

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 14TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

WARNING (2 CORINTHIANS 13:1-4) THE THIRD TIME

Paul had gone to Corinth to share the gospel, and the church was formed on his first visit. His second visit addressed some sins that had taken root and required Paul to be tough on them. His actions will be based on their response to this letter when he returns a third time.

TWO OR THREE WITNESSES

Paul clarifies that he is willing to engage in difficult conversations. He references scripture that guides Believers when dealing with each other's sins. Paul cared enough to correct them.

- **Ignoring sin doesn't make it go away. Someone has to confront it—if we don't, someone who loves us should.**

I GAVE A WARNING

Paul doesn't mince words. He has been patient and loving while saying what needed to be said. Now, he is prepared to do what must be done. The consequences of their unrepented sins will be painful.

- **Sin doesn't just make us "feel" bad, it comes with real consequences.**

PROOF

They had listened and believed Paul when he shared the gospel. They enjoyed the joy. But now, when he exposes their sin, they aren't sure they like his message and want proof of his authority.

- **When we love salvation but hate accountability, we can expect some proof of how wrong we are.**

POWERFUL AMONG YOU

They had seen signs and wonders and miracles when they were saved. Now, they would see the power of Christ when dealing with sin.

- **We love the passion of Christ to come, live, and die as a sacrifice. He is also passionate about the purity of His Church.**

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

Paul is still teaching that Christian weakness is not like human weakness. Christ demonstrated "weakness" when He was crucified and "power" when He was resurrected. The strength that kept Him meek would be revealed in how they dealt with unrepentant sins. Would they be ready for God's power?

EXAMINE (2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-10) IF YOU ARE IN THE FAITH

Until now, Paul had shown some confidence in everyone's salvation and eventual repentance. Now, he calls them to check their authenticity.

- **If we lack conviction, or our conviction never leads to repentance, we should check ourselves. If we don't judge ourselves, God will!**

RECOGNIZE

Paul encourages them to check him, too. He knew he would pass the test. He knew the false teachers would fail, even if they appeared to pass by worldly standards.

- **Paul didn't need them to affirm him; he wanted them to do the right thing before he got there.**

FOR THE TRUTH

Paul says that his actions when he returns will be based on what needs to be done. He will rejoice in their repentance (and appear weak) or discipline their rebellion (and appear strong).

- **God will do what is required to change us. We can repent or resist.**

A SIGN OF MATURITY

Paul's prayer is that all will repent before he returns. He is willing to discipline them but prefers to build them up with encouragement because they are willing to return to Christ.

- **Our willingness to admit our weaknesses and repent shows that our desire isn't to sin but to surrender.**

MATURE (2 CORINTHIANS 13:11-13) FINALLY, BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Past all of his corrections and defense of his authority, Paul returns to some gentle admonitions. These may be his last statements, but they may be some of the most important things he shares with this spiritually young congregation.

- **Always remember to encourage. This is what we are called to do when we meet.**

REJOICE

He reminds them to rejoice. Sure, they had listened to and followed false teachers. But Paul would rejoice because he knew they would be restored. They could rejoice because they could still repent and enjoy full fellowship with Christ.

- **We should rejoice when one repents. We should rejoice because WE can repent!**

BECOME MATURE

This is what 1 & 2 Corinthians is all about. Paul wants the church to mature in every aspect of their Christian walk. It's a process, and Paul is committed to seeing it happen.

- **Maturing is what we all need. It doesn't happen overnight or at the same speed for everyone. Is it happening?**

THE SAME MIND, AT PEACE

Paul calls for a unity of agreement on the majors that will bring peace to their meetings.

- **This level of maturity requires Christ-like humility and a willingness to listen to others. Transcending differences because we agree with Jesus will change our lives and this community.**

THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE

Paul isn't repeating himself here. He reveals the source and result of love and peace. God gave Christ out of love to restore our relationship with Him. As we grow in Christ, we share that love and desire for peace with others. God continues to give that fruit (love and peace) to every follower of Christ.

GENUINE LOVE

This "holy kiss" is a sign of the true acceptance of each other. It's not the deceptive kiss of Judas but a greeting that sincerely rejoices in the presence of others.

- **We may not be able to greet everyone, but how are we engaging with the ones we can greet? Are WE authentic?**

THE SOURCE

Paul closes the letter by recognizing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the source of true love, grace, and fellowship.

- **God revealed His love by sending Jesus. Jesus offers grace by His sacrifice. The Holy Spirit keeps us in fellowship with Him and each other. We have the source; are we sharing it?**

SIN

- Sin happens.
- **Do we love it or hate it?**
- **We have weaknesses that may lead to sin. But weakness isn't the same as sin. Knowing our weaknesses will help us avoid sin and show others how to help us when needed.**

HUMILITY

- Humility is hard.
- **Humility is hardest when we want to be proud, strong, and the best (right).**
- **Humility is required for us to mature as followers of Christ. Authentic faith doesn't just profess; it confesses that we need God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to live a life for His glory.**

UNITY

- Unity isn't a goal; it's a characteristic.
- **Unity comes from the Holy Spirit; we must remember what Christ has done for us and will do through us.**
- **We are called to come together and encourage one another. We do this with grace and love as we hold one another accountable. Are we willing to be truth-tellers and truth-receivers?**