

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 13TH–14TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

## THE AUTHOR: THE APOSTLE PAUL

- Jewish-born in modern-day Turkey.
- Also a Roman citizen.
- A highly-educated religious leader and Pharisee who persecuted Christians until his dramatic conversion around 35 A.D.
- Ministered mostly to Gentiles (non-Jews).
- Executed by Nero in 68 A.D. in Rome.

## THE SETTING: CORINTH

- Letter written around 55–57 A.D.
- Church planted by Paul in the capital of Achaia, a Roman province, on his 2nd journey.
- A seaport city of international commerce.
- A diverse church from all walks of life, but the majority were mostly lower and middle-class Romans and Greeks.

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS LETTER

Between the Corinthian letters, Paul had visited them, and it went poorly. **Not only were they returning back to sinful lifestyles, but false teachers were telling them it was ok.**

- Paul wrote this to **refute false teachers and doctrine**, bring about **repentance**, and **restore their relationship**.

## SOME GENERAL THEMES

- There was also a famine in Jerusalem, so Paul wanted to teach them **charity and benevolence**.
- We will see Paul hit on **suffering and comfort, discipline and restoration, discernment, authority, self-examination, repentance**, and our **perspective** on life.

## PRESSURE & COMFORT (2 CORINTHIANS 1:1–7)

### “PAUL, AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST JESUS”

Paul begins his 2nd letter like his 1st. He establishes that he has spiritual authority because he is part of a small group of men who had been personally appointed by Jesus.

- The biblical definition of *apostle* is one who had *direct contact and commission by Jesus*. Paul's was unique to the others.

### “WITH ALL THE SAINTS”

*Saints* in the NT usually refers to all sanctified (set apart) Christians. Timothy was a fellow brother in Christ who helped Paul reach regions (Achaia) and local churches.

- We learn **the body of God is intended to be symbiotic**. Even though we have levels of authority, **we are all in this war together**.

## THE EBBS AND FLOWS OF LIFE

Paul focuses on grace and mercy because he understands that without it, we will drown in the pressures of life. On top of everyday pressures, Christians will also suffer for their faith.

- **Suffering is part of Christianity because Christ suffered. In suffering, we evolve to be more like Him.**

## THERE IS ANOTHER SIDE OF THIS

Though it may be hard to understand at times, Paul explains that if we suffer with Christ we also receive “overflow[ing]” comfort and salvation which produces “patient endurance.”

- **In order to live we must be willing to die. Salvation and strength come through being “crucified with Christ”** (Galatians 2:20).

## PERSEVERANCE (2 CORINTHIANS 1:8–11)

### A DELAYED VISIT

Paul had meant to visit Corinth but was delayed because of riots, attacks, imprisonment, and illness while he was in “Asia” (Turkey).

- Because of his absence, many Christians in Corinth thought Paul was neglecting them. This absence also allowed false teachers to slip in.

## FINDING THE BRIGHT SIDE

Paul seemed to be quite the optimist. Even though he had been “overwhelmed—beyond [his] strength” and almost killed several times, he remained positive and focused on Jesus and our promised eternity in heaven.

- **We must choose to “dwell on [good] things”** (Philippians 4:8) if we're to find joy and endure.

## BUILDING THE REPUTATION OF GOD IN OUR LIVES

Paul focused on the times in the past when God had taken care of him to encourage himself to keep moving forward. He also asked others to pray for his strength.

- **If we're faithful, God will sort out our lives and help us.** We must remember what He has done and His promises.

## THE “GIFT” OF LIFE

The “gift that came to us” is probably referring to God sparing Paul and Tim's lives so they could continue to share the gospel.

- **We are invaluable to God and life is a gracious gift to be stewarded well. Also, our lives have purpose, and we have a calling to help build our eternal family.**

## CONSCIENCE (2 CORINTHIANS 1:12–14)

### PAUL “BOASTS” ON HIS GOOD CONSCIENCE

“Boast” in this context is not sinful arrogance, but a healthy pride in how he and Tim had conducted themselves “in the world.”

- **The key to a clear conscience is living a sincere and pure life. We're incapable of this with “human wisdom,” so we are to lean on God's wisdom and grace.**

## THIS ISN'T OVER OUR HEADS

**The knowledge of living a pure and sincere life isn't hidden or beyond our comprehension.**

God delivered His Word through real people in a way that is digestible. Our problem seems to be a lack of effort.

- **Relationships take dedication and effort, and our journey with God is no different.**

## HAVING CONFIDENCE IN ETERNITY

Paul says they only partially understood his teachings. This made him question their confidence in what would happen “in the day of our Lord Jesus,” but he still had hope.

- **It is only in walking with Jesus through prayer and obedience to the Word that we can confidently know the state of our souls.**

## INTEGRITY (2 CORINTHIANS 1:15–24)

### BECAUSE HE LOVED AND BELIEVED IN THEM

Paul loved the Corinthians and believed they could change. So, though he was far away and going through trials, he still planned on visiting them.

- The false teachers were claiming Paul was duplicitous in his motives because he still hadn't personally come to Corinth again.

## ADDRESSING FALSE ACCUSATIONS

In vs. 17–20, Paul is making the argument that he follows the principle of Jesus to let our “yes” be “yes” and our “no” be “no” (Matthew 5:37).

- **Action over time proves integrity. Christians are not to be known by saying one thing yet doing another. One cannot follow Jesus and be double-minded.**

## WE ARE CAPABLE WITH HIS HELP

Vs. 21–22 say, “it is God who strengthens us” and “He has also put his seal on us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment.”

- Life will have struggles, but **we're not only promised a perfect afterlife, we are also given the means to live fruitful lives now through a relationship with Jesus.**

## “GOD AS A WITNESS, ON MY LIFE”

**The Word of God and how our life looks against it will determine if we are living correctly and have good motives.** Paul also says he didn't “lord” his position and knowledge over anyone, meaning **he approached correction with love and gentleness.**

## EBBS AND FLOWS

- Life in general will have ups and downs, but choosing to follow Jesus comes with unique trials.
- Christians must remember that **it is only in our choosing to walk and suffer with Christ that we have access to the same Spirit that raised Him** (Romans 6, Galatians 2).

## CHOOSING TO SEE LIGHT AND LIFE

- If we are to persevere, we must **pray, ingest the Word, live obediently, remove evil influence** in our life, and **consciously choose to think on the things of God.**
- We must also remind ourselves of the provisions of the past while remembering the promises for our future.

## “GOD AS A WITNESS, ON [OUR] LIFE”

- We are invaluable to God. Knowing our value and identity should inspire us to **take our lives seriously.**
- Because God loves us, He gave us His Word, sent His Son, and gave us access to His Spirit through faith and obedience to empower us to **live holy (set apart) lives.**
- **Because we're made in God's image we're to live to His standard** (1 Peter 1:15–16, Matthew 5:48).
- If we're in relationship with Jesus, we're in His grace, and our lives are a testimony of His power and love. **Can we honestly say, “As God is my witness,” I have confidence in how I live and where I am going?**