

2 CORINTHIANS 13 -- Coming With Authority; Paul Prefers Gentleness; Greetings and Benediction

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

2 CORINTHIANS 13 -- Coming With Authority;

As Paul brought his letter to a close, his great love for the Corinthians constrained him to make one last appeal. He did not want his third visit to their church to be another painful experience for them and for him. He had opened his heart to them, explained his ministry, answered their accusations, and urged them to submit to the Word of God and obey the Lord. What more could he say or do?

In this closing section of the letter, Paul used three approaches in his attempt to motivate the Corinthians toward obedience and submission.

He Warned Them (2Co_13:1-8)

“Prepare yourselves!” (2Co_13:1-4)

“Examine yourselves!” (2Co_13:5-8)

He Encouraged Them (2Co_13:9-14)

2Co 13:1 This will be the third time I am coming to you. "BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD SHALL BE ESTABLISHED."

2Co 13:2 I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare—

2Co 13:3 since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

2Co 13:4 For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.

2Co 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

vs. 1-2 Reluctantly, Paul promises to come with severity, if necessary. *third time...* On his first visit to Corinth, Paul founded the church and stayed *a year and six months*. His second visit was a brief, painful visit, probably between the writing of 1 & 2 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. Now he is prepared to come for a third time. *By the mouth of two or three witnesses.... (Deu 17:6, 19:15)*, He quotes it in reference to his coming visit. Either the *two or three witnesses* are Paul's three visits, or the testimony of his associates. But the point of the quotation is to remind them he comes this time as a judge. He has enough evidence to write, *“If I come again I will not spare.”* Strong words, but the situation among the Corinthians called for strong leadership.

v. 3 proof of Christ speaking in me: Paul's opponents, the most eminent apostles among the Corinthians, said they wanted to see more “power” from Paul. He seemed to weak and humble for their liking. So, Paul addresses this thinking: “You want to see proof of Christ speaking in me? Fine. When I come the third time, you will see the power of God in my rebuke as I clean house. So clean it up before I come.”

v. 4 For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you. So as Jesus displayed weakness, yet now reigns in power, so Paul will come with similar power after having shown the Corinthians his weakness.

v. 5 A plea for self examination. Paul asks the Corinthians a sobering question: **“Am I really a Christian?”** We are rightly concerned that every believer have the assurance of salvation, and know how to endure the attacks that come from Satan in this area. At the same time, we also understand that there are some **who assume or presume they are Christians when they are not**. It is a challenge to all: *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?* First, we must examine and test ourselves. “That was the trouble at Corinth. **They criticized Paul and failed to examine themselves.**” “To examine yourself, in fact, is **to submit to the examination and scrutiny of Jesus Christ the Lord** - and this never to fix attention on sin **but on Christ** - and **to ask Him to reveal that in you which grieves His Spirit**; to ask Him to give you grace **that it might be put away and cleansed in His precious blood.**” Self **examination** “takes the chill away from your soul, it takes the hardness away from your heart, it takes the shadows away from your life. It **sets the prisoner free.**”

v. 1 – Paul is telling the Corinthians to get ready for my visit. The Lord asked in *Luke 18:8b Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”* How ready are we for His return?

v. 2 – If Paul came to visit me right now, would he find evidence of recurring sin, that has previously be repented and forgiven?

v. 3 – Paul had come to them in weakness, but the Word of God was mighty and had transformed them in that sin-sick city. How do you see that Paul was not weak toward the Corinthians, but mighty in them?

v. 4 – Notice Paul says, “For though he was crucified through weakness.” It sounds strange to hear about the weakness of God. What is this weakness? When He went to the Cross, my friend, that was the weakness of God. “Yet He lives by the power of God.” Do we understand that true power is shown in total weakness, when one is all powerful. Do we use all of the power that He has given us for good or do we use some of it for bad?

v. 5 – What are to look for when we **examine (know whether or not it's true)** and **test (know to what degree it's true**, like testing the % of gold in gold ore) ourselves? **We are to see that Jesus Christ is in you.** We are not to look for perfection, in ourselves or in others; but we should see real evidence of Jesus Christ in us **What an important thing that is!** There are so many people who are living lives of sin and yet they feel they are all right. They feel that somehow they have a special dispensation from God, that they can somehow engage in the world and in the things of the world and in the worldly practices and still be saved.

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INTERPRETATION

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2Co 13:5 *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test (dokimazō) yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified (adokimos).*

2Co 13:6 *But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.*

Paul Prefers Gentleness:

2Co 13:7 *Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved (dokimos - properly acceptable, approved, tried), but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified (adokimos - unapproved, worthless (literally or morally): - castaway, rejected, reprobate).*

2Co 13:8 *For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*

2Co 13:9 *For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete (katartisis - thorough equipment, perfection, mature).*

Unless indeed you are disqualified: Paul knew there were some who were *disqualified* for eternal life and salvation. Their thinking was worldly **because they were of the world, not of the Lord**. This is a hard truth to confront, but it is **better to know now than when it is too late!** The word for *disqualified* is simply **the negative of the word for test** in this same passage. If we don't *examine* ourselves and *test* ourselves now, we may find that we ultimately don't pass the *test* and are *disqualified*.

Vs. 6-7. Paul is anticipating a question. “Paul, you ask us to examine ourselves. Well, why don't you examine yourself? Maybe you aren't a Christian after all!” Paul dismisses this question out of hand. It is so apparent that we are not disqualified that he simply trusts that they recognize the truth of it. Even so, Paul admitted, “*though we may seem to be disqualified.*” If one judges a genuine Christian life by worldly standards (emphasizing “power” and “success”), Paul might seem to be disqualified. It was by these standards that Job's friends were convinced that his hardships were the result of sin in his life. But one could only say that by judging with worldly standards.

v.8. Even as an apostle, Paul could ***do nothing against the truth***. The apostles were not above the truth. Paul could only work effectively ***for the truth***, not ***against the truth***. It is right to make examination of the doctrine of any speaker in the Church, whatever title he may claim, until Christ has manifested Himself in his teaching, for then it is not Christ that is being judged but the man. But when it is clear that it is God's Word that is being proclaimed, then what Paul says holds good, that it is God Himself who is being disbelieved.

vs. 9 ***For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong:*** If Paul's weakness could contribute to the strength of the Corinthians, he would be ***glad!*** His real concern was that ***you may be made complete***, which is the same idea as in **2Co 12:19**: ***we do all things, beloved, for your edification***. Paul wanted to build up the Corinthians, to make them complete. They were already a body strong in spiritual gifts and personal testimony (**1Co 1:4-7**). But their strength was not complete. They were not like a building that was just a foundation and a bit of rubble. They were like a building built tall and strong - for one and a half walls, with the other walls crumbling or barely started. Paul wanted them to ***be made complete***.

v. 6 Paul has made an inventory of himself, and he wants them to know that he is in the faith. Can it be said that we are “in the faith”?

v. 7 Here Paul is saying that he just wants them to be the type of believers they should be. How close are we living to the standard of the type of believer we should be?

v. 8 **The truth will stand.** We can't do anything against the truth, only for the truth. **We need to mark well this great truth.** We are not to do anything against the truth. We should declare the Word of God and not spend our time defending it. God doesn't ask us to defend it. He asks us to declare it, to give it out.

v. 9 “Even your perfection” does not mean perfect as we usually think of perfection, but it means maturity. He wishes them to be mature Christians. He wants them to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. We still hear that expression today—“Why don't you grow up?” That is what Paul is saying to them. Grow up in Christ! How mature or perfect are we?

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INTERPRETATION

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Signs of an Apostle;

2Co 13:10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

Greetings and Benediction

2Co 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

v. 10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness: Paul desired that the Corinthians would clean up their act *before* he came to see them. He wanted to use his *authority* for *edification*, not *destruction*. God's Spirit in your life, in a person's life, can be transmitting them into eternal, building up. But also the power of the Spirit can be used in destruction! Paul said, I don't want that. I want to use the gifts to build you up. I don't want to see you destroyed. So I am writing these things to you. I hope that the issues are all settled before I get there. I don't want to have a showdown when I arrive.

v. 11. Farewell is much better translated *rejoice*. Even though Paul has been severe with the Corinthians, all has been said to the end that they would enjoy the joy of walking in a right relationship with God. *Become complete:* In 2Co 13:9, Paul revealed that he prayed that *you may be made complete*. Now he exhorts them to help answer his prayer, as he challenges them *become complete*. As Christians, we shouldn't excuse and neglect areas of our life by saying, “I'm just not into that” or “That's just my weak point.” We certainly cannot work on everything at once before the Lord, but we can have a heart to *become complete*. *Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace:* By exhorting the Corinthians to do these things, Paul proves an important point. These are at least partially in our power to do. We often think that our *comfort*, or being *of one mind*, and our being at *peace* with others just depends on them. In part, that is true, but it also depends on us. We need to let God worry about their part, and we can worry about our part! It costs something to work hard to *be of good comfort, be of one mind*, and to *live in peace*. But the reward is worth it: *the God of love and peace will be with you*. (Rom. 15:33; 1 Cor 14:33). If you feel that God isn't with you, perhaps it is because you are resisting and rejecting His call to *be of good comfort, be of one mind*, and to *live in peace*.

v. 10 Paul is please that he can write to them at this time. He is writing for the purpose of building them up and not tearing them down. We all **need to emphasize being used for edification and not for destruction!**

v. 11 complete - The Corinthians were exhorted to **be complete, “to grow up”, to be mature**. It speaks of full age or maturity. *Good comfort* - **be of good comfort**. *be of one mind* - Let there be no division among us in regard to Bible doctrine, Christian experience, or religious duty. **Stop fightings; quit the division**. *live in peace* - The nature of the peace recommended includes love to our brethren in Christ, and good will toward all men. **Don't have the factions, cliques or clubs!** This is such good advice for us as well!

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<p><i>2Co 13:12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.</i></p> <p><i>2Co 13:13 All the saints greet you.</i></p> <p><i>2Co 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. .</i></p>	<p><u>vs. 12-13.</u> <i>Greet one another with a holy kiss:</i> The idea of greeting this way was common in that culture. Our cultural equivalent is a handshake and a warm greeting. The fact that it is a holy kiss shows that it had nothing to do with romantic affection. It was commonly practiced as a warm greeting in the early church, but was rarely done on Good Friday, in remembrance of Judas’ kiss that betrayed Jesus. The fact that the kiss was described as holy indicates that erotic overtones were excluded, the kiss was a greeting, a sign of peace and Christian <i>agape</i>.</p> <p><u>v. 14.</u> <i>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.</i> This is the only place in the New Testament where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are mentioned together in this kind of blessing. Paul wanted the Corinthians to be completely blessed, by everything God is. In essence, Paul wanted them to be blessed as true <i>Christians</i>. “For a Christian is one who seeks and enjoys the grace of the Lord. There are three persons of the One God. One God manifested in three persons. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the fellowship or communion of the Holy Spirit) be with you all. Amen.</p>	<p><u>v. 12</u> The everyday fellowship of God’s people is important to the church. We must greet each other in other places as well as in church. We must show concern for each other. In giving this admonition, Paul was certainly hitting hard at one of the most serious problems in the church: their division and lack of concern for one another.</p> <p><u>vs. 13-14</u> This closing benediction is one of the most beloved used in the church. It emphasizes the Trinity and the blessings we can receive because we belong to God. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ reminds us of His birth, when He became poor in order to make us rich. The love of God takes us to Calvary where God gave His Son as the sacrifice for our sins. The communion of the Holy Spirit reminds us of Pentecost, when the Spirit of God came and formed the church.</p> <p><u><i>I AM HIS AND HE IS MINE! – George Robinson – Discovery Singers</i></u></p> <p><i>Loved with everlasting love, Led by grace that love to know; Gracious Spirit from above, Thou hast taught me it is so! Oh, this full and perfect peace! Oh, this transport all divine! In a love which cannot cease, I am His, and He is mine; In a love which cannot cease, I am His, and He is mine.</i></p>
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