

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 14TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

SEVERE VISIT (2 CORINTHIANS 13:1-4) PATIENT AND LONG-SUFFERING

Paul **gave more time and attention to the Corinthians than any other church.** He visited multiple times, stayed 18 months on his first visit, and wrote multiple letters.

- Paul had shown great care for the Corinthians, went to great lengths for them, and displayed great patience towards them, but **his patience was running out.**

LEGAL PROCEDURES

Paul quotes Deuteronomy 19:15, **"A fact must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."** The Mosaic law gave this procedure to avoid unsubstantiated accusations and rumors.

- A judge would only hear matters that are confirmed by witnesses, at which point he would have to make a ruling.

JUSTIFIED RULING

Paul's application of the Mosaic law essentially says, **"I came previously with a warning, then I reminded you here in this letter, now when I return a third time it will be as a judge, not an investigator."**

- There will be **no more warnings**, Paul has enough evidence to say to those still in sin, **"If I come again, I will not be lenient."**

GOD IS PATIENT, LONG-SUFFERING, AND JUST!

The "super-apostles" had influenced many in Corinth to seek "proof of Christ speaking in [Paul]." Paul tells them **he too came in "weakness" but would return by the "power of God"**.

- **Christ, the suffering savior, was "crucified in weakness" and one day will return as a conquering King.**

EXAMINE YOURSELVES (2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-10)

"EXAMINE YOURSELVES."

This should have been a very sobering statement for the Corinthians, **"Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith."**

- The deception of the "super-apostles" led the Corinthians to believe they were one thing when they were another. **It is a very dangerous assumption or presumption to believe ourselves to be Christians when we might not be.**

"NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, 'LORD, LORD...'"

Paul knew **there were some among the Corinthian "Christians" who, by their own merit, had disqualified themselves for eternal life and salvation.**

- There are many who believe they are followers of Christ that will go to hell (Matthew 7:21). **If we do not test ourselves now, we will ultimately fail and be disqualified later.**

HOW ARE WE TO TEST OURSELVES?

We do not use others as a measure. Instead, we use the One **we are supposed to be following as the "plumb line."**

- We use the Word of God as a barometer of how we are to be Christ-like. We are not looking for perfection in ourselves, but **we should be able to see real evidence of Jesus in us.**

"RECOGNIZE THAT WE OURSELVES DO NOT FAIL THE TEST"

It is as if **Paul knew that there would be those who would ask if Paul had examined himself in the way he was asking of them.**

- **Paul was not above the need for honest self-evaluation** and assured the Corinthians that he had done so and that **if they were willing to avert their eyes from a worldly perspective, they would see the evidence of Christ in Paul.**

THEY WERE INCOMPLETE

As a recipient of the truth, Paul could effectively work for the truth, not against it.

- Paul would be glad if his weaknesses contributed to the strength of the Corinthians because his concern was for them. **He desired to see the Corinthians mature and be made complete, not lacking anything.**

WRAPPING UP HIS LETTER

Paul wants the Corinthians to know why he **"[wrote] these things while absent."**

- Paul hoped that they would honestly **evaluate themselves** and **address any discrepancies** through repentance before he arrived a third time so **he could use his apostolic authority for building up and not for tearing down.**

EXHORTATION (2 CORINTHIANS 13:11-13)

"FINALLY, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, REJOICE."

Though Paul had been harsh with the Corinthians, **everything he had written was in hopes that they would experience the fullness of walking in a right relationship with God.**

- To end his letter, **Paul offers five exhortations**, urging the Corinthians into action and explaining "the why" behind it, **followed by a promise.**

"BE OF THE SAME MIND"

Paul insisted that the Corinthians stop the factions and instead greet one another in the customary way that brothers and sisters of a family greet one another.

- Paul wanted the church to be unified and treat one another the way family should treat each other. **True familial love will put differences aside and love for the good of others.**

BECOME MATURE

- As Christians, we should be growing in knowledge (2 Timothy 2:15) and obedience (James 1:22-25). **If something is not growing, then by default, it is dying.**
- We believe God has given us a "formula" for maturing Christians, and everything we do, from exegetical teaching to the "5-Step Process," is focused on maturation.

BE OF THE SAME MIND

- Have no divisions or factions within the body; though we may not agree on everything, we need to make sure we agree on the majors.
- We also should not be divided in our own minds. Worldly thinking and heavenly thinking cannot cohabitate in our minds (**James 1:8**).

BE ENCOURAGED

- Paul ended the letter to the Corinthians, reminding us all that we have reason to rejoice.
- As mature, unified, and peacemaking Christians, we have the promise that the God of love and peace will be with us, and we will be completely blessed by everything God is.

THE FULLNESS OF GOD

- The **grace of the Lord Jesus Christ**, which is the unmerited favor of God towards his people, offers us forgiveness of sin.
- The **love of God**, His affection and loyalty, surrounds us and saves us.
- The **fellowship of the Holy Spirit** is a nearness to God that encourages and empowers us in our daily walk with Him.