

The God of All Comfort

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

This letter was apparently written not long after the first. We will observe the facts surrounding it as Paul writes. Suffice it to say, most of the church at Corinth had taken the first letter well and were striving to do as it instructed. However, a strong (vocal) minority was still stirring up trouble and leveling an attack against Paul.

Greetings

Paul started answering his accusers immediately. He stressed that he was an apostle chosen by God, not men. He placed Timothy's name with his in the introduction, perhaps because he had helped establish the church in Corinth (Acts 18:1,5) and had been sent to correct problems there (1 Corinthians 4:17). This letter was also addressed to "the whole of Achaia," which would include Athens in the Roman province, while the first letter seems to have been limited to the smaller Greek sense. This is thought because 1 Corinthians 16:15 calls Stephanas the "firstfruits", while inclusion of Athens would make some Athenian the firstfruits (2 Corinthians 1:1; Acts 17:34).

Paul prayed that the Corinthian church might have grace and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ his Son. It is interesting how the apostle adopted both the Greek and Hebrew terms of greeting. The combination certainly makes for an appropriate prayer for God's people in all ages (2 Corinthians 1:2)

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Paul went on to thank God and honor him as the source of mercy and comfort. The singer of Israel sang of God in Psalm 86:15. "But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth." As McGarvey and Pendleton wrote, "Paul regarded affliction as a school wherein one who is comforted of God is thereby instructed and fitted to become a dispenser of comfort unto others." Comfort, according to G. Campbell Morgan, "literally means strengthened, sustained....This is more than consolation, it is underpinning. It is coming to the side of someone and disannulling all his loneliness and his difficulty--comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Just as Jesus suffered persecution and ridicule, so will Christians, his followers, suffer when they try to imitate Christ. Peter said, "But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:13). That joy should arise from knowing the promise that all will work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28). Also, if a Christian suffers, he will be greatly rewarded (2 Corinthians 1:5; 1 Corinthians 4:17, 2 Timothy 2:12).

Paul endured persecution so others might hear the gospel message and be converted by his willingness to suffer to proclaim it. The comfort Paul received served to comfort those who also suffered since they knew God would aid them. Those who stood with Paul and the true gospel

would likely face the same hardships Paul faced. However, the apostle knew that all would come out for their good since God would give them the same comfort he had received (2 Corinthians 1:6-7).

God Delivered Paul

During Paul's trip to Ephesus, trouble arose between Paul and the devoted followers of Diana, who were led by Demetrius (Acts 19:23-20:1). There is no doubt he saw great opportunities to further the gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 16:8-9). However, he told the Corinthian brethren that he feared for his life. Acts 20:1 pictures him as disturbed enough to leave Ephesus suddenly. It seems Paul's escape was so narrow that he assumed he would die. He gave up on his own power to escape and placed complete reliance on God. He was greatly comforted by knowing that God can raise the dead (2 Corinthians 1:8-9).

Paul knew God had delivered him and believed He would continue to deliver him until his purpose was accomplished. Such great evidence of God's power caused Paul to trust God to deliver him from all enemies. The Corinthians had helped Paul during the times of trial by praying for him. Paul's deliverance was granted, in part, by the prayers of many brethren. So, Paul says all should pray to God specifically thanking Him for that deliverance (2 Corinthians 1:10-11).

Correcting Some Misunderstanding

2 Corinthians 1:12-2:2

Paul's Sincerity

If his words sounded boastful, Paul's conscience could withstand the test of God's scrutiny and still show him holy and truthful. He had not lived as one after earthly gain, but as one following God's instruction. This was true in all his actions and especially in Corinth. His dealings with the Corinthians could withstand the inspection of the divisive teachers (2 Corinthians 1:12).

Paul had used the same sincere approach in his writings to them. He had written plainly and without double meaning. All his writings were public, open to anyone's inspection. He did not write privately to some to clarify or change his meaning. He hoped they would continue to confess the truth of his words until the day they died. If they continued to acknowledge his truthful words till death, they could glory in one another in judgment. Paul could be proud of them as his children in the faith and they could be proud of him as their father in the faith (2 Corinthians 1:13-14).

A Change in Plans

Since they had mutual pride and respect for one another, Paul had confidently planned to visit them on the way to and from Macedonia, but had changed plans to give them time to correct the problems he addressed in the first letter. If they made the corrections, their visit would obviously be better. Too, God had blessed him with a great opportunity in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:5-9; Acts 19:1-40). Because they were important to him, he had changed his plans from two short visits to one longer visit so they might receive extra teaching and strength. He thought so highly of them that he wanted the Corinthians to see him off on his journey to take money to the needy saints in Judea (2 Corinthians 1:15-16).

Paul asked the Corinthians if he acted like an unscrupulous person of this world who would promise one thing and do another with light regard for his honor. The apostle went on to tell them that he was just like the God he had preached to them. God was good to his word and so his servant Paul was true to his word. He, unlike a crooked politician, would not affirm and deny the same statement (2 Corinthians 1:17-18).

Silas, Timothy and Paul had all preached and worked together during the apostle's first visit in Corinth (Acts 18:5). They had, on that first visit, preached a Christ who kept his promises. No matter how many promises God makes, he will keep them all. God also sent Jesus to be the "Amen". He came to say "So be it" to all of God's promises (2 Corinthians 1:19-20).

God's Verification of Paul's Sincerity

God had established Paul's sincerity by backing him with signs and miracles. Since God was a promise keeper, He would not support one who was dishonest. God had anointed Paul as an

apostle and placed His seal on him to show His ownership. The Holy Spirit working through Paul was God's way of putting up enough money to guarantee payment of His part of the bargain. The Spirit was evidence that Paul was working in God's behalf (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

Paul called God as a witness since God knows all things and is able to search man's heart. He wanted them to know that he did not come to Corinth when promised, to spare them added hardships. The apostle could not rule over their faith. Instead, he revealed the will of God to them in the hope that they would grow in faith. He wanted his trip to be with them to be a happy occasion, which it would be if they stood firm in God's truth. Paul refused to come to them while they needed discipline for their weakness in the faith. He had made them sorry by the discipline of the earlier letter and was hoping to be made happy by their changed lives. His love for the church and desire to see them grow in faith made it well worth the wait before coming. Only those he had caused to be sorry could make him happy. Their standing firm in the faith would bring rejoicing (2 Corinthians 1:23-2:2).

Discipline's Desirable End

2 Corinthians 2:3-17

Discipline that Worked

Paul wrote his first letter to the church in Corinth in an effort to get them to change. Specifically, he was concerned that they were tolerating sin. He directed them to withdraw from the disorderly brother in an effort to save his soul. He warned them to change and confidently believed they would make him rejoice. He had not rejoiced in the evil that was present in the church but was brought to a state of anguish (1 Corinthians 4:21; 5:1). He demonstrated his love for them by correcting and disciplining them (2 Corinthians 2:3-4).

The fornicator Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5 had brought sorrow to Paul through his sinful acts. Paul saw his sorrow in the matter as nothing compared to the sorrow of the church. The apostle had encouraged them to withdraw fellowship from him in an effort to bring him to repentance. Apparently, they were successful in their actions and Paul pleaded with them to forgive the penitent man and accept him back lest his sorrow and shame drive him to Satan for lack of hope. Just as Paul had instructed them to discipline the fornicator, he wanted them to forgive him and publicly display their love for him (2 Corinthians 2:5-8).

Paul had used this case of fellowship as a test of their willingness to obey. They had proven faithful. He was in agreement with any action taken under God's direction. In fact, he indicated any action which is taken in accord with Christ's law is actually taken in conjunction with the Lord. The purpose of discipline is to save the sinner (1 Corinthians 5:3). In a similar manner, the apostle urged the church to forgive to defeat Satan. If we are unmerciful, or unforgiving, Satan can use that to completely harden the penitent sinner against the truth (2 Corinthians 2:9-11).

Triumphant in Christ

Before going into a brief discussion of discipline, Paul had been telling about the first letter and reasons for his delay in coming. He next resumed by telling them he went from Ephesus to Troas. He had an opportunity to preach. However, being so disturbed over waiting and receiving no word from Titus of Corinth, Paul moved on to Macedonia. His anxiety over the Corinthian response to the first letter hindered his preaching (2 Corinthians 2:12-13).

Paul was thankful for the good word that Titus brought from Corinth. He also thanked God for the continual triumphs he experienced so long as he remained in Christ. G. Campbell Morgan saw this as a picture of a Roman triumph. The knowledge of Christ is like an incense burned by the victor and carried as he goes. In a similar way, the apostle to the Gentiles saw Christ's messengers as producing an aroma. To those who accepted the gospel, they gave off the sweet smell of victory. To those who rejected the good news, they were like the incense smelled by the Roman captives going to their death (2 Corinthians 2:14-15).

Those who reject God's plan to save man face death, while the believers look forward to life

eternal. Paul asked who was prepared to deliver such a great message. Unfortunately, he knew there were many who would corrupt God's word, changing it to suit popular demands and their own selfish desires. The word "peddling" originally was used of a tavern keeper who would short change his customers and dilute supposedly pure drinks. Paul intended to deliver a pure gospel, remembering God could see all. Also, he was constantly aware that he was one of Christ's spokesmen (2 Corinthians 2:16-17).

Paul's Ministry and the New Covenant

2 Corinthians 3

Paul's Letter of Recommendation

It seems Paul was criticized for using personal examples in his first epistle. The apostle makes it clear that he needs neither boasting nor letters of commendation as the Lord's apostle. In fact, he said they were his letter. Their conversion was deeply etched in his heart and was on display in Corinth, a center of world trade. Christ was the author, Paul his secretary, the heart the place of record, and the Holy Spirit the means of leaving a lasting impression (2 Corinthians 3:1-3).

Assured by Christ, Paul confidently counted them as his letter of recommendation. Of course, the work he did in Corinth was through God's power. God made Paul a messenger, not of a legal age, but of a spiritual age. This new law gives life in place of condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:4-6).

The Greater Glory of the New Covenant

The law of Moses was written in stone and condemned men to die since they were not perfect. Yet, Moses, as a minister of that covenant, was glorified to the point that no one could look upon his face. Moses' law was directed to the outward man and condemned, yet brought glory. The law brought by the Spirit and directed to the inward man should bring more glory (2 Corinthians 3:7-8).

The Old Law could not free man from sin, while the New can. Since the Old brought glory, the New should outshine it as the sun outshines the moon. Even though the Old Law was made glorious, the New, in comparison made it as if it had no glory. Like the rising sun obscures the moon, the New Law obscures the Old. It remains while the other is obscured, thus displaying its greater glory (2 Corinthians 3:9-11).

Because we have hope of life and not of condemnation, Paul was not timid in speech. Knowing God was on his side, he spoke openly (2 Corinthians 3:12).

Seeing Christ's Glory with the Veil Removed

Just as Moses used a veil to cover the glory shining on his face (Exodus 34:33), so he used types and shadows to cover the glory of the Lord. Christians can now see Christ's glory with the veil of types and shadows taken away. In reading Moses' law, the veil of types and shadows still covered Christ for the Jews. Their hardened hearts refused to see Christ. However, they could see him in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 3:13-14).

Those rejecting Christ still fail to see him in the Old Testament. They overlook the purpose of that covenant (Galatians 3:24). However, those who sincerely strove to see God's will found the veil removed. Earlier (verses 6-7) Moses was used to stand for the letter. In the same way Christ stands for the Spirit. In Him is freedom (2 Corinthians 3:15-17).

One of the greatest freedoms enjoyed by those in the New Covenant is seeing Christ clearly. Christians see His glory reflected in the New Covenant and their faces are made to shine with His glory as Moses' face shone (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Seeing the Unseen

2 Corinthians 4

Paul and the False Teachers

In 2 Corinthians 3:6, Paul had said he was a minister of the new covenant. Knowing that he had tried to destroy Christianity, Paul was ever thankful for God's mercy which allowed him to preach the gospel (1 Timothy 1:12-13). That mercy and great message gave him courage to endure persecution (2 Corinthians 4:1).

Apparently, the false teachers Paul opposed had done things in secret which they would have been ashamed to have exposed. It also appears that they would use any means at their disposal to gain followers. They may even have misused God's word in order to escape exposure and punishment. Paul didn't use the false teachers' approach. Instead, he openly proclaimed the truth (Acts 20:26-27) with the realization that he would be tested by men in God's sight (2 Corinthians 4:2).

Even though Paul proclaimed the truth openly, there were those who did not see that truth. As verse 14 of chapter 3 would show, there were some who could not see the truth because they did not want to. These were "those who are perishing" by choice. Sinful man made Satan his god, thus giving him control over the world. To retain his power, Satan has to blind his subjects so they cannot see the light of the truth (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Luke 8:12).

It may be that the false teachers proclaimed themselves, but Paul saw himself as a servant for Jesus' sake. He only reflected the glory of the Savior. To proclaim Jesus as Lord is to tell others that He is Master, Ruler, and Savior. Those who knew the word of God should have remembered that He gave light to a newly created world (Genesis 1:3). In much the same way, the Father sent Jesus to be the Light of the world (Isaiah 60:1-2; John 1:1-5). Jesus reflected God's light and gave man knowledge of God that he might give to others (2 Corinthians 4:5-6).

God's Proclaimers Will Overcome

The treasure would be the gospel. That treasure is carried to the world in earthly vessels, that is, our bodies. Because the body is weak, the greatness of the message it carries is better seen. Also, it is easy to see such a frail body is not the source of such a powerful message (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Paul also pictured gospel proclaimers as soldiers fighting for the gospel treasure. He knew the enemy might move in on all sides at close quarters. However, the apostle said God's soldier would still have room to wield his sword and defend himself with his shield. Though he might be greatly troubled by the close fighting, he should not lose hope. In the thick of the battle, the soldier might seek safety by running. Even then, Paul said God would not leave him in a helpless state. In fact, the apostle said God would not allow His soldier to be defeated even if he was overtaken by the enemy and knocked down (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).

Paul and other proclaimers of the good news suffered persecution like Jesus and died, as it were, because of it (1 Corinthians 15:31; Romans 8:36; Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:24; Galatians 6:17). Paul's sufferings caused the selfish man to be dead and Christ to be seen in Paul's response to that suffering (Galatians 2:20). That death, brought about by suffering for Christ, also brings eternal life through the gospel, for those who hear us proclaim despite trials. Despite affliction, which might have caused Paul to give up, he took the attitude of the Psalmist who was compelled to speak because he believed in God (2 Corinthians 4:10-13; Psalm 116:10).

The ultimate source of the proclaimers' belief and hope rested in the resurrection. It was the knowledge that all believers, including the bearer of good news, would one day overcome the grave and be taken home to be with the Lord that kept them strong and faithful. Everything done in the service of the gospel is done for the believer. They were taught that they might receive God's grace and, in turn, that grace received by them might glorify God (2 Corinthians 4:14-15).

A Proper View of Suffering

Since he believed death would be followed by a resurrection, and his suffering brought God glory, Paul did not give up hope and quit fighting. While the physical body was gradually destroyed by suffering, the spiritual man grew stronger, because of it, daily.

The apostle counted his troubles as light because of the reward withstanding them would bring. Trials are temporary, while the reward will be eternal. Scripture clearly teaches bearing up under tribulation will bring reward (2 Corinthians 4:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:12; 1 Peter 4:13; Romans 8:17).

Jesus left us an example that we should respond to worldly trouble by obeying God. (Philippians 2:7-11) If we think only in terms of this world, we may not be able to bear suffering. Yet, the Christian thinks in terms of eternity and the spiritual rewards to come (2 Corinthians 4:18; Colossians 3:1-4).

Being Reconciled to God

2 Corinthians 5

Verse 1. McGarvey and Pendleton see this as a comparison to the spirit of God dwelling in the tabernacle until the temple was built. By inspiration, Paul knew that if the fleshly body were destroyed, a spiritual body would replace it. The spirit would separate from the body at death and the body return to dust. (James 2:26; Ecclesiastes 12:7) Our new body will be specially suited for life in heaven.

Verse 2. While enduring this life's suffering, it is natural to long for that better specially prepared house (or clothing).

Verse 3. Paul longed for the day of the Lord's coming when he might lay aside this physical body and put on the spiritual.

Verse 4. Paul did not long for death because it brought separation of soul and body (or nakedness). Rather, he was willing to face death because of the new body awaiting him on the other side.

Verse 5. God told us about the immortal body which awaits us and how to reach it. He gave us the Holy Spirit as a pledge that He would keep the promise of a new body (Hebrews 2:3-4).

Verse 6. With such assurance, Paul knew that this earthly home was not to be preferred to death where we can be home with the Lord.

Verse 7. Faith is the assurance that we will have that new body in the heavens. We can not see it, but know it by faith (Hebrews 11:1).

Verse 8. That knowledge caused him to desire death with no need to fear because he would be with the Lord.

Verse 9. Though he had assurance, he did not grow lazy. Paul wanted to please God while in his physical body (absent) and when he was with the Lord (at home).

Verse 10. To let down his guard would have been fatal since all deeds will be laid open before Christ's judgment seat. Each will be rewarded on the basis of those deeds, so Paul took aim toward heaven to avoid missing being at home with the Lord.

Verse 11. Fearing the Lord because of his power to judge all deeds, Paul sought to please the Lord by persuading men. God would know his right intentions, since he saw all, and Paul hoped the Corinthians could now also see his good intentions and actions.

Verse 12. Paul did not say this to boast, but to give his friends full enough knowledge to compare his actions with those opposing him. While those opposing him gloried in outward show (like letters of recommendation), he, Paul, had spiritual facts to stand in his behalf.

Verse 13. Some opposing him might say he was mad. Yet, his madness was all directed in God's service. Even if they saw a sane part of him also, it was aimed at the strengthening of the church. So, they could not accuse him of building up himself.

Verse 14. Paul was devoted in his service to Christ who would have him serve man. Though the apostle might be tempted to neglect this service, the love of Christ caused him to continue in it. He especially felt compelled to serve since Christ had representatively died for all. Paul was thus dead to sin and self, and alive in Christ. (Romans 6:1-11; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:3)

Verse 15. Since Christ died for us, we ought to live for Him. (Romans 12:1-2)

Verse 16. After his conversion, Paul did not judge men in light of worldly thinking. This was true even though Paul had judged Christ by that standard before his conversion. This verse might especially be directed to Jews and their genealogies.

Verse 17. Christians are spiritual and should be judged by spiritual standards. They should not be rejected because they are Gentiles or accepted because they are Jews. Fleshly desires are laid aside at baptism and a new life begun.

Verse 18. This new man lives a life completely planned and revealed by God. He sent Christ to die that we might be made friends again with God.

Verse 19. God gave us a means of having our sins forgotten and re-establishing our friendship with him. In turn, he wants us to tell others the terms of becoming God's friends.

Verse 20. As ambassador carries messages from the King. Because Christ's blood had cleansed him of sin, Paul carried the message of salvation to the world. As Christ's messenger, he pleaded with men to become God's friend through the washing away of sin.

Verse 21. The strength of Paul's plea lay in the fact that God loved us enough to send a sinless Son to die for sinful man.

CHAPTER 6

Verse 1. In verse 20 of chapter 5, Paul had called himself Christ's ambassador. He now says that he and Jesus work together to save the Corinthians. Paul pleaded with them to remain faithful so they would not be turned away from the gospel.

Verse 2. Isaiah 49:8 is now quoted by the apostle to prove God's continual interest in man's salvation. God is always ready to receive sinful man, but man is limited to the present since it will never happen again and the future is not assured.

Verse 3. In verse 1, Paul said he pleaded with men to accept God's plan of salvation. Now, he says he lived his life in a way that would not cause men to refuse the appeal because of the messenger. He did not want his life to hinder his preaching and its effectiveness.

Verse 4. Paul's life stood as a witness and letter of recommendation. Instead of hindering him, it showed how completely he believed what he said. Paul had quietly suffered knowing that a day of reward would come (Matthew 10:22). "Afflictions" may be the general persecution of the church with "necessities" being the want caused by these. "Distresses" would convey the idea of times when one is pushed into a corner where no human help will get him out.

Verse 5. Five times Paul received "stripes" from Jewish whips and three times from Roman rods (II Cor. 11:24-25). We know he was imprisoned in Acts 16:24, which would be before this writing. Paul was in "tumults", or "tossed to and fro" so often that we need not mention them all. "Labors" would be working with his hands. On other occasions he watched and labored with the brethren all night. He even missed meals in devotion to his work.

Verse 6. He had remained holy, not allowing trials to cause him to compromise the truth. He quietly suffered all the trials and was kind to his greatest tormentors. The Holy Spirit gave Paul strength and he rose to a true love of Christ and his service.

Verse 7. Paul relied on God's word and power. He was ready to defend with God's righteous armor on the left hand and attack with God's righteousness on the right.

Verse 8. He had been honored by converts and dishonored by Jews and Judaizers. Each side

gave a different account of him. Some thought of him as a fraud, but God knew he was a faithful servant.

Verse 9. His enemies refused to recognize him, but God's people knew him well. Some tried to kill him, but God saved him. He had to suffer, yet not more than he could bear.

Verse 10. This life was sorrowful, but he would rejoice in the next. He had no money, but he gave others God's Word. He gave up all here, yet expected rich reward in the hereafter.

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthian brethren, the troubles at Corinth had caused him to have a heart narrowed with concern for them. He also had been careful to keep his lips close together because of his determination to say the right things. As he wrote the second letter, the apostle found his heart expanded and his lips freed by the basically good response to his earlier appeals. If there was any guarded approach to their relationship at the time of this writing, it was on their part, not his. He longed for them to open up to his love (2 Corinthians 6:11-13).

Verse 14. This appeal is based on the aforementioned love. All relationships with unbelievers that hinder our service to God should be stopped. So long as we can have peaceful relationships with unbelievers that do not affect our service to God adversely, we may continue in them (I Cor. 5:9-10; 7:12-13).

Verse 15. Those trying to force us into a mold of wickedness must be shunned. Belial means worthless fellow (Satan).

Christians are buildings, or temples, consecrated to the service of God. In what appears to be a loose quotation from Ezekiel 37:26-27, Paul indicates God dwells in those who are true believers and controls their actions (John 14:23). To allow the wicked to have an evil influence on the inward man thus housing God is unthinkable. In a quote from Isaiah 52:11, the apostle demonstrates that God's people must not allow wickedness to be within them. He then goes on to quote from Hosea 1:10 and Isaiah 43:6 to show that those who do purify the inward man will be adopted as God's children. God's followers can allow the wicked to influence them to evil only if they spurn this loving promise of adoption into God's great family (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).

CHAPTER 7

Verse 1. Because such adoption is promised, we should cleanse the inward man so we will be pure for God's entrance. We should fear his wrath at finding a dirty dwelling place.

Verse 2. Paul now makes an appeal for them to make room in their hearts for him. They had no reason to be closed against him since he had not led any man into sin, or corrupted any man's morals or faith, or defrauded anyone out of their money.

Verse 3. He did now say these things to condemn them as if they were ungrateful or falsely accusing him. As he had told them before, he would have like to live and die with them.

Verse 4. Paul's love for them was so great that it allowed him to speak openly with them about problems. He also told others of their good deeds and was glad to suffer in their behalf.

Verse 5. He was so concerned for them that he could not rest until he heard from them. This verse continues the thoughts of II Cor. 2:12-13. Paul faced outward trials while inwardly worrying about the Corinthian reaction to his earlier letter.

Verse 6. Just as God comforts all who are downtrodden, he comforted Paul with Titus' appearance.

Verse 7. Not only was Titus' report encouraging, but also the effect it had on him. Titus must have been visibly satisfied with the results. Titus told of the Corinthian sorrow at having grieved Paul. He also told of their desire (longing) to see Paul and enthusiasm at carrying out his instructions.

Verse 8. Paul had been worried about the effect of his stern writing. Now, he was happy because it had moved them to sorrow.

Verse 9. He was happy over their sorrow because it was Godly sorrow that moved them to repent. Paul was happy because the letter had caused no damage but, rather, good was done.

Verse 10. Sorrow that comes out of faith in God and desire to please him will cause the sorrowful to desire to change. Such sorrow will bring happiness because salvation of the one made sorry is the end result. On the other hand, a sorrow based on worldly considerations (such as, sorrow for being caught or the bad effect on one's reputation) may bring a correction but eternal damnation because of the motive behind the correction.

Verse 11. The very case of the Corinthians is a good example of the good effects of godly sorrow. It caused them to quit being indifferent about their state and start showing concern. They wanted to wipe the sin away and make restitution. It upset them that they had been so lax in their attitude toward discipline. It made them fear that Paul would come with a rod to punish them. yet, they longed for his coming that the matter might be taken care of. It caused them to get busy and punish the offenders so that the wrong might be righted. They showed their pure

desire by completely caring for the matter as Paul, by inspiration, instructed.

Verse 12. Paul's goal in writing was not to straighten out a problem between two individuals, though the incestuous man was wrong and he had wronged his father. The greater cause for the letter was to see that they followed an inspired apostle's instruction and did what was right in God's sight.

Verse 13. Because they received Paul's message and turned back to God, Paul was comforted. Paul had further joy in that Titus had not been depressed but uplifted. It appears that Titus had misgivings about delivering the letter to Corinth.

Verse 14. It further seems Paul had eased these misgivings by telling Titus that the gospel would be well received by the Corinthians. Paul was not made ashamed because their actions had verified the truthfulness of his statements concerning their loyalty.

Verse 15. Titus' love for the Corinthians had grown because of their fearful response to the message of truth delivered.

Verse 16. Paul's confidence in them had also been strengthened. He was assured that they would strive to do what was right in God's eyes.

CHAPTER 8

Verse 1. Paul gave instructions concerning this collection in 1 Corinthians 16:1-3. "Grace" is the opportunity to do good for others, which Christians should be thankful for. Macedonia would include Philippi, Berea, and Thessalonica. The money is for poor saints at Jerusalem.

Verse 2. McGarvey and Pendleton tell us that Macedonia had just been through three civil wars. They were so poor, their taxes had been lightened. The church was made even poorer by persecution (2 Thessalonians 1:4). They were put to the test by their affliction and poverty. But, they coupled this with their joy at receiving the gospel and gave abundantly, especially in light of their poverty.

Verse 3. Before Paul had a chance to ask for a contribution, these people gave over and above their means.

Verse 4. They then begged Paul to deliver the money to those in need in Jerusalem.

Verse 5. The reason they gave so freely was that they first gave themselves over totally to God. Then, they gave their service to the apostles as God's servants. The reason their gift exceeded all Paul's hopes is evidently the fact that they counted all they had as God's.

Verse 6. Thus encouraged by the Macedonian response, Paul sent Titus back to finish the collection at Corinth. Paul uses the example to encourage, not to promote competition.

Verse 7. They possessed many of the gifts of the Spirit and Christian virtues. Paul now encourages them to add one more good work.

Verse 8. Paul was not commanding them to give, as that must be a personal decision to be of value. Rather, he would use an example to inspire them and will look to the gift as a measure of their love.

Verse 9. Paul could not think of giving without thinking of Jesus' great sacrifice. He gave up heaven and its riches to come to earth and die for us (Philippians 1:4-8; Hebrews 2:9).

Verse 10. Paul would not command them to give, as giving has to be willingly done (II Cor. 9:7). He did encourage them to finish the work they had started.

Verse 11. They had promised to do a certain work and Paul was pleading with them to keep that promise.

Verse 12. God will accept a gift that is given willingly and freely. The greatness of the gift is not determined by amount, but by amount coupled with ability. The best example of this is the widow and her gift of 2 mites (Mark 12:41-44).

Verses 13-14. Paul's purpose was not to make the Corinthians poor so that those in Jerusalem

might be made richer. He wanted them to give out of their overflow that others might have their basic needs provided for. Later, the Corinthians might have needs that could be met by someone else's abundance.

Verse 15. In the wilderness (Exodus 16:17-18), no one had anything left and no one lacked for manna. McGarvey and Pendleton write, "Now that which God effected by irresistible law under the old dispensation, he was now seeking to effect under the new dispensation through the gracious influence of brotherly love. Our differences in ability make it inevitable that some shall surpass others in the gathering of wealth; but as selfishness gives place to Christian love, the inequality of earthly possessions will become more even.

Verses 16-17. Paul thanked God that he had caused Titus to have the same loving concern for the Corinthians' spiritual growth as Paul had. Titus was not only willing to go back and encourage them to take up a collection, but had prepared to go before being asked.

Verse 18. Another brother, who was widely praised for his work in behalf of the gospel, went with Titus.

Verse 19. This second brother could be trusted because of the above mentioned praise and because he had been appointed to help Paul carry the gift to Jerusalem.

Verse 20. Paul was glad to have companions so that he would be above suspicion in the handling of the money.

Verse 21. He wanted to be right in God's eyes and have a good reputation among men if possible.

Verse 22. Paul sent a third brother with them who had been used by Paul often and had proven a determined worker in God's service. This brother's determination had grown stronger because of his knowledge of the Corinthians' work.

Verse 23. To stop all objections to the three, Paul noted that Titus was his partner in the work at Corinth. Further, the other two were men sent by churches to deliver messages. Apparently they had proven faithful by delivering the whole message without any changes. Also, their lives were plainly given over by them to Jesus with the sole purpose of glorifying the savior.

Verse 24. Since the messengers deserved their trust, Paul asks the Corinthians to show their love in the collection of the gift. He wanted them to show it because he knew they had it and had confidently affirmed to the messengers they would display it.

CHAPTER 9

Verse 1. Paul knew that the Corinthians would give to care for the poor saints.

Verse 2. He believed the Corinthians when, over a year before, they had committed themselves to give. He used that as a means of moving others to action, much as he used the Macedonians to stimulate the Corinthians (II Cor. 8:1-5). In fact, the example of Achaia had stirred Macedonia to its liberality.

Verse 3. Titus and two other brethren (II Cor. 8:16-22) were sent by Paul to take up the collection so that Paul's good words about the Corinthian readiness would not prove empty.

Verse 4. Paul did not want to be ashamed, to say nothing of the shame of Corinthians would feel, if one from Macedonia should come and find their example not as good as the Macedonians' own gift.

Verse 5. Thus, the brethren were sent ahead of Paul that the Corinthians could give freely rather than feeling pressured into giving because they feared Paul's rebuke. A gift freely given is the only one of value to the Christian (Philippians 4:17).

Verse 6. This law stands in the spiritual realm as well as the physical. The one who skimps on the planting will have a skimpy reward. Those who abundantly plant will reap in abundance.

Verse 7. We should give out of our heart's desire and not as others require. We should not give if such giving bring tears and sorrow as we part from our money. Morgan says the word "cheerful" could literally be rendered "hilarious". We should want to laugh and sing for the joy of giving.

Verse 8. God can favor us with temporal good and will when we cheerfully give.

Verse 9. Paul quotes Psalm 112:9 to show that the man who cheerfully gives will be physically provided for. It further shows that this man will always be able to give since God will replenish his goods. The word righteousness here means general virtue or excellence as shown in giving to those in need.

Verse 10. God causes the farmer to receive a harvest which provides for his needs and gives him seed to use the next time. In the same way, the one who sows the seed of giving will see needs taken care of and see provided for future giving.

Verse 11. Their free gift would multiply their ability to give freely and cause the ones who received to glorify God.

Verse 12. Then, the gift not only provides for the needs of the saints, but also goes up to God in the form of thanks given.

Verse 13. Those in Jerusalem would give thanks for the provision for their needs and for the Corinthians. They would give praise to God for the good Christians who were truly converted, as their actions showed, at Corinth. They would give thanks for the generous gift and the knowledge that the needy everywhere could rely on Corinth.

Verse 14. Paul says that the Jerusalem saints would pray for God's blessings on the Corinthians and that they might meet face to face and fellowship their generous brethren.

Verse 15. Because of the great work the Corinthians were involved in and its effect on the Jerusalem brethren, Paul is moved to thank God for the great gift of Jesus that brought such fellowship about.

CHAPTER 10

Verse 1. Most of the earlier part of this letter has been addressed to that part of the church loyal to Paul. The apostle now turns to deal with his accusers. He had included Timothy in previous thoughts, but now stands alone (1) for his defense. To show the spirit of his writing, Paul accepts their charge that he was weak in their presence. He says he is writing in the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

Verse 2. Paul pleaded with them to change so he might again come to them gently. He did not want to use the power God had given him to prove his spirituality and disprove the charges that he served only his fleshly desires.

Verse 3. He admitted that he was a man, but denied using human tactics (slander to destroy enemies; adjusting speech to please others) to satisfy personal desires.

Verse 4. All of Paul's power was from God and based on His word (I Cor. 4:19-21; 5:5). This is a possible reference to the "crow" that was a great claw used to pull down strongholds and castles.

Verse 5. The purpose of Christianity is to throw out all human thinking and place God in complete control. Every part of the Christian is to be subject to God's uses and intents.

Verse 6. The power previously mentioned, was going to be used by Paul to punish those who insisted on disobeying God's inspired apostle. He did, however, pause to give all those who would obey a chance to repent.

Verse 7. Some were looking at the outside to determine value. Such is a shallow measure. Paul was at least equal to those who opposed him (Acts 9:15; 15:25; Galatians 2:9).

Verse 8. Paul knew that he could boast in his authority over against theirs and his boast would be backed up. He would not fall to his shame. However, God gave him that great power to build up the church, not tear it down, as others with less power apparently would do.

Verse 9. Paul could back his strong letters with power if it was necessary when he arrived.

Verse 10. Some falsely accused him of being powerful in his writing, but weak when present.

Verse 11. Clearly, Paul wants them to know he will back his words with power and prompt action when he is present with them.

Verse 12. Paul did not see himself as an equal to his opponents in their ability to exaggerate

their own power and authority. Apparently they had accused him of commending himself (II Cor. 3:1; 5:12), but they were describing their own problem. Within their own narrow circle, they looked big to themselves, but showed their lack of knowledge of the way things were else where. We will be judged by Christ's word (John 12:48), not our own consciences.

** Written on side - We should not compare ourselves to the world, but to Christ.

Verse 13. Paul did not measure himself by men. Rather, he measured himself by the area God had given him to work in. His sphere of preaching was the area where Christ had not been named (Romans 15:20), which included Corinth when he started the work there.

Verse 14. He did not go out of the sphere assigned to him when he preached at Corinth. He even went to Corinth to fulfill his mission.

Verse 15. He did not have to build on other men's labors to find work. In fact, he could, and had to, confine his labors to them until they grew. Their lack of growth kept him from furthering the gospel elsewhere.

Verse 16. Paul intended to go on and establish churches in other lands needing the gospel when he finished at Corinth. he did not need to seize someone else's work as his opponents had done.

Verse 17. This rule comes from Jeremiah 9:23-24. Paul gave all the glory for his success to the Lord, unlike those challenging him.

Verse 18. Self-approval and commendation carries no weight. God's approval is based on service actually rendered and carries lasting value.

CHAPTER 11

Verse 1. Paul does not see any point in the mindless bragging of those opposing him, but he asks the Corinthians to bear with him while he proves his apostleship. He further states that he knows they will bear with him.

Verse 2. Paul was not jealous because of a selfish desire for gain. Rather, he wanted them to be faithful to God. Also, he says that he arranged an engagement for the Corinthian church with Christ. The waiting time, before Christ came to claim her, gave her time to prove her faithfulness and show she would not flirt with or love another.

Verse 3. The apostle to the Gentiles was also worried that they would be drawn away from the truth by false teachers promising attractive rewards, as Satan had drawn away Eve. They had the pure truth and should spurn any other.

Verse 4. If the false teacher, who probably stands for all the false teachers, had presented another plan of salvation or savior, Paul might understand their hearing him out. These claimed to preach the same Savior and salvation, yet denied what He had taught.

Verse 5. Apparently some were claiming to be "super" apostles in Corinth. Paul was equal to all of them.

Verse 6. Paul admits he was not a great orator, but he was great in knowledge and made it plain and understandable in his speaking.

Verse 7. Paul had not accepted payment for his work among them so that no one would be hindered from obeying the gospel. Ironically, some were saying he refused the pay of an apostle because he knew he was not one (I Cor. 9:1-15). He simply asks if it was a sin for him to refuse pay.

Verse 8. Others were deprived of their needs so that Paul might preach to the Corinthians without charge.

Verse 9. He did without necessities rather than lose his influence by accepting wages from the Corinthians. He waited until brethren came from Macedonia, saw his need, and cared for him.

Verse 10. While in Achaia, Paul would continue to refuse help from them, and would continue to boast about it.

Verse 11. Some wondered why he did this. Perhaps they suggested that it was out of a lack of love. Paul calls God as his witness that this was not true.

Verse 12. Rather than openly talk about their weakness, which caused him not to accept

payment, Paul refuses to give all of his reasons. Here, he does say that he will continue to refuse pay so the false teachers will continue to be exposed. They took pay from the Corinthians, while he did not.

Verse 13. Those that accepted pay and opposed Paul were impostors pretending to be apostles. They worked, but hidden beneath their work were bad motives and intentions. Since they were not called of Christ, they made themselves apostles.

Verse 14. Satan often presents himself to man as one seeking man's good, as he did with Eve in the garden of Eden. It should come as no surprise that his ministers would likewise portray themselves as great religious leaders seeking man's good.

Verse 15. All who would turn God's people from the truth are ministers of Satan. They deceive and will be punished for such deception (Rev. 21:8).

Verse 16. Glorifying has been the main subject, however, Paul has strayed from it twice since verse 1. Driven by his opponents to boast, Paul asks the readers' indulgence.

Verse 17. Delivering the message of Christ does not require boasting. However, he will do it to show he had more to glory in than the false teachers and can beat them on their own ground.

Verse 18. The false teachers had boasted about fleshly things while downgrading Paul in the same. He now turns to show the weakness of their argument.

Verse 19. They thought so highly of themselves that they patiently listened to foolish boasters.

Verse 20. They had been patient with the false teachers while they placed themselves in bondage to false authority and doctrine. They had paid the high wage demands. They had even stooped to the position of slaves who must suffer the great insult of being slapped.

Verse 21. Paul had spoken to them in meekness while in Corinth which had been misunderstood to be weakness. Now, Paul will show the boasters his superiority; but it will all be wasted since he was called to be an apostle by Christ and would be judged by Him.

Verse 22. The false teachers are now clearly seen as Judaizers. Paul was their equal in that religion, despite their apparent claims to the contrary (Acts 22:2-3; Phil. 3:5).

Verse 23. In Christianity, he was their superior. They might claim he was mad for making such a statement and he admits it. While they lived off of another man's labors (II Cor. 10:15-16), he excelled in real labor. As proof of his labor, he lists sufferings and not accomplishments.

Verse 24. The law allowed forty (Deut. 25:2), but they left one off to avoid breaking the law by accidental miscount.

Verse 25. Beating with rods was Roman scourging (Acts 16:22-24). Stoning was usually Jewish punishment for blasphemy (Acts 14:19).

Verse 26. Travel was dangerous in those days. Gentiles were enraged because he turned some away from idols. False brethren may have sought to ruin him, as in Corinth.

Verse 27. He worked till work was painful and lost sleep to help others.

Verse 28. Not only did he suffer physically, he also worried about the churches and wrongs he was called upon to right within them.

Verse 29. Paul worried about every Christian that faced hard times. He felt their weaknesses and blushed when they blushed because of falling short.

Verse 30. If he was forced to boast, at least he would not tell of his great accomplishments. Rather, he put his enemies to shame by showing the suffering he endured for the cross.

Verse 31. Any doubt concerning the truthfulness of Paul's statements about his weakness should now be laid aside by this great call of God as his witness.

Verse 32. Acts 9:23-25 tells of this great danger Paul faced early in his career.

Verse 33. Here was an embarrassing escape from wicked hands. With the gates closely guarded, he was forced to leave by a window from a house along the wall.

CHAPTER 12

Because of the false teachers, Paul continued boasting, though such would not ordinarily be desirable. The visions of which he spoke would have been given by God, while revelations were used to expose truths God had not shown before. The specific vision the apostle referred to

involved a man, which was Paul according to verse 7, caught up into the third heaven. The birds fly in the first heaven, stars shine in the second, and God abides in the third. Paul could not tell whether he went bodily or only in spirit. Some think the passing of fourteen years would place Paul back in Antioch (Acts 13:1-3). However, he may have been speaking of the stoning at Lystra (Acts 14:19-20). The latter would more readily explain why he could not say whether he was in or out of the body (2 Corinthians 12:1-3).

Jewish writers often used parallelism, a technique wherein they write of a matter twice using slightly different but synonymous words so the reader is sure to understand. Paradise, as used in this verse, apparently refers to the "third heaven". The purpose for this vision is unknown, though it must have helped Paul face the trials already mentioned. We do know God would not allow him to talk about it.

Verse 5. Such a man had certainly been honored and Paul could boast about the man's honor. As for himself, he would only glory in his weakness.

Verse 6. Boasting was foolish if one exaggerated his ability. Paul could boast without that, but chose to stand on his speech and actions. He did not want men to honor him for what God had given.

A Request, a Refusal and a Realization

Verse 7. Paul could have been destroyed by pride because of what God had shown him. So, he was given a "thorn" or "stake" in the flesh which kept him from becoming overly proud. This physical condition kept him from being puffed up by spiritual revelations he had received.

Verse 8. As in the case of Jesus at Calvary, this prayer was heard and answered in the negative.

Verse 9. Not only was the answer no, God also told Paul that he would see to it that his problem did not overburden him (I Cor. 10:13). God further made it clear that His power was brought to its fullest use when men were weakest. Men of faith, such as Gideon, learned this fact. Therefore, Paul boasted of his weakness because that was the time God's power would be the strongest in his life.

Verse 10. Lipscomb and Shepherd say "injuries" refer to "wrong springing from violence, injury, affront, and insult, to which there are frequent allusions in this epistle" (II Cor. 1:17; 3:1; 7:8; 10:10; 11:6,8,16). The spiritual man's hours of greatest weakness are the times God's greatest strength is brought to bear in his behalf.

Verse 11. Since they would not defend him, the Corinthians forced Paul into boasting. Paul knew that he was nothing without God. Even at that, he was greater than those false teachers who set themselves up as the chiefest of apostles.

Verse 12. There had been an apostle among them, but it was Paul. He was supported in his claim by the signs Christ had promised (Mark 16). These same words were used by Peter about the vents on Pentecost (Acts 2:22). Paul also told the Thessalonians that the "wicked" one would deceive them with things like these (II Thessalonians 2:9).

Verse 13. In fact, the church at Corinth had the same blessings and gifts as any church started by an apostle. The only thing they lacked was a demand of high wages by Paul, like the false apostles had made.

Verse 14. During his soon to come visit, Paul would again refuse pay out of a love for them as a parent for a child (I Cor. 4:14-15). He did not seek their money, but the salvation of their souls.

Verse 15. Like a father, he would give up all he had for the salvation of his spiritual children. He wonders if this greater love will cause them to love less.

Verse 16. Paul was willing that their love be lessened if they could benefit. Yet, his accusers claim he tricked them into paying him.

Verses 17-18. Since he had taken no money personally, they apparently accused him of using Titus and the others to take money for a false collection. Paul wants to know if Titus received wages of them or took up the collection personally. The money had, instead, been kept in the church treasury (I Cor. 16:1-2).

Verse 19. Instead of defending himself before them, Paul was laying out the facts in the sight of God, who is the judge. Paul had done all to teach them, as God knew.

Verse 20. Paul had worked with them and written to them so they would put away sin. He hoped he would not find them still in it when he arrived. If they were in sin, which he did not want, he would discipline them, which they did not want.

Debates - quarrel, wrangling

Swellings - haughtiness

Tumults - instability, disorder.

Verse 21. Paul did not want to find such evil since he would be humiliated and forced to weep over those who refused to turn from their evil ways. Repentance would cause them to change their minds and ways. They should no longer be divided into factions which sinfully attacked one another.

CHAPTER 13

Verse 1. Paul had visited Corinth twice before and is now prepared to come a third time. Paul was further prepared to deal with the false teachers. It would not be rash action, but would be confirmed by two or three witnesses (Numbers 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matthew 18:15-17).

Verse 2. The time of patient waiting was over. Any still involved in sin would be punished severely. Division and carnal thinking must end.

Verse 3. They had challenged Paul's inspiration and accused him of preaching a weak Christ. He responds by reminding them that Christ's power had been evident in his work in Corinth.

Verse 4. Christ was crucified because of weakness, man's. He was raised in power, God's (Rom. 4:24; 6:4; 8:11; I Peter 1:21). Because of Christ, Paul had suffered trials and the weaknesses of man. But, he was now prepared to show God's power to them in punishment.

Verse 5. Paul challenges them to test themselves as Christians, just as they had tested him as an apostle. Jesus would be in them if they were obedient (John 14:23). To be reprobate, they would have to fail the test (Jeremiah 6:30).

Verse 6. Paul hoped they knew that he would not fail the test.

Verse 7. His prayer for the Corinthians was that they be faithful. He did not pray that so that his name would be cleared and they would again respect him. Rather, he would allow his name to remain stained in their sight if they could be found faithful.

Verse 8. Instead of rejoicing over a chance to show his power because of this evil, Paul would pray that their good would cause his authority to go without proof.

Verse 9. Paul would gladly have them keep on thinking him weak and without authority, since that would mean he had not been required to discipline them.

Verse 10. While he was away from them, Paul wrote to them hoping they would change. The authority and power he had was intended for use in making congregations grow. He would hate to have to use that power to cut out infected and diseased members.

Verse 11. "Farewell" should be translated "rejoice, or joy to you". He calls them "brethren" to show the letter was written in a spirit of love. He wanted them to strive to be perfect in God's sight and reassured by the promises of His word. They would be of the same mind if they all submitted to the rule of God's word. Such submission would bring peace. They would be more concerned with the good of others than self, which would bring peace and love.

Verse 12. They should greet each other as friends and brethren.

Verse 13. Those who were with Paul sent their greetings to them as brethren.

Verse 14. Paul would close by praying that they should receive all the blessings the Godhead had to offer.