in despair.....
 - e) But he prayed to God. (Phil. 4:6)
- 2) God’s answer was “NO!”
 - a) Not the one he wanted to hear, but one that he needed to hear.
 - b) He felt it would hinder his work....God felt it would help his work.
 - c) God may say no to us many times....may not know reason why.....BUT BE ASSURED, it is for our good!

- d) He knows what is best!
- 3) God reassures Paul with two statements:
 - a) **“My grace is sufficient for thee”**
 - 1—What I have given is sufficient for you to serve me.
 - 2—The favor I have bestowed on you is sufficient for you to accomplish your task.
 - b) **“My strength is made perfect in weakness.”**
 - 1—God’s power is perfected in weakness.
 - 2—God’s power is made manifest in man’s weakness.
- 4) Paul’s response to God’s answer:
 - a) **“Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities”**
 - 1—I will do my boasting in these, rather than my strengths.
 - 2—If God gave them to me, then they must be something in which to glory.
 - b) **“That the power of Christ may rest upon me.”**
 - 1—His reaching of the masses showed that the power of Christ was in the gospel, not in him.
 - 2—If infirmities is what brings the power of Christ into my life-- I will glory in them.

V. PAUL WENT ANOTHER STEP BEYOND. (12:10)

A. I will not only glory in infirmities, but I will take pleasure in infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and in distresses for Christ’s sake.

- 1) Instead of being dissatisfied, I will be well pleased with such.
- 2) I am content to bear them cheerfully.
- 3) Heb. 12:2—**“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”**

B. Gives the reason.....”For when I am weak, then am I strong”

- 1) We must die to live.
- 2) We must be humble to be exalted.
- 3) We must recognize our weaknesses, in order to be strong.
- 4) Because then, I rely upon true strength that comes from God.
- 5) The very things that could make him weak, also are the means of making him strong.

CONCLUSION

- 1. The Christian life is a growing process.
 - a) This maturing must come if we are to live successfully before God.
 - b) Paul was constantly learning from his experiences.
 - c) So must we.....from his and our’s as well.
- 2. Our outlook towards our condition in life makes a world of difference.
 - a) The same Sun shines upon all.
 - b) But it melts the wax, but hardens the clay.
 - c) We need to be wax.....so God can mold us as we need to be.

3. Salvation is not found in men, but in God.
 - a) Those who try to save themselves are doomed to fail.
 - b) Only those who die to self can truly be saved by God.
4. Are you ready to make that decision?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. When Paul was called to be an Apostle, he was told how much he would have to suffer for Christ.
- ___ 2. Paul's Apostleship compares with the Old Testament Prophets.
- ___ 3. Paul stated that he had been allowed a vision of Paradise (where righteous go awaiting the resurrection).
- ___ 4. Paul had this vision before he began his missionary tours.
- ___ 5. Paul did not want people to think of him above what he actually was.
- ___ 6. Paul stated that the thorn in the flesh was given him because he had seen Paradise.
- ___ 7. When Paul prayed for the removal of the thorn, God told him to wait awhile.
- ___ 8. Paul chose to glory in his infirmities rather than in his accomplishments.
- ___ 9. Paul said that he was strong when he recognized his weaknesses.
- ___ 10. One's outlook about his circumstances makes a world of difference.

Lesson Twelve

“THOUGH GREAT, YET NOTHING”

(2 Corinthians 12:11-21)

INTRODUCTION

1. It was not right for the church to lightly esteem the responsible position of an apostle.
2. But even more, it was not right to lightly esteem one who brought the message of God to them.
3. This some had done in their midst.
4. Others had not rushed to his Defense as they should have.
5. So, it became necessary for Paul, himself, to uphold his apostleship.
6. Now, he does that by:
 - a) Rebuking them;
 - b) Asking pointed questions that have obvious answers;
 - c) Shaming them;
 - d) Almost, if not altogether, making fun of their inconsistent actions.
7. But one of the sad insight given in these verses is the possible gross immorality that still existed among them.

DISCUSSION**I. HIS REBUKE OF THE CHURCH. (12:11)****A. You have compelled me to have to be foolish in the eyes of men for upholding my apostleship.**

- 1) He really should not have been considered such.
- 2) But he knew that he would appear as such to some, anyway.
- 3) But Paul was forced to do what he did.
- 4) They caused it by their inaction!

B. “I should have been commended by you.”

- 1) When my credentials were attacked by these teachers from Jerusalem.
- 2) You should have vindicated me, but you didn't.
- 3) There should have been no need of me doing what I have done in defending my apostleship.

II. REASONS WHY THEY SHOULD HAVE UPHELD PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP. (12:11-13)**A. Because “for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles”**

- 1) You know that I am not inferior as an apostle of Christ.
- 2) I have done no less than the very greatest of the apostles.
- 3) “Though I am nothing.”
- 4) What a wonder.....So great a man, but yet nothing!
- 5) Humility is a beautiful garment to wear.

B. The marks of Paul's apostleship were obvious!

- 1) Not only had he labored diligently with patience among them, enduring much hardship;
- 2) But in their very midst he had:
 - a) Performed great wonders.....acts that causes wonderment.

- b) Healing, casting out demons, speaking in tongues, etc.
- c) All with supernatural results.
- d) But he had been able to pass on these gifts to the church to be able to carry on their work.
- e) Only an apostle could do this!
- f) I Cor. 9:2—***“If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.”***

3) Rom. 15:17-21

C. Because they were not “inferior to other churches.”

- 1) They had what they all had, and possibly even more!
- 2) No church established by any apostle had been given & done more for than Paul had done for them.
- 3) With possible one exception!
- 4) Paul had not taken support from them, as others were doing!
 - a) Maybe, they were inferior to other churches in this regard!
 - b) Almost irony again!
- 5) Sincerely, or in the way of irony, “Forgive me this wrong!”
 - a) Won’t you please forgive me this injury to you!
 - b) May have been sincerely apologizing that he had made them inferior to other churches in this respect!

III. NOW, CONCERNING COMING TO THEM. (12:14-18)

A. He had planned & wanted to come twice before, but didn’t.

- 1) Instead, he had sent the 1st letter by Titus.
- 2) The 2nd time, he was sending another letter by Titus.
- 3) But very soon, he plans to be in their midst, personally.

B. When he comes:

- 1) He promises not to be burdensome to them.
 - a) He would not asked, nor expect support from them for himself.
 - b) He hasn’t in the past, and he definitely will not now!
- 2) Reason: ***“For I seek not yours, but you.”***
 - a) Paul was not in preaching for the money , but for the saving of their souls.
 - b) His interest was not to beat them out of their possessions, but to teach them the way of salvation.
- 3) In doing so, I am acting like a parent does for his children.
 - a) Children do not lay up for their parents,
 - b) But parents for their children!
 - c) So, Paul was laying up for them spiritually!
- 4) And, he states clearly, ***“I will gladly spend and be spent for you.”***
 - a) He will be spent physically, so their souls could be saved!
 - b) And he would do it willingly, gladly, with joy!
 - c) He was willing to even suffer death to bring the gospel to them.
 - d) The saving & perfecting of souls for eternity brings glory to God and secures the highest good for humanity!
 - e) Some resent the giving of themselves to help others.
 - f) Paul gladly gave as His Great Master had gladly given!

- 5) However, he has noticed something about them.
 - a) The more he tried to show his love to them, the less they respected him.
 - b) He had given far more than these Judaizing teachers had, but they seemed to respect them more!
 - c) Be that as it may.....I was not a burden to you like they are.
 - d) ***“Ah, you say, that may be; I did not lay any charge on you myself, but I preyed upon you by roundabout means, like the knave I am.”***
(Knox)
 - e) He could have been dealing with an accusation of his underhanded way of getting money from them.

C. He now pointedly deals with just such an accusation!

- 1) ***“Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?”***
 - a) Titus and another brother had been sent to them.
 - b) Did they ask money for me while in your midst?
 - c) Did I take unfair advantage of you thru them?
- 2) ***“Did they make a gain of you?”***
 - a) Did they ask for support of themselves?
 - b) Did they try to defraud you in some way?
- 3) ***“Walked we not in the same spirit?Same steps?”***
 - a) Didn't we both act the same way towards you?
 - b) The answer was obvious.
 - c) They had allowed these teachers to dupe them into believing falsely about Paul & those sent by Paul.
 - d) Because none of them had received any money from Corinth.

IV. PAUL'S EXPECTED VISIT. (12:19-21)

A. Do you think we are trying to excuse ourselves for not coming in person to you?

- 1) ***“If you imagine that I am trying to excuse myself by my defense, you are wrong---I need no defense. But I do need to remove the falsehoods that alienate you from me.”***
- 2) I call God as a witness that I speak the truth in Christ sincerely to help you! To build you up! To help you make it to heaven!
- 3) ***“We do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.”***

B. He still has fears about what he will find when he comes!

- 1) “I shall not find you such as I would.”
 - a) That he would be disappointed in what he would find there.
 - b) That he would not find reformed, penitent persons that he wanted to see!
- 2) But also, that they would not like what they saw in Paul if he has to be stern with some of them.
 - a) He did not want to be or desire to be stern, but would do so, if necessary.
 - b) Even though they might be disappointed in him.
- 3) “Lest there be....all kinds of dissensions among you.”
 - a) Debates (Discords, quarrels, strife among your teachers)
 - b) Envyings (emulations, jealousies among your leaders of parties).

- c) Wraths (Anger over injuries received, unforgiven).
 - d) Strifes (Brawlings among the discordant; Contentious words, abusive language.)
 - e) Backbitings (Evil speaking against one another).
 - f) Whisperings (slandering one another)
 - g) Swellings (men making themselves look big, self-conceit).
 - h) Tumults (Disorderly excitements)
- 4) “That my God will humble me among you.”
- a) Bring me into deep despair over what I see in your midst.
 - b) By what I have to do when I come.
- 5) “That I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.”
- a) Lament...deep mourning over the sinfulness of the people.
 - b) Great grief when a soul is lost in sin.
 - c) Or, Great grief in having to disfellowship sinful Christians in delivering them unto Satan!
 - d) This will have to be done with those who will not have repented of their gross immoralities.
 - e) The incestuous man had repented.
 - f) Evidently others needed to do so also.
 - g) Not a very pretty sight to behold in God’s church!!

CONCLUSION

1. How would you like the responsibility of trying to help unrepentant people to come to repentance?
2. Two letters have been sent to help straighten out the problems in their midst.
3. Now, Paul will come in person to finish the job, if need be!
4. If he hadn’t loved them, he could have just written them off.....goodbye!!
5. But he did care....he was concerned.....he wanted them to be saved.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS

True or False

- ___ 1. Paul had to uphold his apostleship because the church did not as they should have.
- ___ 2. Paul stated that he was not inferior to any of the other Apostles.
- ___ 3. Paul indicated that there were signs of an Apostle by which you could tell the true from the false.
- ___ 4. The one sign in particular that an Apostle could do that others could not do was to pass on the miraculous gifts to individuals.
- ___ 5. Paul said that the Corinthian Church was not behind any other church in blessings from an Apostle.
- ___ 6. Paul promised that when he came he would not be burdensome to the church.
- ___ 7. Paul said that the more he showed his love for the Corinthians the less they seem to respect him.
- ___ 8. Paul reminded them that only Timothy took money from the church at Corinth.
- ___ 9. Some in the church at Corinth were guilty of immorality and uncleanness.
- ___ 10. Paul threatened that he would personally deal with the unrepentant persons when he visited the church.

Lesson Thirteen

“FROM WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH”

(2 Corinthians 13:1-14)

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul’s opponents derided him by saying, “He is strong in his letters, but weak in bodily presence.”
 - a) He had already dealt with this accusation, as well as others up to this point.
 - b) Now, he stresses that when he comes, he will deal with those who will not repent.
 - c) If they do not give proof of their repentance, then he will give proof of his apostleship by supernatural powers!
2. These false teachers: (false apostles)
 - a) Wanted to destroy Paul’s influence on the church at Corinth.
 - b) They seem to despise him and what he had accomplished.
 - c) They had continued to try to draw away disciples after them.
 - d) Openly denied the miraculous powers that Paul had exercised while at Corinth.
3. Paul was fighting the battle to save the church at Corinth from destruction.

DISCUSSION**I. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN PAUL COMES. (13:1-4)****A. Believe it....he is coming!**

- 1) He had planned to come twice before, but was not able to or felt it better to write letters.
- 2) This time he is definitely coming.

B. Discipline will be administered.

- 1) Paul was fully prepared to punish the obstinate & unrepentant.
 - a) A crisis was at hand and would be met properly.
- 2) It will be done righteously.
 - a) Decisions will be based on witnesses to the facts.
 - b) All will be fully established by evidence, not rumors.

C. None will be spared who have not repented.

- 1) Understand this clearly as though I was there speaking to you!
- 2) No one will be left out...all will be punished.
 - a) Those who have continued in sin.
 - b) Those who opposed Paul’s apostleship.

D. You will see the proof of Christ speaking in me.

- 1) You will have no reason for further doubt of this fact.
- 2) Since a proof of this is desired.....you will see it clearly when I come.
- 3) Since Christ’s powers are seemingly strong among you.....
- 4) You will see that same strength in me.
- 5) He deviates to discuss the weakness & strength of Christ:
 - a) He was weak in his earthly pilgrimage in the flesh.
 - b) His death on the cross was testimony to His voluntary weakness (humility).
 - c) But, the power of God raised him up to sit on the Father’s right hand.

- 6) Just so:
 - a) I am weak in the flesh as Christ was;
 - b) But I have been made alive in Christ and been given the power of Christ to exercise.
 - c) The authority & power to punish the unrepentant!

II. HIS CHALLENGES TO THEM. (13:5-8)

A. Examine yourselves!

- 1) You have been asking for my credentials....now how about yours?
- 2) Look at your own situation closely.
- 3) Why? To see if you be in the faith!
 - a) Not whether you believe in Christ, but.....
 - b) Whether you are abiding in Him.
 - c) Whether you are holding to & living in God's Truth.
- 4) To see if you are genuine!
 - a) Reprobate, counterfeit, tares, hypocrites.
 - b) Are you a true church or a false one?
- 5) To see if Christ is really in you....
 - a) Motivating you and guiding you;
 - b) Through the spiritual gifts given to you.

B. Be assured of our position.

- 1) Understand clearly that I have examined myself...proven myself.
- 2) I am an apostle of Christ, proven by my works.
- 3) I am teaching the faith, as well as living it.
- 4) I do have the power of Christ to do miracles.

C. Do no evil, and do what is honest.

- 1) Keep your life from sinfulness.
- 2) Be genuine, not hypocritical.
- 3) Be a true follower of Christ, whatever you may think of us!
- 4) I can not do evil, but only good by the power of Christ.
 - a) Paul was powerless to do anything against the truth or even against penitent persons.
 - b) Truth can only be upheld by one who has the power of God.

III. HIS REASSURANCE.(13:9-10)

A. We are glad when we are weak and you are strong.

- 1) When we do not have to use these powers to punish & appear weak.
- 2) Because you are living right and need no punishment.
- 3) Paul had rather come into their midst without using these powers God had given him.
- 4) This may make him look weak.....but no problem.

B. But he also wished their perfection.

- 1) Their continued growth toward a mature & steadfast Christian.
- 2) Successfully dealing with sin & that which is false.

C. I have written, so I will not have to come in sharpness.

- 1) God had given the apostles these powers & authority.
- 2) But they were given for edification, not destruction.
 - a) They were to help reclaim the sinful.
 - b) To fully restore the fallen.
 - c) To build up the body of Christ towards perfection.
- 3) But in some instances....to deliver the unrepentant unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

IV. FINAL THOUGHTS & ADMONITIONS. (13:11-14)**A. Farewell.**

- 1) Not a final farewell, but temporary.
- 2) These thoughts for whole church.

B. Admonitions:

- 1) Be perfect (perfected)
 - a) Look to & work towards maturity in Christ.
 - b) Correct the wrongs in your lives.
 - c) Strive to be like your Lord in all things.
- 2) Be of good comfort
 - a) Paul had been firm with them in his letters.
 - b) If they will take heed.....good will come out of it all.
 - c) So, be of good comfort...take courage.
- 3) Be of one mind
 - a) Unified, acting as one body, not splinter groups.
 - b) Suppress selfishness & the party spirit, so you can be one.
- 4) Live in peace
 - a) Continuous, uninterrupted peace with one another.
 - b) Not in strife & unrest like you have been.
 - c) Avoid the divisive spirit.
 - d) We cannot be at peace with God and at war with our brother.
- 5) Greet one another with a holy kiss
 - a) With a kiss of love...showing genuine affection to one another.
 - b) Not to tolerate one another, but to love one another.
 - c) And all the saints where Paul was salutes you....they send their love & best wishes.

C. Benediction

- 1) "And the God of love & peace shall be with you."
 - a) This is the kind of God whom we serve...Love & peace.
 - b) His children should also be like their heavenly Father.
 - c) God is with his children who strive to be like Him.
- 2) The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - a) The one who has made this grace possible.
- 3) The Love of God.
 - a) The one who was willing to give up His Son to death to make this grace possible.

- 4) The communion of the Holy Spirit.
 - a) The outcome of this grace & love is fellowship with the Divine.
- 5) Be with you all.....Amen!

CONCLUSION

1. Acts records his brief visit after this letter in Acts 20:2-3—*“And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, and there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.”*
 - a) Nothing more is said of the trouble at Corinth.
 - b) The collection evidently went as well as was expected.
2. 35 years later, an uninspired letter was sent to Corinth from Clement of Rome.
 - a) While he seems to indicate that the church still was struggling with turbulence, disunity, and some skepticism.....
 - b) Yet...He also indicated signs of improvement as well.
3. About 135 AD.....
 - a) Hegesippus spoke favorably of them in his visit....
 - b) He mentioned about their obedience and liberality.
4. How well do we compare as a church with the church at Corinth?
5. How well do we measure up to these admonitions?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

1. At least some of these false teachers were posing as Apostles.
2. Paul again threatened discipline upon the unrepentant.
3. Paul said that they would see the proof of Christ speaking in him.
4. Paul said that he was weak in the flesh as Christ was.
5. Paul challenged the church at Corinth to do some self-examination.
6. Paul said that he was glad that they were strong when he was weak.
7. Paul said that he had written so that he would not have to come in sharpness.
8. Paul challenged the church to be perfect and be of one mind.
9. Paul mentions the tri-une God in his concluding the letter.
10. The church at Corinth is mentioned in a letter about AD 135 and it was good.