

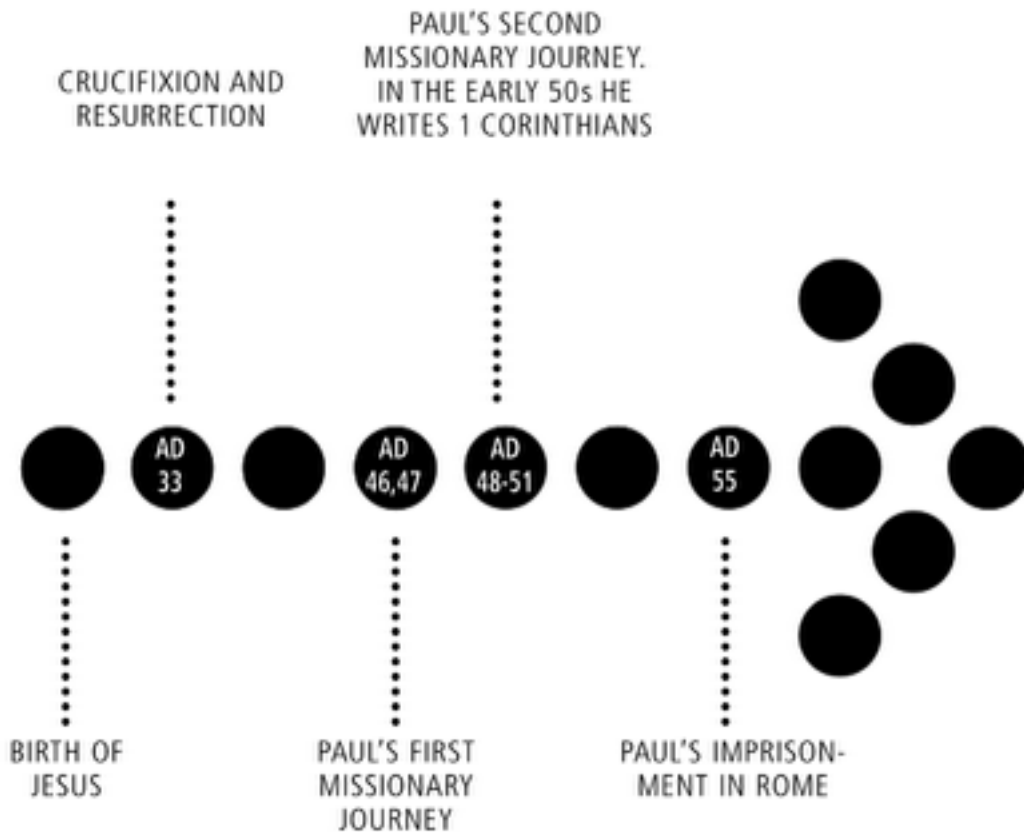
# 2CORINTHIANS

**PRACTICAL GUIDE TO MINISTRY :: BOAST IN WEAKNESS**



**FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE :: BY JUSTIN HUTTS**

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*Outline adapted from "2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness" by R. Kent Hughes (Preach the Word, Crossway)*

# 2CORINTHIANS

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO MINISTRY**

**FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE W/O NOTES**

## 2 CORINTHIANS 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Q: What do you know about Corinth? What do you know about the letter to Corinth? What would you like to know about this letter?

Q: On which journey did the apostle Paul establish the church in Corinth? (Act 18:1-18).

Q: On which journey did Paul write both of his epistles to the Corinthians?

Q: From where did Paul write his FIRST epistle to the Corinthians? (cf. 1 Co 16:8) Ephesus. From where did Paul write his SECOND epistle to the Corinthians? (cf. 7:5; 8:1; 9:2-4)

Q: What is the approximate date of writing?

Q: Whose arrival likely prompted Paul's writing of this epistle? (7:5-7)

Q: What is the purpose of this epistle?

Q: How is this letter practical and applicable to the church today as it was for the first century church?

### Introductions (1:1-2)

Q: Who wrote this letter? (v.1).

Q: What is the authors job description? Explain. (v.1).

Q: Who delivered the letter? What do you know about him? (v.1). Why does Paul often do ministry with others? Who do you have join you when you serve God?

Q: Who is the letter delivered to? (v.1)

Q: How does Paul introduce the letter? How is this similar or different than the way you send a letter?

Q: How is the way that Paul begins this letter similar or different to other letters he has written?

### Comfort of God in Suffering (1:3-7)

Q: How is God the God of all comfort? (v.3)

Q: How does God comfort us? (v.4) Why does God comfort us?

Q: How do followers of Christ share both in His sufferings and afflictions? (v.5; cf.4:11a) Didn't Jesus suffer so we wouldn't have to suffer?

Q: How do our afflictions and comforts serve others in the church? (vs.6-7) How is this a helpful and unique way to look at suffering? How can you comfort those who are suffering today? Who can you encourage today?

### Affliction and Resurrection (1:8-11)

Q: What afflictions are we aware of in Asia? (vs.8-9a; cf. Acts 19:23ff; 1 Corinthians 15:32) Have you experience a burden or despair such as this? How are Paul's afflictions an ongoing fulfillment of Acts 9:15-16?

Q: What did the affliction produce in Paul and the other people? (v.9b) How is the knowledge and promise of the resurrection important, especially during affliction? What purpose does suffering play in our lives? How is suffering a part of the normal Christian life? Why shouldn't suffering be avoided or dreaded? How have you seen afflictions and suffering cause a dependence on God? How has suffering grown your faith and love for Christ?

Q: How has and will God deliver those in affliction? (v.10) How can you rest in the promise of God's deliverance?

Q: How does Paul encourage the church to help Paul and others in their afflictions? (v.11). How will you give thanks to God for your sufferings? How will you bless and pray fervently for those who are going through suffering for the sake of Christ?

## PAUL ON MINISTRY (PART 1)

### Integrity and Ministry (1:12-2:4)

Q: What is Paul's boast? (v.12; cf.4:5; 1 Timothy 1:5; 3:9; Acts 24:16 Romans 9:1) Why is having a clear conscience as a spiritual leader important?

Q: What is Paul's hope in writing? (v.13-14)

Q: Why did Paul want to make a second visit? (v.15; cf. Acts 18:1-18)

Q: When does he plan to make this visit? (vs.16-17)

Q: How does Paul express this wavering or change of plans? (vs.18-20) How is Paul guarding his integrity? Why is integrity so important in ministry? Why is there a higher bar set for those in spiritual leadership? What is the power of integrity?

Q: How has God established Paul and his companions among the church at Corinth? (vs.21-22) How do you see the Trinity at work here in their ministry?

Q: What is Paul's reason for not coming to Corinth yet? (vs.23-24)

Q: How was Paul's previous visit to Corinth a painful one? (2:1) Why doesn't Paul want to cause them anymore pain? (2:2; cf. 12:20-21; 13:10)

Q: Why did Paul write as he did, even though it caused him much pain? (2:3-4)

## 2 CORINTHIANS 2: PAUL ON MINISTRY (PART 2)

### Forgiveness and Ministry (2:5-11)

Q: How have you enjoyed and benefitted from the input of a seasoned pastor or missionary?

Q: If you could describe Paul in one word, what word would you use?

Q: What pain is Paul speaking about? (vs.5-6) What do we know about this unknown letter Paul references to? Why was it punishment enough to discipline the sinful man?

Q: How did Paul want to handle the situation with the man who sinned, yet repented after their discipline of him was successful? (vs.7-8)

Q: How are we most like God when we forgive? (vs.5-9) How are you most unlike God when you don't? What would a lack of forgiveness on our part say about our Christ or his church? How is this a test of our obedience and faith? (v.9)

Q: How are we able to forgive others? (vs.10-11) What do you learn about forgiveness and ministry from this text?

Q: Is there unforgiveness in your heart today? Is there pain or embarrassment or shame caused by someone that you need to allow God to restore? Will you rejoice, today, in your own forgiveness?

### Triumphal Procession in Christ (2:12-17)

Q: Have you ever had to make a hard phone call or write a hard letter to a friend struggling with sin? Explain.

Q: What insight does Paul give into his travel plans? (vs.12-13; cf. 7:5; Acts 14:27; 16:8; 20:6).

Q: Why does Paul use the illustration of a procession? (v.14)

Q: What is the importance of being a witness? (vs.15-16) What are some reasons that would block a believer from being a witness? What areas of your Christian walk do you need to be held accountable to change so you do remind people of Christ? Who in your circles of family, friends, school, or workplace are you being both the aroma of life and the stench of death?

Q: How is the gospel both a beautiful aroma and stench of death? (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18; Luke 2:34; John 9:39; 1 Peter 2:7-8).

Q: How was Paul a bold witness? Why was he so bold? (v.17) Who are the peddlers of God's Word? Have you ever not shared the Gospel because you were so concerned about your inability to use an evangelism technique? How can techniques be both helpful and distracting to the gospel of Christ? (Cf. 1 Cor. 1:18, 23; Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Col. 1:5,6; 1 Thes. 2:13).

Q: What typically makes one an afraid witness? Why are you afraid? How is Christ your heroic victor? How is Christ sufficient for all your fears? How can your church help you to stay on mission when you struggle with boldness or fear?

Q: What authority do you place on God's Word when sharing Christ with others? How can you make the Bible more central? In all of the time you have walked with Christ, how have you grown love Him? What do you love most about Christ?



Q: Who is sufficient for these things? (vs.16a-17) Who can bear the weight of knowing that the aroma of a Christ-exalting life will lead some to eternal life and reveal to others death? Are you willing to lay down your treasures to treasure Him? Which treasures will you lay down today?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 3: PAUL ON MINISTRY (PART 3)

### Credentials of Ministry (3:1-3)

Q: Have you ever had to write or receive a letter of recommendation? Explain. Why do we need such letters? What does Paul mean by his first question? (v.1; cf. 5:12; 10:12; 12:11) What are the credentials of an apostle?

Q: Who does Paul commend or recommend? (v.2)

Q: How is the church at Corinth a letter from Christ? (v.3) What allusions to other portions of Scripture to you recognize here? (cf. Exodus 24:12; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26; Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10) How has the living God done mighty things in your life? Who's letter of commendation are you?

### Sufficient for Ministry (3:4-6)

Q: What is the confidence that we have through Christ? (v.4) Why do we often have more confidence in ourselves than we do Christ? How do you express your confidence in Christ? How do verses 4-6 compare with verses 1-3?

Q: How are we not sufficient in ourselves? How is our sufficiency from Christ? (v.5) How does our insufficiency keep us dependent upon God?

Q: How does Christ make us sufficient for ministry? (v.6a; cf. 4:1; 5:18; Ephesians 3:7; Colossians 1:23, 25; 1 Timothy 1:12) What is the New Covenant ministry? (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-33; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 8:8, 13-14; 9:15)

Q: What is the letter and why does the letter? (v.6b) Who is the minister of the New Covenant? (cf. Galatians 6:8). How are you grateful for the Holy Spirit? How does the Holy Spirit give us life?

### A More Glorious Ministry (3:7-18)

Q: What makes something glorious?

Q: What is the ministry of death carved in letters of stone? (v.7) How did they come in glory? What is the glory of God?

Q: How will the ministry of the Holy Spirit have even more glory? (vs.8-9) How does the Holy Spirit produce righteousness?

Q: How does the previous have no glory at all? (vs.10-11) Does this mean the Law has no glory or is meaningless?

Q: What is our hope? What does this hope produce? (v.12)

Q: How is our boldness contrasted with Moses and the veiled face? (vs.13-15) How is this veil lifted? What is the veil a symbol of?

Q: How is the veil removed? (v.16)

Q: Who is the Lord? (v.17) What is produced where the Spirit is? How does the Spirit produce freedom?

Q: How does beholding the glory of God transform us? (v.18) How glorious is this ministry of the Holy Spirit? How has your appreciation and adoration of the ministry of the Holy Spirit grown through this text? How are you reflecting the glory of the Spirit?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4: PAUL ON MINISTRY (PART 4)

### Doing Ministry Honestly (4:1-6)

Q: What is the ministry that Paul is referring to? (v.1; cf. 3:6) Why do we not lose heart? How is discouragement one of the great risks of ministry?

Q: What does Paul renounce? How would this shame Paul and the gospel? What are common tactics people use to use the Word of God for their own advantage? What does he commend? (v.2) How is Paul openly and honestly laying out his ministry before the Corinthians? Why does he do this? (cf. 2 Timothy 2:15)

Q: How is the gospel veiled? (v.3)

Q: How are people veiled from the gospel? Who is the "god of the is world"? (v.4) What does verse 4 teach us about Jesus?

Q: What do we proclaim? (v.5) What does it mean that Jesus is Lord? What is our (Paul's or man's) role? How is Paul's humility and honesty in his ministry an example to you?

Q: What words of God does Paul quote? (v.6; cf. Genesis 1:3) Where else has God created light according to verse 6? What does the light that is in hearts illuminate? What does verse 6 tell us about the work of God in salvation? (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3; Romans 10:9). How does the light of God's knowledge shine through you to the world around you?

Q: How will you proclaim and exalt Jesus with honesty in your ministry this week? How is your ministry (whether seen by many or few) a glorious one?

### Hardships and the Power of New Covenant Ministry (4:7-12)

Q: Where is our treasure? (v.7) Why jars of clay? What are the jars of clay alluding to? (cf. 5:1; 2 Tim. 2:20; Job 10:9; 13:12; Lam. 4:2; 1 Thess. 4:4; 1 Pet. 3:7) What things do people tend to boast in that boast in their power rather than God's? (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:5; Judges 7:2) Have you embraced your weakness as a way of life—and as the invitation to God's surpassing power?

Q: What parallels (or paradoxes) between hardship and hope does Paul make, which h is also experiencing? (vs.8-10) How have you seen these things happen in Paul's ministry? How have you experienced these paradoxes in your own life and ministry? How is it easy to use hope during hardships? How does this verse remind us of the hope we can have when hardships come? How does this list give you a panorama of Christians throughout history who have spread the gospel near and far? How are these paradoxes of hardship and hope seen in the life of Christ and the cross?

Q: How do we carry and show the New Covenant ministry with us everyday? (v.10; cf. 6:9; 1:5, 9; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 15:31; Rom. 6:5; 8:36; 5:10; 6:8; 2 Timothy 2:11) What is the principle of power as Paul describes it?

Q: How are we always being given over to death for Jesus' sake? (v.11) Why is this happening? Why is no hardship haphazard, but part of the plan of God?

Q: How is death at work in you and life in you? How do you seen this verse beautifully displayed on the cross? Describe the day that you died. How does life now live in you?

Q: How is ministry often the hardest work on earth? How do hardship and ministry go hand and hand? How are our hardships a reflection of the ministry of Christ? How can you embrace your weakness and God's greatness?

# MOTIVATION FOR MINISTRY (PART 1)

## Futures and Steadfastness (4:13-18)

Q: What sustains you to do ministry day in and day out? What keeps you going? What gets you out of bed each day to do it all over again?

Q: What does it mean that we have the same spirit of faith? Where was it written? (v.13; cf. Psalm 116:10) How does this Psalm compare to Paul's life and words?

Q: Who raised Jesus from the dead? **God**. How is this our hope too? (v.14; cf. 1 Corinthians 15) How does the reality of your future resurrection affect your present life and ministry now? How was Paul's ministry about preaching the resurrection of Christ? (cf. 2 Timothy 2:8; Acts 17:18)

Q: How does verse 15, give us motivation to share the grace of God given to you to others? How is faith in the future so backwards to your world or culture? How is your future resurrection a means of missions? A motivation for ministry or evangelism?

Q: Where have we learned the phrase, "We do not lose heart" before? (v.16; cf. v.1) Why would one lose heart about their earthly body? How is the outer self wasting away? How is the inner self being renewed day by day?

Q: What is our light momentary affliction? (v.17) How is it preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison? How does this verse ("momentary afflictions") bring you encouragement and hope?

Q: What kind of things that "seen" do we hope in? What are the unseen things?. How are these lesser hopes than things that are unseen? (v.18) How does your future determine your present? What are you living for?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 5: ???

??? (5:1-?)

Q: ???

## 2 CORINTHIANS 5: MOTIVATION FOR MINISTRY (PART 2)

### Hopeful: More Beyond (5:1-10)

Q: How would you describe your dream home? Is there more beyond this present world? How does your future affect your present? How does your future feed your hope for your present?

Q: What is the “tent”? (v.1) What is the tent is destroyed?

Q: How do we groan in our present bodies? (v.2) How does is a greater reality for some? When do we tend to forget about the future or future bodies?

Q: What is “naked” and “clothed” in verses three and four alluding to?

Q: Who has prepared us for this new body? (v.5) What proof has he given that he will do it? (cf. 1:22; Romans 8:23).

Q: How are we always of good courage? (vs. 7-8) Is our faith blind faith? (cf. 4:18; John 20:29). Why would Paul long for a new body and groan in his present body?

Q: What is our aim whether we are home or away? (v.9)

Q: What is the judgment that Paul is talking about? (v.10; cf. Matthew 25:31-32; Romans 14:10; Acts 10:42)

Q: Why is Paul so hopeful? How does his hope increase your hope? How is the truth of more beyond a good place to rest your hope?

### Fear and Love: Paul's Driving Motivations (5:11-15)

Q: What is the fear of the Lord? (v.11; cf. v.10; Job 31:23; Acts 9:31; Hebrews 10:31; Jude 23) How is this a means to persuade others? (cf. Acts 17:4; 18:4; 19:8, 26; 26:28; 28:23). How does the truth that you are known to God affect your conscience or the way you live? Why would Paul fear the judgement of God? (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; James 3:1).

Q: What does it mean to commend yourself to others? (v.12) What is the difference in boasting in appearance than what is in the heart?

Q: What does it mean to be “foolish” for God? (v.13; cf. 11:1, 16-17; 12:6, 11) How is this all for the church at Corinth? I

Q: What is the love of Christ? How does the love of Christ control us? (v.14a)

Q: What is the importance of the phrase “one has died for all, therefore all have died”? (vs.14b-15; cf. Romans 5:15; 6:11-12; 14:7). How are these verses enough motivation to live for Jesus alone? (cf. 12:10)

Q: What motivated Paul? What drove him to live and die as he did for the gospel? How does the fear of God and the love of Christ motivate you? What is your driving motivation? How can Jesus and living for him be your driving motivation?

### Gospel Regard (5:16-17)

Q: How we regard no one according to the flesh? (v.16; cf. Philippians 3:7-8; Colossians 2:11). What illustration does Paul give for this? Why is he of the flesh no longer? How is living in the flesh a disregard of the gospel?

Q: What are you if you are in Christ? What is the significance of the phrase "in Christ"? (cf. 12:2; Romans 16:7; Galatians 1:22) What does it mean to become a new creation? How has the old passed away and the new become new? When did Paul become a new man? When did you become a new creation? How are you living in your new life and no longer living in the flesh? How can you regard the gospel everyday?

## **God's Reconciliation (5:18-6:2)**

Q: What is "all this"? (v.18) Where is "all this" from? What has Christ done? What ministry do we have because of Christ? What does reconciliation mean?

Q: How did Christ demonstrate reconciliation? (v. 19, 21; cf. Colossians 1:20; Romans 5:10-11; 1 John 2:2) How is reconciliation a complete work of God?(cf. Romans 8:3; 4:25; Galatians 3:13). How has Jesus entrusted you with the message of reconciliation? How does it impact you knowing that he took the initiative to make your wrong relationship with him right? How has God displayed his love, kindness, patience, long-suffering, and faithfulness in his relationship with you?

Q: Why did Jesus need to come to reconcile the world? When did the relationship between God and man become severed? (see Genesis 2-3) Why is it impossible for man to reconcile to God himself?

Q: What does it mean to be an ambassador? (v.20) What does an ambassador for Christ do?

Q: How do we work together with God? (6:1) How has Paul called the church to accept these words? What do you sense about Paul's urgency? How does his urgency affect your own ministry?

Q: What Scripture does Paul quote? (6:2; cf. Isaiah 49:8) Why is this text important for this context?

Q: How is God's work of reconciliation different than what we often experience when reconciling a relationship between other humans? How does Jesus' ministry of reconciliation motivate you for your own ministry? What is your responsibility at this time or during this day?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 6: MOTIVATION FOR MINISTRY (PART 3)

### Approved: Ministry that Commends (6:3-13)

Q: We often will see the word “approved” stamped on documents or commercials. What does it mean when something is approved?

Q: What obstacles or faults is Paul talking about? (v.3) Why is suffering or trouble often seen as a weakness or fault? Why don't sufferings disqualify a persons ministry, rather them amplify?

Q: How are servants of God commended? (vs.4-10) List all 28 ways in which Paul exhibits great endurance in multiple troubles? How do troubles produces great endurance? How do you see this unfold in the life of Paul? Why would Paul endure so much? T How does endurance commend one for ministry?

Q: How has Paul laid his heart bare to the Corinthian church? (v.11) Why was the church rejecting Paul and his apostleship? (cf. 1:3-11; 7:4-5).

Q: How is the church restricted? (v.12)

Q: Why does Paul speak to the church as to a child? (v.13) Why do they need to widen their hearts?

Q: How are you commending the gospel through your endurance? How is it evident that Christ is worth your full allegiance?

### Bringing Holiness to Completion (6:14 - 7:1)

Q: What is the greatest danger to the church? What is the great danger you face in ministry?

Q: What does it mean to be “yoked” with unbelievers? (v.14a) Why are these partnerships potentially harmful for the church? This verse is often used to speak to dating to to-be-married relationships where one couple is a believer and the other is not. How does the context of this verse broaden the application to be more than just dating couples?

Q: How do these verses build a theology of separation? (vs.14b-16) How do you see the New Covenant benefits on display in the five questions? When is separated good or when does it go too far? What are some false gospels that can come from within the church?

Q: How are we the temple of the living God? (v.16a; cf. [Ephesians 2:22; 1 Corinthians 3:16]). How does that truth affect your daily life?

Q: Where does Paul quote these texts from? (vs.16b-18; cf. Leviticus 26:11-12; Ezekiel 37:27; 2 Samuel 7:14; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 20:34; Isaiah 43:6) Why are these text important?

Q: How are these texts amazing promises? (7:1) What is to be our response to these promises? What does it mean to bring “holiness to completion”? How should this give us a good fear?

Q: Are you becoming or or less holy with age? Why doesn't older necessarily mean holier? What are your greatest dangers to holiness from within? How will you protect yourself and your church from false gospels?



# 2 CORINTHIANS 7: MOTIVATION FOR MINISTRY (PART 4)

## Comfort and Joy for a Caring Heart (7:2-16)

Q: How does Paul defend himself and his ministry in Corinth? (vs.2-4) How does he affirm his love and concern to the church at Corinth? What examples of church life does Paul speak about in these verses? How do you see these display in your life and ministry and church?

Q: Where was Paul? (v.5) What were his experiences there? What kind of discouragement's have you faced in your walk with Christ and while doing ministry? How was Paul comforted during his miseries? How has this also been a comfort to the church at Corinth? What do you learn here about the depths of Paul's discouragements and depression? How can ministry burdens weigh heavy upon you and cause great discouragement even depression?

Q: What letter to Paul referring to? (v.8) Why would it have made the church grieve or him grieve? Have you ever had to say tough words or confront difficult things? How can Paul's attitude through it be a comfort and joy to you when confronting or confronted?

Q: What comes to your mind when you think of the word "repentance"? Why do we often cringe at this word? What are the benefits of repentance? (vs.8-11) What is true repentance? What fruits of repentance do you see in verse 11? How does repentance bring you freedom? When was the last time you repented?

Q: What was Paul's purpose in writing the hard things? (vs.12-13a) How do you see the purposes of this letter being fulfilled within this letter?

Q: What do you know about Titus? (vs.13b-16) How does Paul boast in Titus and the church? Who is someone you really care for? What do you love about your church that you would do anything to protect? How does the example and ministry of Titus encourage you? Do you know a Titus-like person in your life? Are you a Titus to someone?

Q: How is Paul's comfort all of God? How is God your source of comfort and joy? How does God bring us comfort through others and the church?

Q: How is discouragement even depression a reality in ministry or a reality for followers of Christ? Who is someone in the church you know needs the comfort and joy of Christ? How will you display a caring heart for them or give them a loving touch? How can you allow others in the church to be a source of encouragement and joy to you?

# 2 CORINTHIANS 8: GIVING—A GENEROUS MINISTRY (PART 1)

## The Grace of Giving (8:1-15)

Q: Have you ever been give an extravagant give from someone you knew had to sacrifice much to give it? What was your reaction or response to the gift? What does it mean to be generous?

Q: Where is Macedonia? What is the “grace of God given among the churches of Macedonia”? (v.1) What is the situation of the church there? (v.2) What was the great need that the church was giving towards? (cf. v.4; 9:2; ch. 9:2; Romans 15:25-26; 31; Acts 24; )

Q: How did the Macedonian church give? (vs.3-5) How is money and giving so intertwined with the soul? (Luke 16:13b) How much time do you give to thinking about your money?

Q: What is the “act of grace”? (v.6). What is Titus' part in the “act of grace” at Corinth? Why would Paul call on the church of Corinth to give to another church so far away? T

Q: How does Paul encourage the church at Corinth with their strengths and exhort them to give all in one breath or phrase? (v.7; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:5) If the Corinthians were incomplete, where are you incomplete and need to grow? How will you strive to excel in this act of grace yourself?

Q: Why did Paul exhort them to be generous? (v.8) Why is this a good reputation to spread? How can you spread the good reputation of your church that others might not be aware of?

Q: What theology does Paul give to back his exhortation to the church at Corinth to be generous? (v.9) How does this truth—or theology from the life of Christ—encourage you to be generous and give of yourself? How does Jesus exemplify the greatest act of grace? (cf. John 1:16)

Q: How does Paul, again but now by example encourage the church? (vs.10-13; cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1-4) What command does Paul give on giving?(vs.11-12).

Q: What does Paul mean when he says he doesn't want this gift to be an ease for one and a burden to others? (vs.13-14) Why does Paul say it is neither ease or burden, but fair? How can giving become a burden? When is giving a joy? Why is there often greater joy in giving than receiving?

Q: What Scripture does Paul quote? (v.15; cf. Exodus 16:18) Why is this text so fitting?

Q: How do grace and giving go hand in hand? What is your theology of giving? What other extraordinary acts of grace do you see in Scripture? (See Zacchaeus, Luke 19:8; rich young ruler, Luke 18:22). Why is giving to your local church a great importance?

## The Integrity of Giving (8:16-24)

Q: Who is Titus? (cf. 7:7, 13-16). How have Titus and Paul been an encouragement to each other and the church at Corinth? (vs.16-17)

Q: Who is the famous brother who is being sent to Corinth? (v.18) Why is that a great thing to be famous for? What are you famous for?

Q: What else is this brother tasked to do? (v.19) Why would Paul choose a man who is about preaching the gospel to help handle money from the churches?

Q: Why is Paul traveling as a group? (vs.20-22) What does this passage reveal about one of the tensions between Paul and the Corinthians? How do these verses emphasize financial integrity? How is handling money often a point of contention for people, especially churches or fellow believers? How can this tension be minimized or eliminated according to this passage?

Q: What is Titus' relationship to Paul? (v.23) Can you relate or do you have a similar relationship with a fellow believer?

Q: How is the church to respond to these men? (v.24) Why was this so important to Paul?

Q: What does the way you use and think about money say about your faith?

# 2 CORINTHIANS 9: GIVING—A GENEROUS MINISTRY (PART 2)

## Ready, Willing, Generous Giving (9:1-15)

Q: How is Paul reinforcing something he has already said? (vs.1-2; 8:10, 25) What does Paul say about the Corinthians church's generosity? (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

Q: Who is Paul sending? (vs.3-4; cf. 8:6, 17, 18, 22) What is Paul's purpose in sending these men?

Q: What does Paul say about the Corinthians church's generosity?

Q: Where have you heard this principle before? (v.6; Proverbs 11:24-25; 22:9; Galatians 6:7, 9; Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38) What are blessings from God? What blocks God's abundant blessings? (vs.6-7) How have you decided in your heart to give? Why does giving begin in the heart? Why is it an oxymoron to be a stingy Christians or an uncheerful Christian (Christians Scrooge)? (cf. 8:8, 24; 9:3).

Q: What releases God's abundance? (vs.8-9) How is this kind of generosity possible? How does God give us what we need to give to others? How are we always rich enough to be generous? (v. 8 "sufficient"; cf. 8:1-2)

Q: How does God want our blessing to overflow abundantly? (v.10-15) How many of these blessing are not relates to money? **Most all.** Why is this important to understand? What area of abundant overflow are you lacking?

Q: How is God's gift the focus of this passage? (v.15; 2:14; 8:9; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8) Why is God's gift to you often inexpressible?

Q: How does this passage challenge your personal philosophy of giving? How can you give even if you don't have much money? (see: Parable of Talents; Matthew 25) Would you describe yourself as a ready, willing, and generous giver? Which area do you need the more change? Which area have you been most blessed by God's readiness, willingness and generosity to you?

# 2 CORINTHIANS 10: BOASTING—A DEFENSE OF MINISTRY (PART 1)

## Call to Church Discipline (10:1-6)

Q: What attitudes of Christ does Paul write the Corinthians? (v.1) How do you see these attitudes on display in Jesus and Paul? Why are these attitudes often looked down upon in our world? How do we often judge a person's outward appearance before considering their spirit or character?

Q: How does Paul confront his opponents in the church at Corinth? (v.2) What do some in the church suspect Paul and his companions of doing? What is the difference between the boldness of Christ and the boldness of many people in this world?

How does Paul respond to the suspicion of walking in the flesh? (vs.3-6)

Q: How does Paul speak to the now and not yet aspect of the kingdom of God?

Q: What kind of warfare is Paul speaking about in verses three and four? How do these verses speak to his opponents? What was the difference with Paul's weapons of warfare? How have Paul's mighty weapons in God proved to be effective in his ministry? (cf. Acts 17:16ff)

Q: What power does the gospel have over all other arguments? (vs.4b-5) Why is the military vocabulary helpful to understanding Paul's argument? How does Christ transform any and all false thinking or teaching? Could anything be more wonderful than to have every thought experience captive obedience to Christ?

Q: Why was this such a big deal that Paul needed to defend himself?

Q: What is the punishment Paul demands? (v.6) When is one's obedience complete? (cf. 2:9; 7:15) What is Paul calling the church to do?

Q: Why is church discipline often looked down upon in our day and age? Why is church discipline needed? How does Paul give us a loving example of church discipline?

## Boasting in the Lord (10:7-18)

Q: What does boasting look like? What are things people will boast in? What is your opinion of boasting?

Q: What is Paul telling the Corinthians to look at? (v.7; cf. 5:12; John 7:24). What is the one thing that Paul and the Corinthians have in common? (cf. 11:23; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:23; 9:1; 14:37; Galatians 1:12; John 4:6). How does your bond in Christ link you to other people? Why did Paul's opposers claim to have a special bond to Christ?

Q: What authority is Paul speaking about and boasting in? (v.8; cf. 13:10) Why does Paul take the moment to speak about his authority?

Q: Why might Paul's letters have frightened the church? (v.9) Who are those who are accusing Paul's letters of being heavy and strong, but he is weak in appearance and speech? (v.10) Why do people often value strength and suave speech over meekness and gentleness? What kind of qualities does the world look for in a leader? What kind of qualities does Jesus look for in a leader?

Q: How does Paul defend the “two-faced” argument? (vs.11-12) (cf. v.18; 3:1; 12:6; Proverbs 26:12; 27:2). What is the problem with commending yourself? How is comparing yourself with others a weak comparison or improper grounds for boasting? Who should you compare yourself to?

Q: What does it mean that they will “not boast beyond limits”? (v.13) What area will Paul boast in and why? How did Paul demonstrate this (by bringing it) to the Corinthians? (vs.14-16) Why is it easier to boast in our work or service than the work of Christ?

Q: What are the grounds of Paul's boasting? (v.17) To boast in the Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:31; Jeremiah 9:23, 24). What does it look like to boast in the Lord? How do you boast in the Lord? How is boasting in the Lord the best kind of boasting?

Q: Who's commendation does Paul seek? (v.18) What does it look like to seek commendation in men versus the Lord? Why is it human to boast? Why does it take a bigger man to boast in Christ? How will we boast throughout eternity? (cf. Revelation 4:8, 11; 5:9-10; 7:9-10)

# 2 CORINTHIANS 11: BOASTING—A DEFENSE OF MINISTRY (PART 2)

## Apologia for Boasting (11:1-15)

Q: When was the last time you defended yourself? Why did you feel the need to do it?

Q: Why does Paul feel the need to defend himself? (v.1) What could be such a big deal that he feels the need to protect his reputation?

Q: Doesn't that sound backward for Paul to boast? Shouldn't he turn the other cheek or be more humble? Why is boasting foolish? If we do like people who boast, how much does God like it? (cf. Jeremiah 9:23; Proverbs 27:1; 25:14; Jude 1:16; Luke 18:11-12, 14b) So why would Paul stoop to the level of boasting?

Q: When is foolish boasting acceptable? (cf. 10:17; Jeremiah 9:23-24). What does it look like for you to boast in the Lord?

Q: What is the responsibility of the father of the bride? How does Paul take his responsibility seriously as father of the church at Corinth? (vs.2-4). How does Paul's love for the church encourage or challenge your love for the church?

Q: Who are the super apostles? (v.5) How does Paul compare himself with the super apostles? (vs. 6-11)

Q: What does Paul really call these super apostles? (vs.12-15) Why would he use such harsh terms? What is the end of the super apostles? (v.15b)

How does this passage challenge all who take money and serve the name of Jesus? Do you consider the financial gain before you consider the glory of the Name? How did Jesus exemplify this in his own life? (cf. 8:9)

## Paul's Boasting (11:16-33)

Q: What does Paul feel necessary to repeat in his letter? (vs.16-18) Why is it necessary to exaggerate or belabor an issue to make a point?

Q: How are Paul's words cutting to the heart? (vs.19-21a) How does Paul cut at himself to shame the church? Is Paul's sarcasm or shaming really necessary? Is he speaking the truth in love? When are sarcasm and shaming acceptable?

Q: How does Paul have the corner on boasting? What earthly identities does Paul claim that give him the right to boast? (vs.21b-23a) Why do these super apostles have nothing on Paul? Why would Paul say that he is a better servant of Christ?

Q: What kind of pressures did Paul face in his ministry? (vs.23-28) How do you see Paul dealing with these pressures in his life and ministry? How are these verses an example of Paul boasting in his weaknesses? What might another pastor, church planter or servant in Paul's shoes say? Why is this doubly foolish?

Q: What is the final pressure that Paul faces? (v.29) What kind of pressure do churches put on a church planter or pastor? What does this verse reveal about Paul's heart for the church? (cf. 7:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:5) What does Paul mean by his questions in verse 29? How does this one verse give us special insight into suffering, weakness and Paul's apostleship in one swoop?

Q: If Paul boasts, what things will he boast of? (v.30) Who comes to his defense? (v.31)

Q: What illustration does Paul use to conclude his boast? (v.32-33) Why would he share this story?

Q: How might this chapter be applicable to your life and ministry? Can you embrace your weaknesses? Will you boast in your weaknesses?



## 2 CORINTHIANS 12: BOASTING: A DEFENSE OF MINISTRY (PART 3)

### Paul's Greatest Boast (12:1-10)

Q: How does Paul continue on his theme he's been talking about since Chapters 10-11? He continues to talk about boasting. Why is there nothing gained by boasting? (v.1) What does Paul boast in?

Q: What is the vision and revelation Paul describes? (vs.2-4). Who is the man Paul speaks of? Where is the third heaven?

Q: How does Paul use this man's story as a means to boast himself? How do the boast compare? (v.5) What type of things do people boast in? How are we prone to one-up stories by boasting?

Q: How would Paul boast if he had a choice? (v.6).

Q: Why does Paul have reason to boast greatly? (v.7).

Q: What prevents Paul from boasting more than he does? What keeps him humble? What is Paul's thorn? (v.7).

Q: How did Paul try to deal with his thorn? (v.8)

Q: How did God answer Paul? (v.9) Why would Paul take joy in his weakness? How can you take joy in your weaknesses?

Q: What was Paul's response to God's response? (vs.9-10). How is this Paul's greatest boast? How is the pinnacle of Paul's letter to Corinth?

Q: How do you boast in your weakness and God's strength? What is your greatest boast?

### Authenticating Apostleship (12:11-21)

Q: What is the "big reason" why Paul did all this boasting in the first place? (v.11)

Q: What is the sign of a true apostle compared to a super-apostle? (v.12) What kind of signs and wonders did apostles do?

Q: Why does Paul seek the church's forgiveness? (v.13)

Q: How does Paul not want to be a burden to the church of Corinth? (v.14) How does Paul illustrate this burden?

Q: How will Paul spend and be spent for the church? (v.15) How can you have this same heart toward the church?

Q: How did Paul's willingness to care for the burden himself get misunderstood? (vs.16-18) How did Paul defend himself and those he sent (like Titus) in his stead?

Q: How is Paul's defense a benefit for the church and a proof of his love for them? (v.19)

Q: What is Paul's fear or concern when he comes back to Corinth? (vs.20-21) How does Paul's concern for the church encourage your own heart for the church? How do you strive to build up the church rather than tear it down?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 13: SALUTATIONS

### Coming Words and Coming Judgment (13:1-10)

Q: Have your parents ever said, "I have something coming for you"? What did they mean by this?

Q: When had Paul previously visited the Corinthians? How did his previous visits with the Corinthians affect his tone and content in this section of the letter? How is rebelling against the apostle Paul like rebelling against God?

Q: How will Paul discipline the unrepentant sinners? (vs.1-2) How will Paul know if they have repented? How is Paul's apostolic ministry like that of a prophet? He is calling the sinner to repent. Why did Paul give the Corinthians so many warnings? Why had he not disciplined them earlier? How often does your church deal with disciplinary matters?

Q: How well does the description of the Corinthian Christians' sin describe your own church and its sins? If Paul wrote to your church, what issues might he address?

Q: How does disciplining sinners demonstrate the legitimacy of Paul's ministry? (vs.3-4)

Q: What does it mean to test your faith? (vs.5-6) Was Paul suggesting that the Corinthians should examine one another, or that each person should examine only himself or herself?

Q: What is Paul's prayer? (vs.7-9) How does he pray for the church's perfection?

Q: Why is Paul so big on repentance? (v.10)

Q: Do you think Paul is too harsh in the closing of this letter? How would you have closed it? How is his harshness a measure of his love?

### Apostolic Optimism (13:11-14)

Q: What final words does Paul give to the church at Corinth? How is this verse a good challenge for all relationships, especially those with other followers of Jesus? (v.11) What is the result of living this way with one another?

Q: How does Paul ask them to greet one another? (v.12). Who does Paul send greetings from? (v.13)

Q: How do you see the Trinity on display in verse 14?

Q: How has Paul's second letter to Corinth been an encouragement to you? What keepsakes have you taken away from this letter?

# 2CORINTHIANS

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO MINISTRY**

**FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE W/ NOTES**

## 2 CORINTHIANS 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Q: What do you know about Corinth? What do you know about the letter to Corinth? What would you like to know about this letter?

Q: On which journey did the apostle Paul establish the church in Corinth? His second journey (Act 18:1-18).

Q: On which journey did Paul write both of his epistles to the Corinthians? His third journey.

Q: From where did Paul write his FIRST epistle to the Corinthians? (cf. 1 Co 16:8) Ephesus. From where did Paul write his SECOND epistle to the Corinthians? (cf. 7:5; 8:1; 9:2-4) Somewhere in Macedonia (perhaps Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea?).

Q: What is the approximate date of writing? The fall of 57 A.D.

Q: Whose arrival likely prompted Paul's writing of this epistle? (7:5-7) Titus

Q: What is the purpose of this epistle? To vindicate Paul's apostleship, ministry, and manner of life.

Q: How is this letter practical and applicable to the church today as it was for the first century church?

### Introductions (1:1-2)

Q: Who wrote this letter? Paul (v.1).

Q: What is the author's job description? Explain. He is an apostle (v.1). He has personally seen Jesus and has been appointed by him.

Q: Who delivered the letter? What do you know about him? Timothy (v.1). He is Paul's patawan, a younger pastor. Why does Paul often do ministry with others? Who do you have join you when you serve God?

Q: Who is the letter delivered to? It is a letter for the church at Corinth (v.1) and to all believers in Achaia (Greece).

Q: How does Paul introduce the letter? How is this similar or different than the way you send a letter?

Q: How is the way that Paul begins this letter similar or different to other letters he has written?

### Comfort of God in Suffering (1:3-7)

Q: How is God the God of all comfort? (v.3) Even in the hardest times we can rest in the promises and presence of God in Christ. God is the Father of all mercies. All good things come from him, even in the hardest of times. Isaiah repeatedly speak of the comfort or consolation of the Messianic age (see Chapters 40-66). Isaiah 40 begins, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem," and the final chapter, 66, says, "As one whom his mother comforts, so I will com-fort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem" (v. 13). So when Christ came, the devout, including Simeon and Anna, were "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25)

Q: How does God comfort us? (v.4) He comforts us in our afflictions. He is with those who are suffering. Christ is the center and source of all comfort. Why does God comfort us? He comforts us so we can comfort others in affliction too. We pass on the comfort. All such Christians will find these

words of comfort speaking to their condition. But to the noncommitted believer, who goes with the flow of culture, who risks nothing for Christ (and therefore does not share in Christ's sufferings) there is no application and no comfort offered here.

Q: How do followers of Christ share both in His sufferings and afflictions? (v.5; cf.4:11a) When one suffers for the name of Christ he can understand the sufferings of Christ. He can take comfort in this, as God was with Christ in his sufferings so he is with us. Paul also explains that abundant suffering and abundant comfort are in fact signs of apostolic authenticity. Didn't Jesus suffer so we wouldn't have to suffer? No. C. S. Lewis solemnized this truth in the epitaph to The Problem of Pain where he quotes George MacDonald: "The Son of God suffered unto the death, not that men might not suffer, but that their sufferings might be like His." In this respect, Paul's prayer in Philippians 3:10, 11 is so right: "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Q: How do our afflictions and comforts serve others in the church? (vs.6-7) Our examples and words in suffering can be an example to others who are or will go through suffering. Knowing that we suffer together offers strength and comfort in numbers. How is this a helpful and unique way to look at suffering? Affliction is essential. What we conclude here is that affliction was the key to Paul's effectiveness in ministry, and affliction is the key to effective ministry today. This is a dynamic way of looking at life because it endows all Christian living with elevated importance. The hard things we undergo as well as the comforts are all graces that together authenticate and empower ministry, so that those who truly desire to minister. How can you comfort those who are suffering today? Who can you encourage today?

## Affliction and Resurrection (1:8-11)

Q: What afflictions are we aware of in Asia? (vs.8-9a; cf. Acts 19:23ff; 1 Corinthians 15:32) He speaks of his sufferings while in Ephesus, Turkey. How great of an affliction was it? They were burdened beyond strength and despaired life itself (v.8). Some thought they were sentenced to death (v.9a). Have you experience a burden or despair such as this? How are Paul's afflictions an ongoing fulfillment of Acts 9:15-16? Paul experiences more affliction than most followers of Christ, but at his calling, it was said that he was suffer for Christ's name sake.

Q: What did the affliction produce in Paul and the other people? (v.9b) It created a reliance upon God who raises the dead (cf. 4:11, 14; cf. Romans 4:17). How is the knowledge and promise of the resurrection important, especially during affliction? Paul knows that because of Christ and his resurrection he too will raise from the dead. This is something he is sure of. For Paul, suffering is not intrinsically good, nor is it a Christian virtue. Rather, suffering is a page in the textbook used in God's school of faith. What purpose does suffering play in our lives? How is suffering a part of the normal Christian life? Why shouldn't suffering be avoided or dreaded? How have you seen afflictions and suffering cause a dependence on God? How has suffering grown your faith and love for Christ?

Q: How has and will God deliver those in affliction? (v.10) Paul emphasizes in verse 10 three repetitions of the word "deliver" — the first being past ("He delivered us from such a deadly peril"), the second being in the near future ("and he will deliver us"), and the third in the ultimate future ("On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again"). As the Corinthians heard this read — "He delivered us . . . he will deliver us . . . he will deliver us again" — the certitude of deliverance from crushing circumstances gently freshened their souls. This is the endless refrain that comes to all committed believers — God by nature is the Deliverer, Redeemer, and Savior who raises the dead. How can you rest in the promise of God's deliverance?

Q: How does Paul encourage the church to help Paul and others in their afflictions? Paul calls on them to pray that many will give thanks on their behalf (v.11). Paul understood the power and blessing in prayer from others (cf. 4:15; Ephesians 6:19; Philippians 1:19; Colossians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:1). His suffering is always for the sake of others (cf. 4:15; 9:11-12). How will you give thanks to God for your sufferings? How will you bless and pray fervently for those who are going through suffering for the sake of Christ?

# PAUL ON MINISTRY (PART 1)

## Integrity and Ministry (1:12-2:4)

Q: What is Paul's boast? (v.12) The testimony of a (clear) conscience (cf.4:5; 1 Timothy 1:5; 3:9; Acts 24:16 Romans 9:1) and specifically that we behave with simplicity and godly sincerity in the world, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and even more so to the church. Paul's choice of the word "boast" was a surprise because he himself abhorred boasting (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:29; 3:21; 4:7; 5:6), arguing that it can only be "in the Lord" (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:17) Why is having a clear conscience as a spiritual leader important?

Q: What is Paul's hope in writing? (v.13-14) Paul hopes that they will fully understand what he is writing and that they will boast in them as they boast in the church at Corinth. The apostle was also sure that he had communicated clearly in his most recent correspondence to the Corinthians (the so-called "severe" letter, 1 Corinthians 2:5; cf. 2 Corinthians 13:10), and that what he was now writing was consonant with what he had already written.

Q: Why did Paul want to make a second visit? (v.15; cf. Acts 18:1-18) He wanted to visit so they could have a second experience of grace. God, by His grace, has met their needs. With Paul, they would get double the benefit of grace.

Q: When does he plan to make this visit? (vs.16-17) He wanted to do it on his way to Macedonia and then be sent on his way from Corinth, but he was wavering between decisions when to do this.

Q: How does Paul express this wavering or change of plans? (vs.18-20) He has not been wavering between "yes" and "no". He doesn't want to deceive the church by giving false promises of a visit, but wants to give them surety. He is not impulsive. There have been some critics how challenge Paul's sense of wavering. Christ's integrity is Paul's integrity. How is Paul guarding his integrity? Why is integrity so important in ministry? Why is there a higher bar set for those in spiritual leadership? What is the power of integrity?

Q: How has God established Paul and his companions among the church at Corinth? (vs.21-22) God has established (1 John 2:20, 27) and anointed them (put His seal on them; cf. Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). Jesus Christ binds them together with them. And the Holy Spirit is in their hearts as a guarantee (cf. 5:5; Ephesians 1:14;). How do you see the Trinity at work here in their ministry?

Q: What is Paul's reason for not coming to Corinth yet? (vs.23-24) It was to spare them from himself. He doesn't dare to be the lord over their faith, but work with them for their joy to stand firm in their faith.

Q: How was Paul's previous visit to Corinth a painful one? (2:1) He confronted sin. He said some hard things. Why doesn't Paul want to cause them anymore pain? (2:2; cf. 12:20-21; 13:10) There is no joy in causing another pain.

Q: Why did Paul write as he did, even though it caused him much pain? (2:3-4) Paul's tear-stained letter (Acts 20:19) was for their joy and to show his abundant love for them.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 2: PAUL ON MINISTRY (PART 2)

### Forgiveness and Ministry (2:5-11)

Q: How have you enjoyed and benefitted from the input of a seasoned pastor or missionary?

Q: If you could describe Paul in one word, what word would you use?

Q: What pain is Paul speaking about? (vs.5-6) What do we know about this unknown letter Paul references to? Paul wrote another letter known as the "severe letter," which is not included in the NT. It was clearly a difficult letter for him to write (v.5; cf. 2 Cor. 7:8-13a). We don't know much about the explosive situation that happened at Corinth between letters, only that there was a man who opposed Paul and shredded his character and ministry. A mutiny arose and some in the church sided with the man. It was sticky enough to cause Paul to leave Corinth. It also caused him and the church much pain. Why was it punishment enough to discipline the sinful man? It was punishment enough because now the man has repented the church is punishing him even more by not restoring him back into the fellowship. What they are doing is unloving and ungodly, therefore inflicting more punishment than God would deem necessary.

Q: How did Paul want to handle the situation with the man who sinned, yet repented after their discipline of him was successful? (vs.7-8) He wanted the church to forgive and comfort him. He wanted them to reaffirm their love to him and restore him to the fellowship.

Q: How are we most like God when we forgive? (vs.5-9) To forgive an offense is to act most like God, while withholding forgiveness is the most self-righteous act. God is a forgiving God. He forgets our offenses as far as the east is from the west. Jesus is forgiving even on the brink of death on the cross (cf. Luke 23:34, 43). How are you most unlike God when you don't? What would a lack of forgiveness on our part say about our Christ or his church? How is this a test of our obedience and faith? (v.9)

Q: How are we able to forgive others? (vs.10-11) I have been forgiven much. What do you learn about forgiveness and ministry from this text? 1) My ministry of forgiveness comes from Christ. 2) Unforgiveness is Satan's strategy.

Q: Is there unforgiveness in your heart today? Is there pain or embarrassment or shame caused by someone that you need to allow God to restore? Will you rejoice, today, in your own forgiveness?

### Triumphal Procession in Christ (2:12-17)

Q: Have you ever had to make a hard phone call or write a hard letter to a friend struggling with sin? Explain.

Q: What insight does Paul give into his travel plans? (vs.12-13) He was preaching the gospel in Troas (but he was distressed because he did not see Titus.) and a door opened for him to go to Macedonia (cf. 7:5; Acts 14:27; 16:8; 20:6).

Q: Why does Paul use the illustration of a procession? (v.14) It serves two purposes. On the one hand, Jesus is the like the triumphant general and Paul is conquered and called to suffer in His service—even die. The word *triumph* is used one other place in the NT, Colossians 2:15, "[God] disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by *triumphing* over them in Him." In Colossians, Paul says God leads the devil in triumph, but in 2 Corinthians, he says that God leads Paul in triumph. Both have been defeated in their rebellion against God. Both are being led in triumphal procession and shamed for their rebellion. However, there is a great difference, Paul is "in Christ." He was defeated and taken captive; but he was brought to faith and forgiven, and became a joyful servant of the greatest General who ever was. Jesus, the One who conquered sin and death. On the other hand, Jesus is like the one marched to His death too, but He rose victorious from the grave. He conquered death as the ultimate and final

sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9). And it is Jesus' sacrifice that gives Paul motivation to also give his life as a sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1-2).

Q: What is the importance of being a witness? (vs.15-16) God's work of salvation requires human witness. The Bible states that through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. What are some reasons that would block a believer from being a witness? What areas of your Christian walk do you need to be held accountable to change so you do remind people of Christ? Who in your circles of family, friends, school, or workplace are you being both the aroma of life and the stench of death?

Q: How is the gospel both a beautiful aroma and stench of death? The gospel both brings life in Christ to those who believe and judgement to those who do not believe (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18; Luke 2:34; John 9:39; 1 Peter 2:7-8).

Q: How was Paul a bold witness? Why was he so bold? (v.17) God's work of salvation requires bold witness. "Boldness" (unafraid, open, freely, plainly and with confidence) appears 42 times in the New Testament. A bold witness is not loud, pushy, obnoxious, rude, or demanding. Boldness is a simple, direct, and sincere presentation of the truth about Christ. Read Mark 8: 31, John 7:25, 11:14, 16:25, Acts 2:29. Who are the peddlers of Gods Word? They are people who use special techniques to draw a crowd. Have you ever not shared the Gospel because you were so concerned about your inability to use an evangelism technique? How can techniques be both helpful and distracting to the gospel of Christ? God's Word has the power to reveal Christ, to bring people into personal contact with the living God. One of the secrets of Paul's impact was his confidence in the power of God's Word. It was not his intellect, personality, good looks or savvy presentation (Cf. 1 Cor. 1:18, 23; Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Col. 1:5,6; 1 Thes. 2:13).

Q: What typically makes one an afraid witness? Human responses to our witness produces fear within us. Many of us are afraid to share because we are afraid of how people will respond. Why are you afraid? How is Christ your heroic victor? How is Christ sufficient for all your fears? How can your church help you to stay on mission when you struggle with boldness or fear?

Q: What authority do you place on God's Word when sharing Christ with others? How can you make the Bible more central? In all of the time you have walked with Christ, how have you grown love Him? What do you love most about Christ? Much love for Christ results in much desire to tell others. Our walk with Christ can be a parade of praise.

Q: Who is sufficient for these things? (vs.16a-17) Paul concludes by asking a crucial question —"Who is sufficient for these things?" Who can bear the weight of knowing that the aroma of a Christ-exalting life will lead some to eternal life and reveal to others death? The answer: *no one*. That's why Paul says, "For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ." (2 Corinthians 2:16-17) Are you willing to lay down your treasures to treasure Him? Which treasures will you lay down today?



## 2 CORINTHIANS 3: PAUL ON MINISTRY (PART 3)

### Credentials of Ministry (3:1-3)

Q: Have you ever had to write or receive a letter of recommendation? Explain. Why do we need such letters? What does Paul mean by his first question? (v.1; cf. 5:12; 10:12; 12:11) Does Paul need a letter of recommendation or proof that he is an apostle nor does he need to commend himself. He is in no need of one. His letters are already commendation or praise and encouragement to the church. The proof of his apostleship is already pudding. He has the credentials of what it takes to be an apostle. What are the credentials of an apostle? They must have been an eyewitness of Jesus. They are able to do the miracles of Jesus.

Q: Who does Paul commend or recommend? (v.2) He commends the church at Corinth. The Corinthians believers are his letter of commendation. Through his ministry, in which he had written upon their hearts with the Spirit of the living God, they themselves have become an epistle of Christ. The church in Corinth is the proof of Paul's ministry that all can know and read.

Q: How is the church at Corinth a letter from Christ? (v.3) They are not written with ink but with the Spirit. Paul does not need letters of commendation in order to validate his ministry at Corinth. He has a far greater commendation, namely, the work that the Holy Spirit has performed in the hearts of the Corinthian believers themselves. What allusions to other portions of Scripture to you recognize here? (cf. Exodus 24:12; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26; Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10) Paul used this contrast between ink/stone and Spirit/hearts to point out an important difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. When Paul spoke of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Living God, he drew upon Old Testament traditions. Yahweh is called the "living God" in the Old Testament to set him apart from inanimate idols. They are powerless. But the living God can move in history and in peoples' lives. The Holy Spirit had done mighty things in the Corinthian church. The living God had been among them because of Paul's ministry. How has the living God done mighty things in your life? Who's letter of commendation are you?

### Sufficient for Ministry (3:4-6)

Q: What is the confidence that we have through Christ? (v.4) We have confidence to have access to God anytime, anyplace, and anywhere (cf. Ephesians 3:12). Why do we often have more confidence in ourselves than we do Christ? How do you express your confidence in Christ? How do verses 4-6 compare with verses 1-3? Any confidence Paul had was before God and not in himself.

Q: How are we not sufficient in ourselves? How is our sufficiency from Christ? (v.5) We have no real power of our own, everything we have is a gift of God's grace. This is namely our salvation (cf. Ephesians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 15:10). How does our insufficiency keep us dependent upon God?

Q: How does Christ make us sufficient for ministry? (v.6a; cf. 4:1; 5:18; Ephesians 3:7; Colossians 1:23, 25; 1 Timothy 1:12) What is the New Covenant ministry? (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-33; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 8:8, 13-14; 9:15) The expression "new covenant" appears in the New Testament as a designation for the arrangements established between God and his people on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection.

Q: What is the letter and why does the letter? (v.6b) The letter is the Law (cf. Romans 2:27). The law condemns man because man cannot obey it in its entirety. The Law of Moses was not intended to be a way of salvation. But the early church had false teachers who insisted that the Law of Moses was designed to provide eternal life. Paul opposed these false teachers. They failed to realize that seeking righteousness by the Law was actually the way of eternal death. Who is the minister of the New Covenant? The Holy Spirit, who gives life (cf. John 6:63; Romans 8:2). Paul declared that the empowerment of the Spirit through the new covenant was the only way to eternal life (Galatians 6:8). How are you grateful for the Holy Spirit? How does the Holy Spirit give us life?

## A More Glorious Ministry (3:7-18)

Q: What makes something glorious?

Q: What is the ministry of death carved in letters of stone? (v.7) The 10 Commandments. How did they come in glory? When Moses came down from the mountain with the stone tablets his face shone with the glory of God so much that the Israelites could not look upon his face (cf. v.13; Exodus 34:29-35). What is the glory of God?

Q: How will the ministry of the Holy Spirit have even more glory? (vs.8-9) If the law condemns and the Holy Spirit produces righteousness, His ministry far exceeds that of the law. How does the law condemn? (cf. Hebrews 12:18-21) How does the Holy Spirit produce righteousness?

Q: How does the previous have no glory at all? (vs.10-11) The glory of the new far surpasses the glory of the previous that much. Does this mean the Law has no glory or is meaningless? Absolutely not. It means that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is so glorious. It is simply a comparison of glory. The Law is a ministry that is passing away (it will end), but the ministry of the Spirit remains (it will be forever).

Q: What is our hope? Our hope is in the glory of the Holy Spirit which produces righteousness within us. What does this hope produce? (v.12) Boldness (cf. 7:4; Ephesians 6:19). With the more glorious nature of the new covenant, Paul could speak with great boldness.

Q: How is our boldness contrasted with Moses and the veiled face? (vs.13-15) The veil produces a mind that is hardened because the veil was cover the glory of God on Moses' face and the Israelites thought the Law was their end (cf. Exodus 34:29-35; Romans 11:23). To obey the law was their salvation, rather than faith in the promises of God. The Law condemns. Not one person was righteous in fulfilling all the law. How is this veil lifted? Only through Jesus Christ is it taken away. Israel's inability to see then is like their inability today, unless they come to Christ. What is the veil a symbol of? It is the barrier between God and man (cf. Isaiah 25:7). Remember, in the temple there was a veil that separated the presence of God from the people. If a man were to step behind the veil (expect the high priest on the Day of Atonement) he would die. On the day, Jesus died the temple veil was torn giving all access to the Holy of Holies.

Q: How is the veil removed? (v.16) The veil is lifted when one turns to the Lord. When one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed, just as Moses did when he returned to the presence of the Lord

Q: Who is the Lord? (v.17) The Holy Spirit. Through faith in Christ the Spirit of God resided in our hearts (cf. Galatians 4:6). What is produced where the Spirit is? Freedom. How does the Spirit produce freedom? Sin no longer condemns me, but the power of Christ has released me from sins bondage (cf. Galatians 5:1, 13; John 8:32).

Q: How does beholding the glory of God transform us? (v.18) When we (like Moses) are able to behold with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord transforms us into the same image. The Spirit has given us new eyes to see the glory of God (cf. 4:4, 6; 1 Timothy 1:11; John 17:24). It transforms us into the image of God in that we reflect his image also to others (Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:49). How glorious is this ministry of the Holy Spirit? How has your appreciation and adoration of the ministry of the Holy Spirit grown through this text? How are you reflecting the glory of the Spirit?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4: PAUL ON MINISTRY (PART 4)

### Doing Ministry Honestly (4:1-6)

Q: What is the ministry that Paul is referring to? (v.1; cf. 3:6) New Covenant ministry. It is the glorious ministry. A ministry of the Spirit. Why do we not lose heart? He does not get discouraged because this is the ministry God has called him to (by the mercy of God) and God promised him there would be persecution (cf. Acts 9:3-9; 15-17). How is discouragement one of the great risks of ministry? We can easily become discouraged that God is not merciful in his call or that the gospel ministry does not have surpassing glory.

Q: What does Paul renounce? He renounces doing ministry in a cunning tactics or tampering with the word of God. There are some that are claiming Paul is dishonest and deceitful with them in the way he does ministry and handles the Word of God. Paul therefore defends himself in turn he defends the gospel. Paul would never water down Jesus or the Word. How would this shame Paul and the gospel? What are common tactics people use to use the Word of God for their own advantage? 1) by removing the text from its context, 2) by moralizing the text, 3) by using the text to promote hobby-horses, and 4) by dogmatic insistence that the text says things it does not truly say. [Hughes, R. Kent (2006-02-02). 2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness] What does he commend? (v. 2) He commends his ministry in the sight of God. He commends the truth, which he has been preaching to them. God is his witness. His ultimate concern is God's approval, not mans (cf. 5:10; 1 Corinthians 4:3-4). How is Paul openly and honestly laying out his ministry before the Corinthians? Why does he do this? (cf. 2 Timothy 2:15)

Q: How is the gospel veiled? (v.3) It is veiled only veiled to those who are perishing or are spiritually dead (cf. 2:15; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:10).

Q: How are people veiled from the gospel? Who is the "god of the is world"? (v.4) The god of this world—Satan—has blinded their minds from seeing the truth (cf. John 12:31; Acts 26:18). What does verse 4 teach us about Jesus? He is the image of God (Colossians 1:15; Philippians 2:6; Hebrews 1:3).

Q: What do we proclaim? (v.5) We proclaim and exalt Jesus Christ as Lord. Paul is not about proclaiming anything (i.e. himself or another gospel) but Jesus. What does it mean that Jesus is Lord? He is master and ruler. What is our (Paul's or man's) role? Our role is as a servant of the church and ultimately of Christ. Paul sees himself not as the man, but a servant of the Son to Man. This is important because Paul puts Jesus front and center, not himself. The real work in ministry comes from God not man. How is Paul's humility and honesty in his ministry an example to you?

Q: What words of God does Paul quote? "Let light shine out of darkness." (v.6; cf. Genesis 1:3) God spoke this at the creation of the world. When there was nothing God created light. Where else has God created light according to verse 6? He has shone the light in our hearts. What does the light that is in hearts illuminate? It illuminates the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ—the gospel Messenger. What does verse 6 tell us about the work of God in salvation? It is God who give the light (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3; Romans 10:9). To be saved on must make Jesus Lord. How does the light of God's knowledge shine through you to the world around you?

Q: How will you proclaim and exalt Jesus with honesty in your ministry this week? How is your ministry (whether seen by many or few) a glorious one?

### Hardships and the Power of New Covenant Ministry (4:7-12)

Q: Where is our treasure? (v.7) Our treasure is in jars of clay, but more specifically our treasure is “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” (v.6) Why jars of clay? At first glance, it seems odd that our treasure would be in common ordinary easy to break and easy to replace clay pots (Tupperware of the ancient world), but as you follow the verse it gives reason; to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not ourselves. What are the jars of clay alluding to? (cf. 5:1; 2 Tim. 2:20; Job 10:9; 13:12; Lam. 4:2; 1 Thess. 4:4; 1 Pet. 3:7) The jars of clay are refer it us, humans, followers or Jesus. God has given the treasure, the gospel, to us to have, hold and share. Jars of clay provided Paul with a penetrating metaphor for his and his followers’ humanity. Indeed Adam was formed out of the dust of the ground, and to dust he returned (cf. Genesis 2:7; 3:19). As clay jars we are all frail, weak, transitory mortals. [Hughes, R. Kent (2006-02-02). 2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness]. What things do people tend to boast in that boast in their power rather than God’s? (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:5; Judges 7:2) Have you embraced your weakness as a way of life—and as the invitation to God’s surpassing power?

Q: What parallels (or paradoxes) between hardship and hope does Paul make, which h is also experiencing? (vs.8-10) See chart to the right. How have you seen these things happen in Paul’s ministry? How have you experienced these paradoxes in your own life and ministry? How is it easy to use hope during hardships? How does this verse remind us of the hope we can have when hardships come? Weakness invites strength. When I am weak I seek another strength. My hope rests not in me but power given from God. How does this list give you a panorama of Christians throughout history who have spread the gospel near and far? How are these paradoxes of hardship and hope seen in the life of Christ and the cross?

HARDSHIP	HOPE
Afflicted (squeezed)	Not crushed (squashed)
Perplexed (despondency)	Not driven to despair
Persecuted	Not forsaken
Struck (knocked) down	Not destroyed (knocked out)
Carrying in the body the death of Jesus	That the life of Jesus may be manifest in our bodies.

Q: How do we carry and show the New Covenant ministry with us everyday? (v.10; cf. 6:9; 1:5, 9; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 15:31; Rom. 6:5; 8:36; 5:10; 6:8; 2 Timothy 2:11) What is the principle of power as Paul describes it? Power through weakness. Death = weakness. Resurrection = power. Note: “Death” in the context here refers to the process of dying not the state of death.

Q: How are we always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake? (v.11) Why is this happening? So that Jesus is seen in us. Why is no hardship haphazard, but part of the plan of God? It is God’s will that his frail jars of clay be used to show that the surpassing power belongs to God.

Q: How is death at work in you and life in you? It might seem like polar opposites, but when you think of death like weakness and life as strength it becomes clearer (cf. 13:9). How do you seen this verse beautifully displayed on the cross? Christ died that we might live. The great exchange of the gospel is: Christ’s life for ours. Describe the day that you died. How does life now live in you?

Q: How is ministry often the hardest work on earth? How do hardship and ministry go hand and hand? How are our hardships a reflection of the ministry of Christ? How can you embrace your weakness and God’s greatness?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4: MOTIVATION FOR MINISTRY (PART 1)

### Futures and Steadfastness (4:13-18)

Q: What sustains you to do ministry day in and day out? What keeps you going? What gets you out of bed each day to do it all over again?

Q: What does it mean that we have the same spirit of faith? Faith is what gets Paul out of bed each day, even when ministry was really hard. It's what keeps him boasting in his weakness and God's power. Paul's faith is rooted in the past (Jesus' death and resurrection), but also his future (resurrection body like Christ's) Where was it written? (v.13; cf. Psalm 116:10) How does this Psalm compare to Paul's life and words? Psalm 116 describes a time when the writer (King David) almost died (cf. vv. 3, 8, 15), but God delivered him from death (cf. vv. 8-10). David "believed" that God had delivered him and therefore "spoke" of it (v. 10). As this statement in verse 10 is the center and pivot of the Psalm, it places faith at its very heart. The Apostle Paul felt a spiritual kinship with King David because, like him, Paul had been also delivered from death (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:8-10; 4:7-11; 11:23ff.). Paul had likewise believed, and so he also spoke — as he preached "God's word" (4:2), "the gospel" (4:4), and "Jesus Christ as Lord" (4:5).<sup>2</sup> Thus Paul's gospel ministry rested squarely on God's Word and his experience of God's deliverance from death, which was in grand continuity with the experience of the suffering righteous of the past. It is from this platform of faith that Paul spoke with unflinching certitude and power. [Hughes, R. Kent (2006-02-02). 2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness]

Q: Who raised Jesus from the dead? God. How is this our hope too? (v.14; cf. 1 Corinthians 15) If my faith is in Christ's death and resurrection, I too, have the hope of a future resurrection. How does the reality of your future resurrection affect your present life and ministry now? How was Paul's ministry about preaching the resurrection of Christ? (2 Timothy 2:8; Acts 17:18)

Q: How does verse 15, give us motivation to share the grace of God given to you to others? When we have faith in our future it is hard to keep silent about it or keep it to yourself. Paul's praises the grace of God. It is a gift that keeps on giving. How is faith in the future so backwards to your world or culture? How is your future resurrection a means of missions? A motivation for ministry or evangelism?

Q: Where have we learned the phrase, "We do not lose heart" before? (v.16; cf. v.1) Paul will now give reason for the hope he has; his future hope (transformation). Why would one lose heart about their earthly body? The older one gets the more they face the reality that life is temporal. How is the outer self wasting away? Like the old first Adam our body and spirit—whole man—is perishing. How is the inner self being renewed day by day? Like, Jesus, the second Adam, our body and spirit is being restored to it's original design. Paul is saying that the old sinful man is "wasting away" (being deconstructed!), while our new self in Christ is "being renewed" (reconstructed!) "day by day."

Q: What is our light momentary affliction? (v.17) Paul speaks to the affliction he has been facing for preaching the gospel. He says it is just a blip on the scope of eternity. This is not to belittle his affliction or pain, but to compare it to what is to come. How is it preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison? Rather than a weight of affliction there is a weight of glory. The weight of the glory far out weights the weight of affliction. There is no comparison. It's like comparing a feather to a neutron star. This truth prepares our heart when afflictions come that they are only momentary, but glory is eternal. How does this verse ("momentary afflictions") bring you encouragement and hope?

Q: What kind of things that "seen" do we hope in? Everything that we see with our eyes. What are the unseen things? God, our souls, and the promises of God not yet fulfilled. How are these lesser hopes than things that are unseen? (v.18) As C.S. Lewis said, "whatever is not eternal is eternally out of date." How does your future determine your present? What are you living for?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 5: MOTIVATION FOR MINISTRY (PART 2)

### Hopeful: More Beyond (5:1-10)

Q: How would you describe your dream home? Is there more beyond this present world? How does your future affect your present? How does your future feed your hope for your present?

Q: What is the “tent”? (v.1) It is our temporal body (cf. 2 Peter 1:13-14). There is an allusion to the tabernacle here. A tent that would move from place to place. What is the tent is destroyed? We have a building from God; a permanent dwelling place (cf. Mark 14:58). Our bodies are fragile and temporary (cf. 4:7).

Q: How do we groan in our present bodies? (v.2) Our present aches and pains remind us of a place where those things we be no more (Romans 8:23). We long to put on our eternal garbs (1 Corinthians 15:53-54). How does is a greater reality for some? When do we tend to forget about the future or future bodies?

Q: What is “naked” and “clothed” in verses three and four alluding to? Paul’s groans are echoed by creation (Romans 8:19-22), Christians (8:23), and the Holy Spirit (8:26). All are groaning over the present world’s nakedness, longing for the day when our groans will be transformed into praises and our nakedness will be robed in the righteousness of Christ, just as God clothed Adam and Eve’s nakedness covering their shame (Gen. 3:21). From the beginning, God intended humans to have immortal bodies and live in constant fellowship with Him. Since Adam and Eve were kicked out of the garden we’ve been longing for home. We are most at home with God.

Q: Who has prepared us for this new body? (v.5) God. What proof has he given that he will do it? He has given us a down payment of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1:22; Romans 8:23).

Q: How are we always of good courage? (vs. 7-8) Though we are in the earthly body we have hope of our eternal dwelling. Is our faith blind faith? No (cf. 4:18; John 20:29). Even though we can not see God or all his promises we can see what God has done and is doing. The evidence of God’s presence and promises are all around us. Faith is based on sound facts. Imagination is based on blind belief. We have faith not imagination. Why would Paul long for a new body and groan in his present body? He has suffered much for the sake of Christ and would really like to be with Christ.

Q: What is our aim whether we are home or away? (v.9) To please God.

Q: What is the judgment that Paul is talking about? (v.10; cf. Matthew 25:31-32; Romans 14:10; Acts 10:42) The BEMA seat or rewards judgement, where believers will be rewarded for what they did in their earthly bodies by Christ.

Q: Why is Paul so hopeful? How does his hope increase your hope? How is the truth of more beyond a good place to rest your hope?

### Fear and Love: Paul’s Driving Motivations (5:11-15)

Q: What is the fear of the Lord? (v.11; cf. v.10; Job 31:23; Acts 9:31; Hebrews 10:31; Jude 23) It is for have deep respect or reverence for God. Often, fear of the Lord is connected to a fear of judgement from the Lord because he is holy and detests sin. How is this a means to persuade others? Paul uses the emotive word “persuade” to describe his intense evangelizing activities as they are intertwined with his efforts to persuade his hearers of his integrity of ministry (cf. Acts 17:4; 18:4; 19:8, 26; 26:28; 28:23). How does the truth that you are known to God affect your conscience or the way your live? Why would Paul fear the judgement of God? He was called to be an apostle



and to preach the gospel (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; James 3:1). Paul wasn't about boasting in himself, but the gospel. Boasting in self is liable to judgement.

Q: What does it mean to commend yourself to others? (v.12) It is to build yourself up or your case to prove yourself. He did not need to persuade God, as God knew his heart and, likewise, the Corinthians would know it if they listened to their consciences. What is the difference in boasting in appearance than what is in the heart? Appearance is the things that others can see readily, but the heart is not easily seen.

Q: What does it mean to be "foolish" for God? (v.13; cf. 11:1, 16-17; 12:6, 11) It is to act like those who boast to prove a point about the greatness of Jesus Christ. How is this all for the church at Corinth? It is all an illustration to the church to demonstrate the power of living in Christ.

Q: What is the love of Christ? The love of Christ is demonstrated in his death. Christ died our death, so we died! What unmitigated love! How does the love of Christ control us? (v.14a) Christ's love is a controlling force, that is to say, it holds us within bounds or hems us in. The overpowering love of Christ, demonstrated when he died on the cross for us, controls us and calls forth a mighty response. This is what so mightily drove Paul in his epic missionary endeavors.

Q: What is the importance of the phrase "one has died for all, therefore all have died"? (vs.14b-15; cf. Romans 5:15; 6:11-12; 14:7) Jesus died for all mankind that man might not live for himself, but live for him. As Gresham Machen explains: "Christ died for all, therefore all died" . . . is so because Christ was the representative of all when He died. The death that He died on the cross was in itself the death of all. Since Christ was the representative of all, therefore all may have been said to have died there on the cross outside the walls of Jerusalem when Christ died. How are these verses enough motivation to live for Jesus alone? No matter the situation we are going through, nothing is too tough to not live for Jesus or walk in his power (cf. 12:10)

Q: What motivated Paul? What drove him to live and die as he did for the gospel? How does the fear of God and the love of Christ motivate you? What is your driving motivation? How can Jesus and living for him be your driving motivation?

## Gospel Regard (5:16-17)

Q: How we regard no one according to the flesh? The moment we put our faith in Christ we become born of the Spirit. The flesh no longer is our slave (v.16; cf. Philippians 3:7-8; Colossians 2:11). What illustration does Paul give for this? Jesus Christ. Why is he of the flesh no longer? When he died and rose again he was given a new body. How is living in the flesh a disregard of the gospel?

Q: What are you if you are in Christ? We become new creations. Our burden of sin is gone. Our guilt is gone. Our sense of alienation from God and lostness are gone. What is the significance of the phrase "in Christ"? (cf. 12:2; Romans 16:7; Galatians 1:22) "In Christ" describes the most intimate union possible. What does it mean to become a new creation? It means that God has made us into a new person. Our sinful flesh is destroyed and our spirit body is made new (cf. Isaiah 43:18; 65:17; Ephesians 2:15; 4:24; Hebrews 8:13; Revelation 21:5). "At the same time old and new recalls the coming second exodus and the deliverance of God's people from bondage. Isaiah 43 references the old and new as it proclaims the deliverance of God's people: "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (vv. 18, 19). So the passing of the old and the coming of the new means both complete deliverance from bondage and the dynamic blessings of the new covenant. And more, this newness is ever-lastingly new!" Hughes, R. Kent (2006-02-02). 2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. How has the old passed away and the new become new? When did Paul become a new man? On the Damascus road (cf. Acts 9). When did you become a new creation? How are you living in your new life and no longer living in the flesh? How can you regard the gospel everyday?

## God's Reconciliation (5:18-6:2)

Q: What is "all this"? (v.18) This refers to everything mentioned in verses 16-17. Where is "all this" from? God. What has Christ done? He has reconciled us to himself. What ministry do we have because of Christ? We have the ministry of reconciliation. What does reconciliation mean? Reconciliation in it's simplest definition is to make a wrong relationship right.

Q: How did Christ demonstrate reconciliation? (v. 19, 21; cf. Colossians 1:20; Romans 5:10-11; 1 John 2:2) Jesus did not count the trespasses of the world against them (cf. Psalm 32:2; Romans 4:8). He made Jesus to be sin—though he did not sin himself—on our behalf that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. Jesus made a wrong relationship right. We were in the wrong because of our sin, but Jesus made it right through his death. How is reconciliation a complete work of God? God is the one who took the initiative (cf. Romans 8:3; 4:25; Galatians 3:13). Here God is shown to be the creator of the messenger, the ministry, and the message of reconciliation. This text is wholly God-centered. God is the mover of every mention of reconciliation in these verses. How has Jesus entrusted you with the message of reconciliation? How does it impact you knowing that he took the initiative to make your wrong relationship with him right? How has God displayed his love, kindness, patience, long-suffering, and faithfulness in his relationship with you?

Q: Why did Jesus need to come to reconcile the world? When did the relationship between God and man become severed? (see Genesis 2-3) Why is it impossible for man to reconcile to God himself?

Q: What does it mean to be an ambassador? (v.20) It is to represent a higher authority (cf. Ephesians 6:20; Malachi 2:7; Galatians 4:14). In human governments ambassadors often represent or speak on behalf of the president. What does an ambassador for Christ do? A Christ ambassador represents Jesus and speaks on his behalf so that others may know his message of peace and love and sacrifice for them.

Q: How do we work together with God? (6:1) We proclaim the truths to others (cf. Mark 16:20; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Acts 15:4). We mimic the saving words of Christ so that others may know him. We walk as living examples of the work of God. How has Paul called the church to accept these words? First, he implores them to be reconciled. Second, he appeals to them not to receive the grace of God in vain. What do you sense about Paul's urgency? How does his urgency affect your own ministry?

Q: What Scripture does Paul quote? (6:2; cf. Isaiah 49:8) Why is this text important for this context? Paul says, in effect, that Isaiah's day of salvation has arrived in the reconciliation of the cross. Therefore, the Corinthians must not miss this long-awaited opportunity for salvation.

Q: How is God's work of reconciliation different than what we often experience when reconciling a relationship between other humans? How does Jesus' ministry of reconciliation motivate you for your own ministry? What is your responsibility at this time or during this day?



## 2 CORINTHIANS 6: MOTIVATION FOR MINISTRY (PART 3)

### Approved: Ministry that Commends (6:3-13)

Q: We often will see the word “approved” stamped on documents or commercials. What does it mean when something is approved?

Q: What obstacles or faults is Paul talking about? (v.3) The obstacles to people believing his own apostleship and credibility of ministry. Why is suffering or trouble often seen as a weakness or fault? We think that if someone is suffering something must be wrong with them. Why don't sufferings disqualify a person's ministry, rather than amplify?

Q: How are servants of God commended? (vs.4-10) By a “blizzard of troubles:” troubles in general (v.4b), troubles from others (v.5a), and troubles from self (v.5b), inner graces (vs.6-7a), righteousness (vs.7b-8a) and in triumphant paradoxes (vs.8b-10). List all 28 ways in which Paul exhibits great endurance in multiple troubles? How do troubles produce great endurance? How do you see this unfold in the life of Paul? Why would Paul endure so much? The gospel is that important. It also models the life of Christ in action. How does endurance commend one for ministry?

Q: How has Paul laid his heart bare to the Corinthian church? (v.11) He is sharing all these things as a proof of his ministry for the sake of the name of Christ. Paul shows that his endurance through multiple troubles proves his authenticity and is reason for the Corinthians to open their hearts to his message. Why was the church rejecting Paul and his apostleship? He had glaring weaknesses and ongoing suffering for the gospel (cf. 1:3-11; 7:4-5).

Q: How is the church restricted? (v.12) They are restricted from understanding the purposes for suffering, endurance and the importance of the gospel message.

Q: Why does Paul speak to the church as to a child? (v.13) Paul is not addressing the Corinthians as one whose feelings have been hurt, he is not trying to recover his ego, he has no need to bolster his self-esteem. Paul has spoken from his heart — that is, he has opened before them what makes him tick, his inner motives for ministry. Why do they need to widen their hearts? Their hearts are not focused on the gospel. Rather their hearts are focused on comfort and ease, which Jesus never promised his followers.

Q: How are you commending the gospel through your endurance? How is it evident that Christ is worth your full allegiance?

### Bringing Holiness to Completion (6:14 - 7:1)

Q: What is the greatest danger to the church? What is the great danger you face in ministry? It is of utmost importance that we understand and believe that the greatest danger to the church is not from without but from within. This is a truth that has been repeatedly demonstrated in church history. When bad theology creeps in churches and ministry crumble.

Q: What does it mean to be “yoked” with unbelievers? (v.14a) The command not to be yoked together with those in the church who oppose the truth — unbelievers in the church (cf. 2:17; 5:12—Paul's opponents were from within the church). Do not be yoked to anyone who disses the gospel. Why are these partnerships potentially harmful for the church? These relationships can become the driving force of who we are rather than our commonality in Christ. Anyone against the gospel you should not be intimately connected with, rather we should separate ourselves from them. This verse is often used to speak to dating to to-be-married relationships where one couple is a believer and the other is not. How does the context of this verse broaden the application to be more than just dating couples? We see this exemplified in the life of King Solomon. His many

foreign wives drew his heart away from the One True God to following the gods of his wives. This can also be exemplified in business partnerships and family relationships.

Q: How do these verses build a theology of separation? (vs.14b-16) Anyone who opposes the true gospel we should not have "partnership," "fellowship," "accord," "share," or "agreement." Each of those words describe a disconnect that we must have from those who teach or promote a false gospel. Separation is based on the gospel alone. How do you see the New Covenant benefits on display in the five questions? Each of the questions drives home one of five aspects of the New Covenant (righteousness, light, Christ, believer, temple). Anyone who does not believe in Christ is contrary to Christ and the New Covenant. When is separated good or when does it go too far? Separate with those who promote a false gospel, but it goes too far when you separate over secondary issues, gray issues, or non-essential issues. What are some false gospels that can come from within the church?

Q: How are we the temple of the living God? (v.16a) The Holy Spirit dwells within every believer (cf. [Ephesians 2:22; 1 Corinthians 3:16]). How does that truth affect your daily life?

Q: Where does Paul quote these texts from? (vs.16b-18; cf. Leviticus 26:11-12; Ezekiel 37:27; 2 Samuel 7:14; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 20:34; Isaiah 43:6) Why are these text important? These texts undergird the need to separate from things that are not holy. The Old Testament references refer in their respective contexts to God's promise to restore exiled Israel to their land." G.K. Beale, *New Testament Studies*, 1989. Paul reinforces to the church that the Corinthians were full beneficiaries of the new covenant's deliverance and restoration by intimacy and adoption.

Q: How are these texts amazing promises? (7:1) What is to be our response to these promises? To cleanse ourselves from sins in the body and spirit (1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 3:3). "Body and spirit" means everything that impacts the believer's life. What does it mean to bring "holiness to completion"? This is an ongoing change to become more like Christ from the moment you are reborn to the day you die. How should this give us a good fear? It gives us a good fear of God. The demand for holiness is fearful, "in the fear of God." We will all stand "before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (5:10). Knowing this fear, we must work at "bringing holiness to completion."

Q: Are you becoming or or less holy with age? Why doesn't older necessarily mean holier? What are your greatest dangers to holiness from within? How will you protect yourself and your church from false gospels?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 7: MOTIVATION FOR MINISTRY (PART 4)

### Comfort and Joy for a Caring Heart (7:2-16)

Q: How does Paul defend himself and his ministry in Corinth? (vs.2-4) How does he affirm his love and concern to the church at Corinth? What examples of church life does Paul speak about in these verses? How do you see these display in your life and ministry and church?

Q: Where was Paul? (v.5) Paul was in Macedonia on a ministry trip. What were his experiences there? He was afflicted and persecuted (i.e. fightings with believers and/or unbelievers and fears of what would happen to his work; cf. 11:28-29; Philippians 1:21-24; Galatians 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 3:5), which cause in his great soul distress. His Macedonian ministry is also known as his Macedonian misery. What kind of discouragements have you faced in your walk with Christ and while doing ministry? How was Paul comforted during his miseries? First, God was with them (cf. 1:4; Isaiah 49:13). Second, Titus came to encourage them (v.6-7). How has this also been a comfort to the church at Corinth? Titus was a source of encouragement to Corinth because he came to share about Paul's longing to be with them and the churches longing to see Paul. What do you learn here about the depths of Paul's discouragements and depression? How can ministry burdens weigh heavy upon you and cause great discouragement even depression? (note: Paul's great love for the church came with great hurt, but also great comfort and joy.)

Q: What letter to Paul referring to? (v.8) He is referring to a 'severe letter', which he wrote in-between the first and second letters to the church at Corinth. Why would it have made the church grieve or him grieve? He grieved because he had to confront sin within the church—namely, they did not welcome back into their fellowship a repentant brother. Paul caused them to grieve over this matter, but he knows they only grieved briefly and it was for their good. Have you ever had to say tough words or confront difficult things? How can Paul's attitude through it be a comfort and joy to you when confronting or confronted?

Q: What comes to your mind when you think of the word "repentance"? Why do we often cringe at this word? What are the benefits of repentance? (vs.8-11) Repentance is good because it is a gift from God. Godly grief (or good grief) leads to repentance. Repentance causes change in our life from our path to God's path. The fruit of repentance is ongoing and great. What is true repentance? Change. From going my way into sin, rather turning to God's way of righteousness. What fruits of repentance do you see in verse 11? How does repentance bring you freedom? When was the last time you repented?

Q: What was Paul's purpose in writing the hard things? (vs.12-13a) That the church's earnestness or love for Paul would grow. In turn, that their love for the gospel would grow increasingly. How do you see the purposes of this letter being fulfilled within this letter?

Q: What do you know about Titus? (vs.13b-16) Titus was a patron of Paul's. He pastored and planted churches. He was a young man, but had great love for the church. He had a shepherd heart that cared for the church. He had a mutually deep and appreciative relationship with Corinth. He was known by his love for others. He had the "Titus Touch," which was manifest in his contagious joy. How does Paul boast in Titus and the church? Paul boasts in the way they welcomed Paul and embraced him. He praises the way they have refreshed Paul. Who is someone you really care for? What do you love about your church that you would do anything to protect? How does the example and ministry of Titus encourage you? Do you know a Titus-like person in your life? Are you a Titus to someone?

Q: How is Paul's comfort all of God? God arranged the coming of Titus just at the right time. God effected the Corinthians' godly grief and repentance. God refreshed Titus. How is God your source of comfort and joy? How does God bring us comfort through others and the church?

Q: How is discouragement even depression a reality in ministry or a reality for followers of Christ? Who is someone in the church you know needs the comfort and joy of Christ? How will you display a caring heart for them or give them a loving touch? How can you allow others in the church to be a source of encouragement and joy to you?

# 2 CORINTHIANS 8: GIVING—A GENEROUS MINISTRY (PART 1)

## The Grace of Giving (8:1-15)

Q: Have you ever been give an extravagant give from someone you knew had to sacrifice much to give it? What was your reaction or response to the gift? What does it mean to be generous?

Q: Where is Macedonia? Modern day Greece. Likely the churches of Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. What is the "grace of God given among the churches of Macedonia"? (v.1) The churches have shown much generosity, even though they have so little—literally dirt poor. What is the situation of the church there? (v.2) The church has experienced tests of affliction and extreme poverty. They were poor and picked on. What was the great need that the church was giving towards? (cf. v.4; 9:2; ch. 9:2; Romans 15:25-26; 31; Acts 24; ) The church in Jerusalem—the mother church—was experiencing great persecution.

Q: How did the Macedonian church give? (vs.3-5) 1) They gave according to their means (v.3a). 2) They gave beyond their means (v.3b). 3) They gave of their own accord (v.3c). They gave of their self. 4) They earnestly gave to to others who had a great need (v.4). They begged for the opportunity to give. 5) They gave to God first (v.5a). 6) They gave by the will of God (v.5b). How is money and giving so intertwined with the soul? (Luke 16:13b) How much time do you give to thinking about your money?

Q: What is the "act of grace"? (v.6) This is the gift for the saints in Jerusalem (cf. vs. 4, 19). The grace is the inclination to give generously and readily. What is Titus' part in the "act of grace" at Corinth? He was to complete the work among those in Corinth. Why would Paul call on the church of Corinth to give to another church so far away? This is to show concern not just for one's own church, but the church universal, particularly those suffering or in need. It also show a love and unity for those churches who are not just from a Gentile background, as Jerusalem was heavily filled with believers from a Jewish background.

Q: How does Paul encourage the church at Corinth with their strengths and exhort them to give all in one breath or phrase? (v.7; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:5) Paul shares how the Corinthians have been strong in faith, speech, knowledge, all earnestness, and love for Paul, but now, he challenges them to be abundant in this gift of grace to another church (cf. 9:8). If the Corinthians were incomplete, where are you incomplete and need to grow? How will you strive to excel in this act of grace yourself?

Q: Why did Paul exhort them to be generous? (v.8) He knows they are generous and earnest. They have already proved this to him. He wants them to shows this to others. Why is this a good reputation to spread? How can you spread the good reputation of your church that others might not be aware of?

Q: What theology does Paul give to back his exhortation to the church at Corinth to be generous? (v.9) Jesus became poor so that we might become rich. How does this truth—or theology from the life of Christ—encourage you to be generous and give of yourself? How does Jesus exemplify the greatest act of grace? (cf. John 1:16)

Q: How does Paul, again but now by example encourage the church? (vs.10-13; cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1-4) Just a year prior the Corinthians showed a readiness to give to the needs of others. Paul encourages them now to act upon that desire and do it according to what one has. What command does Paul give on giving? Note: this is the only command on giving in Chapters 8-9. The command is to finish what you were ready to do and do it (vs.11-12).

Q: What does Paul mean when he says he doesn't want this gift to be an ease for one and a burden to others? (vs.13-14) The gift is not meant to ease the sufferings of the church in Jerusalem,

but to bring them joy and relieve amidst the sufferings. Also, the gift is not meant to burden the church at Corinth. They must give out of their joy, not duty. Why does Paul say it is neither ease or burden, but fair? The joy Corinth has in giving will be the joy Jerusalem has in receiving the gift. And the joy Jerusalem has in receiving will give Corinth also a joy to be received. How can giving become a burden? When is giving a joy? Why is there often greater joy in giving than receiving?

Q: What Scripture does Paul quote? (v.15; cf. Exodus 16:18) Why is this text so fitting? Exodus 16:18 under-scores the effect of such giving as it describes how equality and reciprocity were maintained under the old covenant when the Israelites went out to gather manna. There the reciprocity was maintained by a miracle of the manna. Now, under the new covenant, it is maintained by normal, gracious giving.<sup>4</sup> The miracle is what God has wrought in the hearts of his children. And that is why Paul's message was not a Sermon on the Amount. Paul leaves the amount of the gift up to the Corinthians, because he is convinced that "the quantity of their giving will match the quality of their changed hearts."

Q: How do grace and giving go hand in hand? Giving is a matter of grace from beginning to end. Christ gave himself for us. We receive his grace, and then we give ourselves to him and to others in his name. This passage illustrates the significance of Paul's theology of grace both for the individual (having received from God, Christians give to others) and for the life of the church (having been accepted by God, Christians accept one another). Completing the collection would therefore be the theological capstone of Paul's apostolic service, bringing his ministry east of Rome to an end (Acts 19:21; Romans 15:18-29; 1 Corinthians 16:12, 6; Galatians 2:9). The grace to give flows out of the reconciling work of Christ (cf. 5:18-6:1). What is your theology of giving? What other extraordinary acts of grace do you see in Scripture? (See Zacchaeus, Luke 19:8; rich young ruler, Luke 18:22). Why is giving to your local church a great importance?

### The Integrity of Giving (8:16-24)

Q: Who is Titus? Titus is Paul's soul brother (vs. 7:7, 13-16). How have Titus and Paul been an encouragement to each other and the church at Corinth? (vs.16-17) They had the same love and concern for the church at Corinth. Paul and Titus' hearts were cloned.

Q: Who is the famous brother who is being sent to Corinth? (v.18) Ironically, his name remains anonymous. He didn't need to be named because everyone knew him by what he did. Why is he so famous? He is famous for one thing: preaching the gospel in all the churches. Why is that a great thing to be famous for? Paul could think of no higher commendation than this man's gospel fame, and therefore someday this anonymous brother's name will be recognized before the Throne in the only fame that counts. What are you famous for?

Q: What else is this brother tasked to do? (v.19) He will travel to the Paul and Titus as they carry out the "act of grace" or the gift of relief for the church in Jerusalem. Why would Paul choose a man who is about preaching the gospel to help handle money from the churches? It is clear that this man loves the gospel more than money. Jesus says over and over that it is useless to talk about loving him and trusting him and having the sweet assurance of forgiveness and the glorious hope of Heaven unless it makes a difference in our material attachments (cf. Luke 4:18; 6:24; 12:20-21; 16:13; 18:24-25). Strong emotions, deep sweet feelings, and confidence in forgiveness are valid only if they open our hands.

Q: Why is Paul traveling as a group? (vs.20-22) The group helps make a buffer of integrity so that the church in Corinth sees Paul and his three friends as wise stewards of their offerings. What does this passage reveal about one of the tensions between Paul and the Corinthians? There were enemies in Corinth had accused him of financial abuse, suggesting that the reason he didn't accept payment for his services was that he had other ways of fleecing the flock (see 12:14-18; cf. 2:17; 7:2; 11:7-12). So now Paul based his motivation to give on his own integrity and the integrity of the process of taking the offering from the Corinthians to Jerusalem. He wanted to be seen as honorable in the eyes of God and Man (cf. Proverbs 3:4). Note: Paul has distanced himself from the actual gathering of the offering. How do these verses emphasize financial integrity? How is

handling money often a point of contention for people, especially churches or fellow believers? How can this tension be minimized or eliminated according to this passage?

Q: What is Titus' relationship to Paul? (v.23) He is a partner and fellow worker. He was more than a colleague, he was an intimate associate. Can you relate or do you have a similar relationship with a fellow believer?

Q: How is the church to respond to these men? (v.24) 1) Accept these men. 2) Prove your generosity and give. Why was this so important to Paul? It was important for several reasons. The importance of the offering extended beyond the Corinthians into eternity. 1) It would prove the validity of their faith — that it was not in vain. 2) It would help the impoverished church in Jerusalem survive. 3) It would demonstrate the miracle of the new covenant — Jews and Gentiles are actually one in Christ. 4) It would declare the glory of the Lord to the church and to the world. For parallel reasons, what we do with our money is of significance now and in the world to come.

Q: What does the way you use and think about money say about your faith?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 9: GIVING—A GENEROUS MINISTRY (PART 2)

### Ready, Willing, Generous Giving (9:1-15)

Q: How is Paul reinforcing something he has already said? (vs.1-2; 8:10, 25) What does Paul say about the Corinthians church's generosity? They are ready to give. They have been ready for a year now (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

Q: Who is Paul sending? (vs.3-4; cf. 8:6, 17, 18, 22) He is sending Titus and two anonymous men. What is Paul's purpose in sending these men? They will give the offering and deliver it to Jerusalem. They are proof of the Corinthians generosity. They are insurance agents of grace.

Q: What does Paul say about the Corinthians church's generosity? They are willing to give (v.5). They have the desire to give. Note: Paul makes it clear that he is not coercing or exacting the offering (cf. 12:17-18). The church is free to give or not give.

Q: Where have you heard this principle before? (v.6; Proverbs 11:24-25; 22:9; Galatians 6:7, 9; Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38) What are blessings from God? What blocks God's abundant blessings? (vs.6-7) Stinginess (v.6) and Compulsoriness (v.7). How have you decided in your heart to give? Why does giving begin in the heart? Why is it an oxymoron to be a stingy Christians or an uncheerful Christian (Christians Scrooge)? Paul taught that the religion of the Corinthian Scrooges was vain, empty (cf. 8:8, 24; 9:3). New-covenant believers, Christians, are to be generous people who find giving a joyous venture.

Q: What releases God's abundance? (vs.8-9) Generosity and faith. How is this kind of generosity possible? It is possible by the work of God's grace in us. How does God give us what we need to give to others? How are we always rich enough to be generous? (v.8 "sufficient"; cf. 8:1-2)

Q: How does God want our blessing to overflow abundantly? (v.10-15) In finances (v.10a), righteousness (10b; cf. Psalm 112:9), ministry (v.11; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:5), and worship (vs.11-15; thanksgiving and glory to God, affection for others). How many of these blessing are not relates to money? Most all. Why is this important to understand? What area of abundant overflow are you lacking?

Q: How is God's gift the focus of this passage? (v.15; 2:14; 8:9; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8) We have an inexpressible un-pay-back-able gift given to us by God the Father in His Son Jesus Christ. Note: This is the first time the Greek word translated "inexpressible" appears anywhere in the Greek language. Paul could find no word to express the ineffable character of God's gift, so he made one up — a word that says, in effect, that the gift can't be described. Why is God's gift to you often inexpressible?

Q: How does this passage challenge your personal philosophy of giving? How can you give even if you don't have much money? (see: Parable of Talents; Matthew 25) Would you describe yourself as a ready, willing, and generous giver? Which area do you need the more change? Which area have you been most blessed by God's readiness, willingness and generosity to you?



# 2 CORINTHIANS 10: BOASTING—A DEFENSE OF MINISTRY (PART 1)

## Call to Church Discipline (10:1-6)

Q: What attitudes of Christ does Paul write the Corinthians? (v.1) Meekness and gentleness. How do you see these attitudes on display in Jesus and Paul? When Jesus came he came with humility, yet he was bold (cf. Matthew 11:29; 18:1-6; Philippians 2:7-8) as Paul has been humble face to face but bold in letters he has written (cf. 2:1-3). He came to serve not to be served. Meekness and gentleness does not mean weakness. Why are these attitudes often looked down upon in our world? How do we often judge a person's outward appearance before considering their spirit or character?

Q: How does Paul confront his opponents in the church at Corinth? (v.2) He does not want to come to them with boldness (cf. 13:2, 10; 1 Corinthians 4:18, 21). He would rather the church deal with it before he comes. What do some in the church suspect Paul and his companions of doing? Some suspect them of walking according to the flesh. Since he was so unimpressive in speech and appearance something must be wrong with him. What is the difference between the boldness of Christ and the boldness of many people in this world?

How does Paul respond to the suspicion of walking in the flesh? (vs.3-6) He says they are right he does walk according to the flesh. He is meek and gentle and humble, which is like Christ. Paul's opponents were blind to seeing or valuing this. The irony is that while Paul was walking according to the flesh it was Paul's opponents who were fleshly. Paul was on the path of life, while the opponents were on a death walk.

Q: How does Paul speak to the now and not yet aspect of the kingdom of God? He speaks to walking in the flesh while having divine power to combat spiritual forces. The false teachers were leaning more to the now side than the not yet side of things. "The Corinthians were quick to seize every emphasis in Christianity that spoke (or seemed to speak) of spiritual power, of exaltation with Christ, of freedom, of triumph, of victorious Christian living, of leadership, of religious success; but they neglected or suppressed those accents in Christianity that stressed meekness, servanthood, obedience, humility, and the need to follow Christ in his suffering if one is to follow him in his crown. They glimpsed what Christ had done, yet failed to contemplate what remains to be done; they understood that D-day had arrived, but mistook it for V-day. They loved Christian triumphalism, but they did not know how to live under the sign of the cross." (D.A. Carson, *From Triumphalism to Maturity, a New Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13* (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), p. 44.)

Q: What kind of warfare is Paul speaking about in verses three and four? He is not necessarily talking about spiritual warfare but zeroes in on warfare with his opponents. Ironically, these words are not meek and gentle. How do these verses speak to his opponents? The warfare of the false apostles, would be fought with dazzling rhetoric and esoteric preaching laced with personal accounts of their visions and experiences and spiritual exploits. The intended effect would be to overwhelm their listeners with their confident, charismatic, and display of a supposedly strong man. What was the difference with Paul's weapons of warfare? He had spiritual weapons (cf. Ephesians 6:10-20). His greatest weapon was proclaiming the gospel (cf. 2:1-5; 4:2-6; Romans 1:16). How have Paul's mighty weapons in God proved to be effective in his ministry? (cf. Acts 17:16ff)

Q: What power does the gospel have over all other arguments? (vs.4b-5) It demolishes strongholds or any arguments (v.4b), it destroys high towers or lofty opinions (sinful thinking) against the knowledge of God (v.5a), and takes every thought (mind) captive to obey Christ (v.

5). Why is the military vocabulary helpful to understanding Paul's argument? How does Christ transform any and all false thinking or teaching? Could anything be more wonderful than to have every thought experience captive obedience to Christ?

Q: Why was this such a big deal that Paul needed to defend himself? These opponents were not just attacking Paul's apostleship and character, they were essentially attacking the gospel. The salvation of their souls was at stake. Paul confronts those who rebel against the gospel message or God's gospel messenger.

Q: What is the punishment Paul demands? (v.6) Punishment towards disobedience. It is most effective when the whole church owns it and calls all its members to faithfully submit to Christ. Paul calls all believers to disassociate from people who do not teach the gospel. He hopes the false apostles will repent. Paul will be bold when he comes if he need be. The gospel is that important. When is one's obedience complete? (cf. 2:9; 7:15) What is Paul calling the church to do? Paul calls the faithful to obedience and the discipline of the unrepentant. Paul's attention will turn from the repentant majority (Chapters 1-9) to the unrepentant minority (Chapters 10-13).

Q: Why is church discipline often looked down upon in our day and age? Why is church discipline needed? How does Paul give us a loving example of church discipline?

### **Boasting in the Lord (10:7-18)**

Q: What does boasting look like? What are things people will boast in? What is your opinion of boasting?

Q: What is Paul telling the Corinthians to look at? (v.7) Look at their position in Christ (cf. 5:12; John 7:24). They must look plainly at Paul and his teaching and the truth will become clear. What is the one thing that Paul and the Corinthians have in common? They have Christ in common (cf. 11:23; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:23; 9:1; 14:37; Galatians 1:12; John 4:6). How does your bond in Christ link you to other people? Why did Paul's opposers claim to have a special bond to Christ?

Q: What authority is Paul speaking about and boast in? (v.8; cf. 13:10) The authority that Christ gave him. Why does Paul take the moment to speak about his authority? Some in the church challenged or rejected his apostleship. He boasts in his authority to build upon the church not to destroy it (cf. 12:19b; Jeremiah 31:28b). He founded the church and wanted to see it build up, not crumble (cf. 3:10).

Q: Why might Paul's letters have frightened the church? (v.9) Paul is bold and defends himself. He is willing to confront sin in the church, which is an expression of his love for the church. Who are those who are accusing Paul's letters of being heavy and strong, but he is weak in appearance and speech? (v.10) Paul was aware of opposers (false teachers) in the church at Corinth who were critical of the way Paul presented his message (cf. 11:21; 12:7). Rather than seeing how he was a lot like Christ they cut down him and his message (1 Corinthians 1:17). Why do people often value strength and suave speech over meekness and gentleness? What kind of qualities does the world look for in a leader? What kind of qualities does Jesus look for in a leader?

Q: How does Paul defend the "two-faced" argument? (vs. 11-12) Paul says, "The way I am in letters I am in person." He distances himself from his opposers. They commend themselves and compare themselves with themselves (cf. v. 18; 3:1; 12:6; Proverbs 26:12; 27:2). They were their own mutual admiration society. What is the problem with commending yourself? You are blind to many weak spots in yourself. How is comparing yourself with others a weak comparison or improper grounds for boasting? Who should you compare yourself to? Jesus.

Q: What does it mean that they will "not boast beyond limits"? (v.13) Paul confined his boasting to the geography of his own apostolic ministry, which, by the way, included Corinth. Paul will keep his boasting that city, when in reality he could boast of many cities throughout Europe and Asia Minor where he had influence. What area will Paul boast in and why? The gospel of Christ and it's

spreading fame. How did Paul demonstrate this (by bringing it) to the Corinthians? (vs.14-16) He brought the gospel to Corinth and to the uttermost parts of the world. He didn't do it for his name sake, but for the sake of the name of Christ. Why is it easier to boast in our work or service than the work of Christ?

Q: What are the grounds of Paul's boasting? (v.17) To boast in the Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:31; Jeremiah 9:23, 24). That is the trump card of boasting. There is nothing greater than boasting in the Lord. What does it look like to boast in the Lord? It is to acknowledge God for all his gracious acts and providence. It is to praise God for all that he does. How do you boast in the Lord? How is boasting in the Lord the best kind of boasting?

Q: Who's commendation does Paul seek? (v.18) He does not seek the commendation of man, but the Lord's. What does it look like to seek commendation in men versus the Lord? Why is it human to boast? Why does it take a bigger man to boast in Christ? How will we boast throughout eternity? (cf. Revelation 4:8, 11; 5:9-10; 7:9-10)

## 2 CORINTHIANS 11: BOASTING—A DEFENSE OF MINISTRY (PART 2)

### Apologia for Boasting (11:1-15)

Q: When was the last time you defended yourself? Why did you feel the need to do it? Often times one is feels the need to defend themselves when confronted or attempting to protect an opinion or reputation.

Q: Why does Paul feel the need to defend himself? (v.1) What could be such a big deal that he feels the need to protect his reputation? Some in Corinth are discrediting him as an apostle. They say he is tough on paper, but in person he appears weak and doesn't speak quite like the pros. Paul not only defends his ministry, but in doing so he defends the gospel message. It's a big deal because he is protecting the reputation of Christ.

Q: Doesn't that sound backward for Paul to boast? Shouldn't he turn the other cheek or be more humble? Instead Paul sees it is necessary he exercise "a little foolishness." Why is boasting foolish? It is foolish because no one likes listening to a boaster. If we do like people who boast, how much does God like it? (cf. Jeremiah 9:23; Proverbs 27:1; 25:14; Jude 1:16; Luke 18:11-12, 14b) So why would Paul stoop to the level of boasting?

Q: When is foolish boasting acceptable? "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." (cf. 10:17; Jeremiah 9:23-24). Nothing, absolutely nothing trumps the Lord. It doesn't matter what I say about myself, it's what I say about God. It's the essence of backward boasting. I am nothing. God is everything. When the foolish boasting is in favor of Jesus and the gospel message it is sometimes acceptable. What does it look like for you to boast in the Lord?

Q: What is the responsibility of the father of the bride? How does Paul take his responsibility seriously as father of the church at Corinth? Paul, knew just how vulnerable the church was (vs.2-4). Like a faithful father he has boasted in his daughter and wants to keep her pure and protect her from other lovers (deceivers) and present her not to just any man but the Son of Man, the Blessed Bride Groom. How does Paul's love for the church encourage or challenge your love for the church?

Q: Who are the super apostles? (v.5) Some were challenging his authority. Paul sarcastically refers to them as Super-apostles because they made themselves bigger than Paul. We don't know much about these super-apostles other than that they were skilled speakers and were paid well for their skills. I am sure they also had capes and sidekicks too. How does Paul compare himself with the super apostles? (vs.6-11) First, he admits he is not a skilled speak (v.6). He doesn't wow the crowds like the Greco-Roman speakers who were suave, spoke with a swagger, yet were synthetic. Second, he admits he excels in knowledge. In other words he says the main criteria you need to be a good preacher is a knowledge of God. This knowledge made him a powerful and persuasive preacher. Third, Paul explains that he came to Corinth free of charge (vs.7-11).

Q: What does Paul really call these super apostles? (vs.12-15) Paul will switch his tone from sarcastic to serious as he now calls these super-apostles false prophets, deceitful workers Why would he use such harsh terms? These super-apostles are changing Jesus, the Spirits work and the gospel message for their profit. Their work is downright demonic. That gives Paul grounds to boasting in the Lord. What Paul boasts in is the faithful, self-sacrificing efforts made on behalf of the gospel ministry in Corinth to the degree that his example serves to expose false apostles as what they really are, ministers of Satan. What is the end of the super apostles? (v.15b) Their end will correspond with their deeds: wrath awaiting.

How does this passage challenge all who take money and serve the name of Jesus? Do you consider the financial gain before you consider the glory of the Name? How did Jesus exemplify this in his own life? (cf. 8:9)

### Paul's Boasting (11:16-33)

Q: What does Paul feel necessary to repeat in his letter? (vs.16-18) Paul reasons that though he doesn't want to be thought to be a fool, it's okay, if the Corinthians will then listen to his boasts. It is necessary foolishness to draw attention to a greater or worse boasting happening in Corinth. Why is it necessary to exaggerate or belabor an issue to make a point?

Q: How are Paul's words cutting to the heart? (vs.19-21a) Paul uses biting sarcasm as he calls the Corinthians "wise" for their putting up with his enemies' boasting. They are actually foolish for doing so. How does Paul cut at himself to shame the church? He says, "I was too weak to enslave you and devour your resources and ensnare you and lift myself up and abuse you. Shame on me!" Is Paul's sarcasm or shaming really necessary? Is he speaking the truth in love? When are sarcasm and shaming acceptable?

Q: How does Paul have the corner on boasting? What earthly identities does Paul claim that give him the right to boast? (vs.21b-23a) Paul has a threefold earthly identity. First, he is a Hebrew. He has pure ethnic identity (cf. Philippians 3:4-6). Second, he was an Israelite. He had full religious identity with the people of God with all the rights and privileges thereof (cf. Romans 9:4-5). Third, he has—an awesome religious identity. As the seed of Abraham he was of God's covenant people and a participant of the elect people of God. Why do these super apostles have nothing on Paul? Why would Paul say that he is a better servant of Christ? Note that he does qualify it by saying that he is talking like a madman.

Q: What kind of pressures did Paul face in his ministry? (vs.23-28) First, Paul speaks about his specific sufferings (vs.24-25) such as beatings (cf. Acts 16:22-23; Galatians 6:17), stoning (cf. Acts 14:19), and shipwreck (cf. Acts 27:39ff). Second, he speaks of his specific dangers (v.26) from places and people ((cf. Acts 9:23, 29; 13:45; 14:2-19; 15:26; 17:5ff.; 18:12; 14:19-20; 16:16-40; 19:23-41). These people were both outside and inside the church (cf. v.13-15). Third, he speaks of his volitional suffering (v.27; cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:9). Fourth, he speaks of his own pastoral heartache (vs.28-29). How do you see Paul dealing with these pressures in his life and ministry? He often was reminded of his calling (cf. Acts 9), he focused on what mattered (preaching and people), and he paid particular attention to God. How are these verses an example of Paul boasting in his weaknesses? What might another pastor, church planter or servant in Paul's shoes say? He might say, "I have established more churches; I have preached the gospel in more lands and to more ethnic groups; I have traveled more miles; I have won more converts; I have written more books; I have raised more money; I have dominated more councils; I have walked with God more fervently and seen more visions; I have commanded the greatest crowds and performed the most spectacular miracles." (D.A. Carson, *From Triumphalism to Maturity*, p. 116) Why is this doubly foolish? Paul's enemies rejected his weaknesses, viewing them as disqualifications, but he continues and boasts in his seeming disqualifications.

Q: What is the final pressure that Paul faces? (v.29) The daily pressure on him for all the churches. What kind of pressure do churches put on a church planter or pastor? What does this verse reveal about Paul's heart for the church? (cf. 7:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:5) What does Paul mean by his questions in verse 29? Paul asks "Who is entrapped into sin, and I do not burn?" His people's fallings set Paul's heart ablaze with pain. How does this one verse give us special insight into suffering, weakness and Paul's apostleship in one swoop?

Q: If Paul boasts, what things will he boast of? (v.30) He will boast in things that show his weakness. Who comes to his defense? (v.31) God who knows he is not lying. Paul swears an oath. He does so that his opponents will listen to his words.

Q: What illustration does Paul use to conclude his boast? (v.32-33) Paul recounts a very low point in his life, when he was lowered in a basket from a window in the city wall to escape. Why would he

share this story? Again, it is an opportunity for him to boast in his weakness and look like a fool to his opponents. Yet there is a greater twist to this story, "The key to the answer comes from the identification of the city as Damascus. It was to Damascus that Paul first went as a proud Pharisee to seek out and destroy the people called Christians. But it was on the road to that city that he met Christ and received his call. And when he left the city it was like a lowly criminal lowered like a catch of dead fish in a basket whose smelly cargo he had displaced. In effect Paul views the incident in Damascus as a paradigm for his life. God's strength would be perfected in his weakness. Paul tells us by this story that weakness was at the heart of his calling from the very beginning of his apostleship." (Hughes, R. Kent. 2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness Crossway.)

Q: How might this chapter be applicable to your life and ministry? Can you embrace your weaknesses? Will you boast in your weaknesses?

## 2 CORINTHIANS 12: BOASTING—A DEFENSE OF MINISTRY (PART 3)

### Paul's Greatest Boast (12:1-10)

Q: How does Paul continue on his theme he's been talking about since Chapters 10-11? He continues to talk about boasting. Why is there nothing gained by boasting? (v.1) Like Paul had already said, boasting is foolishness unless you boast in the Lord. What does Paul boast in? Vision and revelation.

Q: What is the vision and revelation Paul describes? Paul shares a story about a man who 14-years earlier was taken into the heavens or Paradise (vs.2-4). Many details are unsure, but what is sure is that the man was speechless about the things he heard and saw. Who is the man Paul speaks of? Possibly Paul speaks of himself (cf. 9:4; 16:10; 18:9; 22:17; 23:11). Where is the third heaven? In Biblical cosmology views the heavens as threefold. The first heaven is the atmosphere. The second heaven is the place of the stars. And the third heaven is the abode of God. The parallel designation "paradise" seals the locale of the third heaven as the very presence of God.

Q: How does Paul use this man's story as a means to boast himself? How do the boast compare? (v.5) Paul boasts in this man's story, but then also boasts in his weakness. The two seem to be very opposite reasons to boast. What type of things do people boast in? How are we prone to one-up stories by boasting?

Q: How would Paul boast if he had a choice? Since boasting often exaggerates the truth, Paul would boast by telling the truth so that people do not see or hear more in him than there is (v.6). Paul does not want people to think too highly of him. Rather he desires people to think highly of Christ.

Q: Why does Paul have reason to boast greatly? He possesses a plethora of revelation from God (v.7).

Q: What prevents Paul from boasting more than he does? What keeps him humble? Paul has a thorn in the flesh. What is Paul's thorn? It is unclear. Some think it is a physical malady, others consider it spiritual, later the text alludes to it possibly being the hardships Paul has faced for the Name of Christ. What is clear is that this thorn is used by messenger of Satan as a means to belittling or humbling Paul probably because of his vision and revelation (v.7). The truth here about the thorn that we all should note is that while the thorn was Satan's work, it was God who allowed it.

Q: How did Paul try to deal with his thorn? (v.8) He pleaded with God three times to take it away. The thorn was something that Paul did not like. It was likely humiliating.

Q: How did God answer Paul? (v.9) God reassured Paul of His grace and power in Paul's weakness. While not taking away the thorn from Paul, God promised Himself. Why would Paul take joy in his weakness? It is all for the sake of Jesus Christ. How can you take joy in your weaknesses?

Q: What was Paul's response to God's response? It gives him all the more reason to boast in his weaknesses and is content in the power of Christ (vs.9-10). Even though Paul has faced many insults, hardships and calamities he boasts in his weaknesses and God's strength. Again, Paul wants people to think highly of Christ, not himself. How is this Paul's greatest boast? How is the pinnacle of Paul's letter to Corinth?

Q: How do you boast in your weakness and God's strength? What is your greatest boast?

### Authenticating Apostleship (12:11-21)

Q: What is the “big reason” why Paul did all this boasting in the first place? (v.11) He is defending his apostleship and ultimately defending his message as an apostle of Christ. Paul is not less than these super-apostles or supportive of their acts or teachings. Rather he elevates his apostleship and the teachings of Christ.

Q: What is the sign of a true apostle compared to a super-apostle? (v.12) Signs, wonders, and mighty works like Christ. These signs and wonders authenticated the message of the apostles. What kind of signs and wonders did apostles do? They healed the sick, raised the dead, like Jesus (see the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles).

Q: Why does Paul seek the church's forgiveness? (v.13) He did not take financial support from them. While this did not burden them, it may have been an offense to them.

Q: How does Paul not want to be a burden to the church of Corinth? (v.14) He doesn't want to be a financial burden to them, therefore he will save up his own funding in order to visit them. How does Paul illustrate this burden? He shares about a parent and child. How the child is responsible for the child, not the child for the parent.

Q: How will Paul spend and be spent for the church? (v.15) He literally had another means to pay his way and stay with Corinth on his original visit. He also gave of his time and own burdens to teach, preach and plant the church there. A sign of Paul's apostleship is his willingness to sacrifice for the sake of Christ and the church. How can you have this same heart toward the church?

Q: How did Paul's willingness to care for the burden himself get misunderstood? (vs.16-18) Some thought it crafty and deceitful that Paul had his way paid for and that he did not charge for his services like other traveling speakers (cf. 11:19). This may have been an offense to the church at Corinth that he did not accept support from them like he did others. How did Paul defend himself and those he sent (like Titus) in his stead? He nor others he sent did not take of advantage of them, but want to be a blessing instead.

Q: How is Paul's defense a benefit for the church and a proof of his love for them? (v.19) Speaking about Christ, they have also been exemplifying his words to them. This is for their building up only (see 1 Corinthians 14:26). Paul's motivation behind all his words is the church's edification.

Q: What is Paul's fear or concern when he comes back to Corinth? (vs.20-21) First, he fears that when he comes their will be ungodly communication or conflict happening among the church. Second, he fears that he will have to be humbled and have sorrow over those who have sinned and have not repented (cf. 13:2; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:18). Paul's concern for the church also confirms his apostleship. He is not about himself, but about Christ and the church. How does Paul's concern for the church encourage your own heart for the church? How do you strive to build up the church rather than tear it down?



## 2 CORINTHIANS 13: SALUTATIONS

### Coming Words and Coming Judgment (13:1-10)

Q: Have your parents ever said, "I have something coming for you"? What did they mean by this? Usually it was a treat. If the child were to misbehave then the parent has promised discipline.

Q: When had Paul previously visited the Corinthians? He had already visit two times. This next visit will be his third visit. How did his previous visits with the Corinthians affect his tone and content in this section of the letter? This will be his third visit, which will serve to verify their true condition. How is rebelling against the apostle Paul like rebelling against God? Rebellion against the Apostle Paul's leadership by the unrepentant minority in Corinth was, in effect, rebellion against God himself who had appointed Paul.

Q: How will Paul discipline the unrepentant sinners? (vs.1-2) He will not spare to exercise his authority in Christ. How will Paul know if they have repented? By the word of two or three witnesses. How is Paul's apostolic ministry like that of a prophet? He is calling the sinner to repent. Why did Paul give the Corinthians so many warnings? Why had he not disciplined them earlier? How often does your church deal with disciplinary matters?

Q: How well does the description of the Corinthian Christians' sin describe your own church and its sins? If Paul wrote to your church, what issues might he address?

Q: How does disciplining sinners demonstrate the legitimacy of Paul's ministry? (vs.3-4)

Q: What does it mean to test your faith? (vs.5-6) It is to see if they are actually in the faith if they are living in unrepentance. Repentance is a proof of faith. Was Paul suggesting that the Corinthians should examine one another, or that each person should examine only himself or herself?

Q: What is Paul's prayer? (vs.7-9) He prays that they 1) they do no evil, but do what is honorable, 2) seek the truth, and 3) be complete in strength. How does he pray for the church's perfection?

Q: Why is Paul so big on repentance? (v.10) First, Jesus big on repentance. Second, he is in keeping with the authority he has from Jesus to encourage them to repent.

Q: Do you think Paul is too harsh in the closing of this letter? How would you have closed it? How is his harshness a measure of his love? Paul hopes that they repent before he arrives so he doesn't need to use sharpness in person.

### Apostolic Optimism (13:11-14)

Q: What final words does Paul give to the church at Corinth? He says: Be cheerful. Keep things in good repair. Keep your spirits up. Think in harmony. Be agreeable. How is this verse a good challenge for all relationships, especially those with other followers of Jesus? (v.11) What is the result of living this way with one another? The God of peace and love will be with them.

Q: How does Paul ask them to greet one another? Greet them with a holy embrace (v.12). A kiss was a manner rooted in the Jewish culture of that time. Even today many churches in the Middle and Far East practice light kissing on the cheek or lips among members of the same gender. Paul clarifies it among believers as "holy". Who does Paul send greetings from? (v.13) All the believers he is with presently.

Q: How do you see the Trinity on display in verse 14? We see all three persons of the Godhead on display: the amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God the Father, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit.

Q: How has Paul's second letter to Corinth been an encouragement to you? What keepsakes have you taken away from this letter?