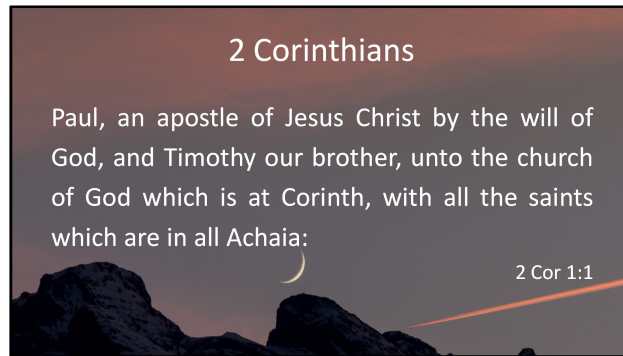


2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 1



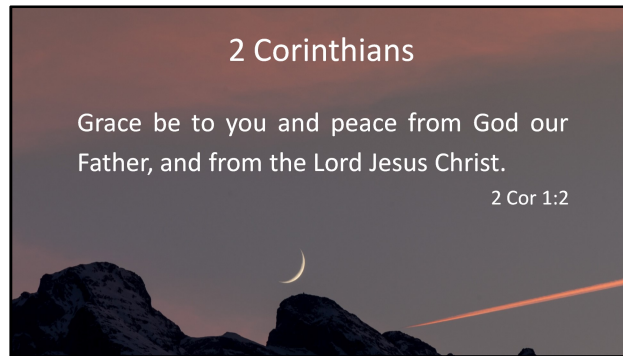
2 Cor 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

Paul opens this epistle by declaring his apostolic authority as he does in eight of his other epistles.

More importantly he adds that he did not bestow this call upon himself, as many modern day apostles do but his apostleship was consistent with the will of God.

He identifies himself and Timothy as the senders of the communication and the church of Corinth as the recipients.

with all the saints When I person cons to Christ he is immediately a saint. This does not mean that he is perfect it means that he is perfect in the righteousness of Christ and therefore a saint

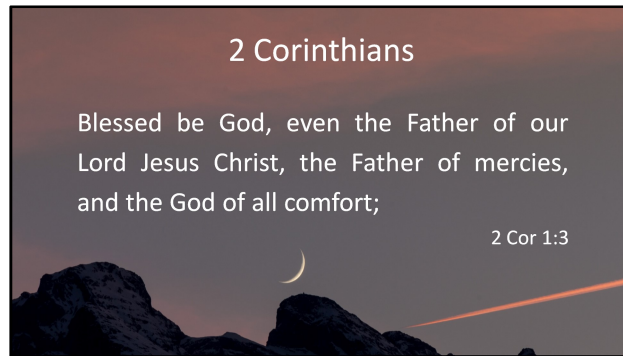


2 Cor 1:2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be to you and peace - this is not merely a salutation on Paul's part, rather he uses these terms in their theological meaning:

Grace has a dual meaning (1) unmerited divine assistance and (2) the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in one's life.

Peace would refer to sanctifying peace which one experiences as he successfully navigates the sanctification process.



2 Cor 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort

Blessed be God - this affirmation simply encourages the saints to bless the Lord.

Bless - *Eulogētos* is the root of the English word “eulogy” and literally means, “to speak well of.”

the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ - The Old Testament frequently refers to God as “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” but the New Testament identifies Him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If Jesus is fully God, why would the Father be referred to as the God... of our Lord Jesus Christ? Because in His deity, Jesus is fully equal to the Father but in His humanity, He submitted to the Father.

2 Corinthians

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

2 Cor 1:4

2 Cor 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation - God comforts His people not only because He is by nature a merciful comforter but also because He has promised to comfort them. This comfort is not a given but must be appropriated by faith.

tribulation - *thlipsis* literally means "pressure."

that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble - Suffering believers receive God's comfort so that they will be able to comfort others. Believers receive comfort in order to be passed on to others.

by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. - Paul viewed himself as a conduit through which God's comfort could flow to the Corinthians - a conduit widened by all the suffering he had endured.

2 Corinthians

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so
our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

2 Cor 1:5

**2 Cor 1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also
aboundeth by Christ.**

*Paraphrase: "For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our
comfort is abundant through Christ."*

Those who experience the sufferings of Christ... in abundance will find that God's
comfort is abundant through Christ.

2 Corinthians

And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

2 Cor 1:6

2 Cor 1:6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

This verse is designed to show one of the reasons of the sufferings which the apostles had endured;

It is for your consolation and salvation - affliction is endured in order to secure your comfort, and promote your salvation.

Which is effectual - denotes that their salvation would be effected, worked out, or secured by the patient endurance of such sufferings.

Which is effectual - *energoumenen* denotes here " the phrase denotes that their salvation would be effected, worked out, or secured by the patient endurance of such sufferings.

Or whether we be comforted ... - One benefit of our being comforted is, that we may be able to impart consolation to you in the times of similar trial and calamity;

2 Corinthians

And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that
as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye
be also of the consolation

2 Cor 1:7

2 Cor 1:7 And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation

our hope of you is stedfast - we have a confident expectation that you will bear trials and be sustained by the Christian hope.

ye are partakers of the sufferings - trials were common in all the early churches and served to unite all Christians in common bonds.

so shall ye be also of the consolation - Those united in common sufferings would also share in the common consolation.

2 Corinthians

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

2 Cor 1:8

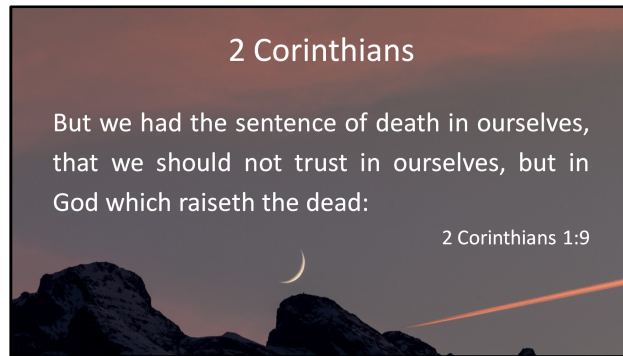
2 Cor 1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia - The object here is to give a full explanation of the nature of Paul's trials, to which he had referred in **2Co 1:4**. He presumed that the Corinthians would feel a deep interest in him and in his trials.

That we were pressed out of measure - see **Acts 19**. We were borne down or weighed down by calamity.

Above strength - Beyond our strength. More than in ourselves we were able to bear without the strengthening of the Holy Spirit.

Insomuch that we despaired even of life - Either expecting to be destroyed by the wild beasts with which he had to contend or to be destroyed by the people.

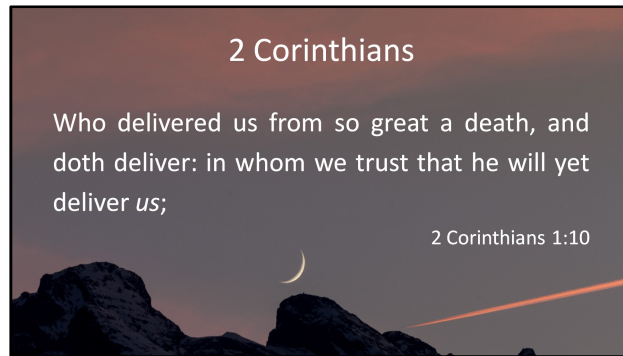


2 Corinthians 1:9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves. It means that Paul felt that he was condemned to die; that he felt as if he were under sentence of death, and with no hope of acquittal; he was called to contemplate the hour of death as just before him.

That we should not trust in ourselves. In the time to which Paul refers, he was in so great danger, and had so certain a prospect of death, that he could put no reliance on himself, he felt that he must die; and that human aid was vain.

But in God which raiseth the dead. Intimating that a rescue in such circumstances would be like raising the dead. It is probable that on this occasion Paul was near dying; that he had given up all hope of life.

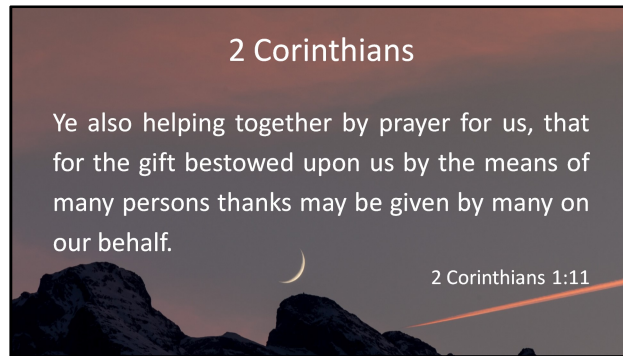


2 Corinthians 1:10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us*;

Who delivered us from so great a death - From a death so terrible and from a prospect so alarming.

And doth deliver - Continues yet to deliver us or preserve us.

In whom we trust that he will yet deliver us - That He will continue to preserve us.



2 Corinthians 1:11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

Ye also helping together by prayer for us - Tindal renders this, "in connection with the close of the previous verse, 'we trust that yet hereafter He will deliver us, by the help of your prayer for us.'"

That for the gift bestowed upon us - The "gift" here referred to means, doubtless, the *favour* shown to him in his rescue from so imminent a peril. He felt that this was owing to the prayers of many persons on his behalf.

By the means of many persons - Probably meaning that the favour referred to had been imparted by means of the prayers of many individuals who had taken a deep interest in his welfare.

Thanks may be given by many on our behalf - Many may be induced also to render thanks for my deliverance. The idea is that as he had been delivered from great peril by the prayers of many persons, it was proper also that thanksgiving should be offered by as many in his behalf or on account of his deliverance.

2 Corinthians

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

2 Corinthians 1:12

2 Corinthians 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

For our rejoicing is this - The cause of our rejoicing.

The testimony of our conscience - An approving conscience. It does not condemn me on the subject.

that in simplicity and godly sincerity - Christian simplicity, frankness and integrity. It stands opposed to double-dealings and purposes.

Not with fleshly wisdom - Not with the wisdom of this world; not by the principles of cunning, mere policy and expediency with ulterior motives.

but by the grace of God - Locke renders it, "By the favour of God directing me." God had shown him *favour*. God had directed him and He had kept him from the crooked and devious ways of mere worldly policy.

We have had our conversation in the world - We have conducted ourselves and lifestyles everywhere we have been.

2 Corinthians

For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end;

2 Corinthians 1:13

2 Corinthians 1:13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end;

For we write none other things unto you - Paul had just declared that he had been actuated by pure intentions and by entire sincerity. He had in all things been influenced by the grace of God.

And I trust ye shall acknowledge - I trust that my conduct will be such as to convince you always that I am actuated by such principles. I trust you will never witness any departure from them.

2 Corinthians

As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit;

2 Corinthians 1:14-15

2 Corinthians 1:14-15 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit;

As also ye have acknowledged us - You have admitted to my singleness of aim and purity of intention by your former acquaintance with me.

In part - The sense seems to be, "as part of you acknowledge;" meaning that a portion of the church was ready to concede to him the praise of consistency and uprightness, though there was a faction or a part that denied it.

That we are your rejoicing - That we are your joy and your boasting. That is, you admit me to be an apostle; you regard me as your teacher and guide.

Even as ye also are ours - as you will be our rejoicing in the day when the Lord Jesus shall come to gather His people to Himself.

minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit - he had been the means of conferring important favours on them and he was desirous of being again with them.

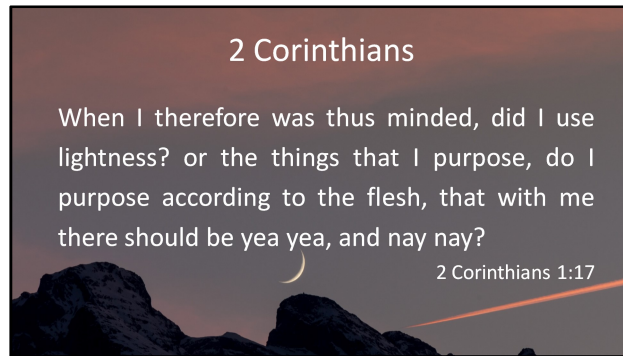
2 Corinthians

And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea.

2 Corinthians 1:16

2 Corinthians 1:16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea.

And to pass by you - His design was to pass through Corinth and Achaia on his journey. This was not the direct way from Ephesus to Macedonia.



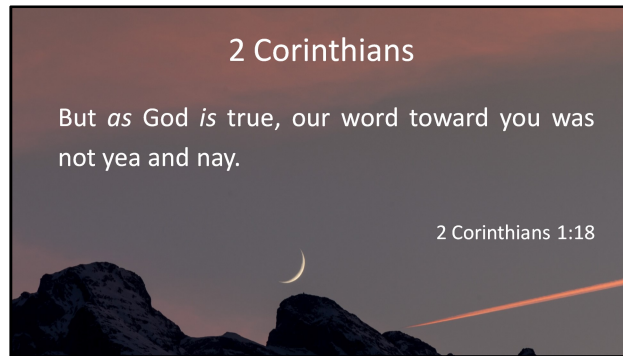
2 Corinthians 1:17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay?

When I therefore was thus minded - When I formed this purpose; when I willed this and expressed this intention.

did I use lightness? - This charge against him was probably that he had made the promise in a trifling and thoughtless manner. By the interrogative form here, he sharply denies that it was a purpose formed in a light and trifling manner.

Do I purpose according to the flesh - In such a manner as may suit my own convenience and carnal interest. Do I form plans adapted only to promote my own ease and gratification?

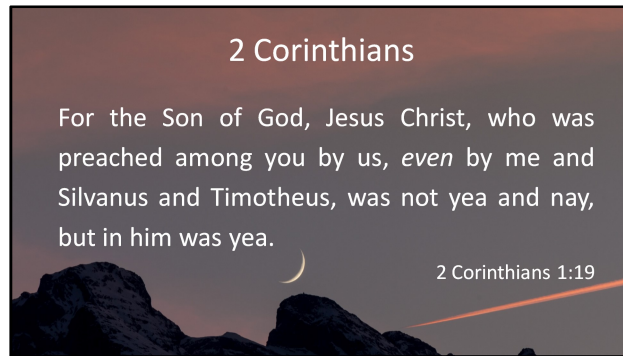
that with me there should be yea yea and nay nay? - "That there should be such inconstancy and uncertainty in my counsels and actions, that no one could depend on me or know what he had to expect from me."



2 Corinthians 1:18 But *as God is true*, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

But as God is true - Tindal renders this, in accordance more literally with the Greek, "*God is faithful.*"

our word toward you was not yea and nay - His words and promises were not characterized by inconstancy and changeableness. It was not his character to be fickle, unsettled and vacillating.



2 Corinthians 1:19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

For the Son of God - Paul states that he felt himself bound to maintain the strictest veracity, for two reasons:

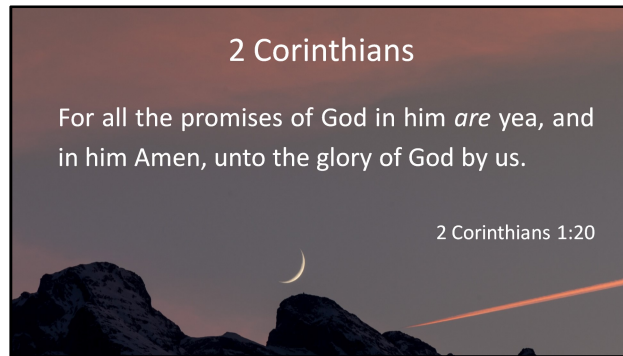
1. that Jesus Christ always evinced the strictest veracity (vs 19)
2. God was always true to all the promises that he made (vs 20)

Therefore, as Paul he was bound to also maintain a character irreproachable in regard to veracity just as the Saviour and God.

Was not yea and nay - Neither Christ nor our representation of Him is to be fickle and changeable but rather immutable.

But in him was yea - Christ was not one thing at one time and another at another. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to day and for ever.



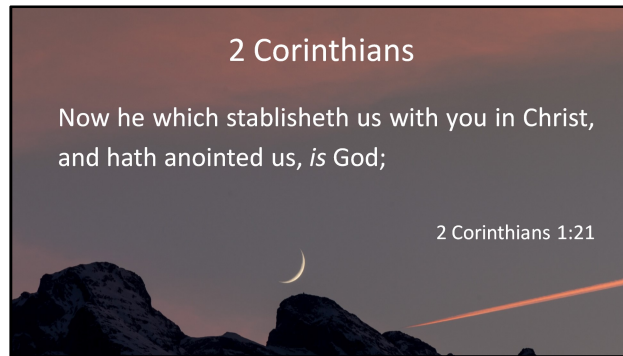
2 Corinthians 1:20 For all the promises of God in him *are yea*, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

For all the promises of God in him *are yea* - The promises of God which are made through Christ are:

1. the pardon of sin to the penitent;
2. the sanctification of his people;
3. support in temptation and trial;
4. guidance in perplexity;
5. peace in death;
6. eternal glory beyond the grave.

All of these are made through a Redeemer and none of these shall fail.

Are yea - There will be no vacillation on the part of God, no fickleness and no abandoning of His gracious intention.



2 Corinthians 1:21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God;

Now he which stablisheth us - Refers to God who makes us *firm*, confirms us in the hopes of the Gospel, and who gives us grace to be faithful according to His promises to us.

And hath anointed us - Us who are Christians. It was customary to *anoint* kings, prophets and priests on their entering into their office. Likewise, we are anointed into Christ.

1 John 2:27 But *the anointing which ye have received of him* abideth in you and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things and is truth and is no lie and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

2 Corinthians

Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 1:22

Earnest: *arrhabon* - part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest

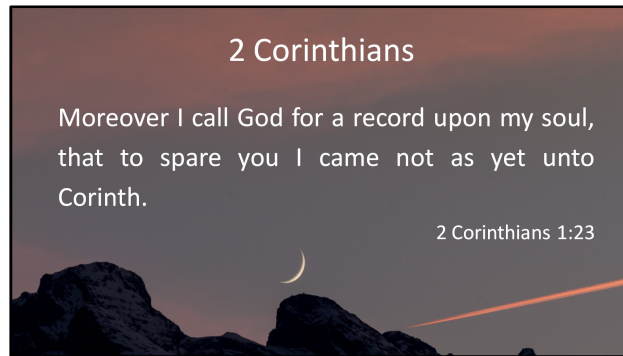
2 Corinthians 1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Who hath also sealed us - to make fast with a seal or signet. To denote that something is genuine, authentic, - as when a deed, compact or agreement is sealed. It is thus made sure and is confirmed or established. Hence, it is applied to *persons* as denoting that they are approved.

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

And given the earnest of the Spirit - means properly a pledge given to ratify a contract; a first payment which is regarded as a pledge that all the price will be paid. (*a down payment*).

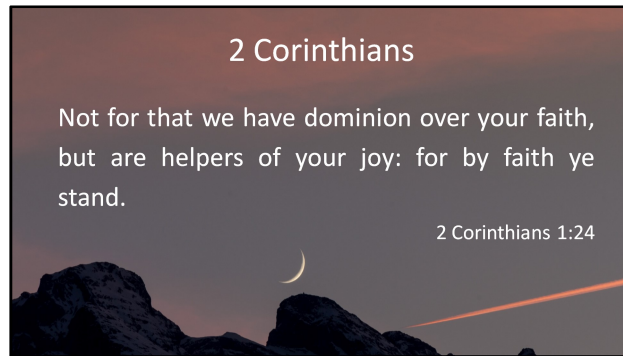
Earnest: *arrhabon* - part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest.



2 Corinthians 1:23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

I call God for a record upon my soul - in the Greek, "I call God for a witness *against* my soul." It is a solemn oath or appeal to God. It implies that if he did not in that case declare the truth, he desired that God would be a witness against him and would punish him accordingly.

That to spare you - If he went among them in the state of irregularity and disorder which prevailed there, he would feel it to be necessary to exert his authority as an apostle and remove at once the offending members from the church.



2 Corinthians 1:24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

Not for that we have dominion - Paul spared them, not wishing to express dominion over them. Paul did not invoke his apostolic authority and the severity of apostolic discipline.

Are helpers of your joy - The main object was to promote their joy. This is what Paul pursued in his plans; in order to secure this, he forbore to come to them.

2 CORINTHIANS

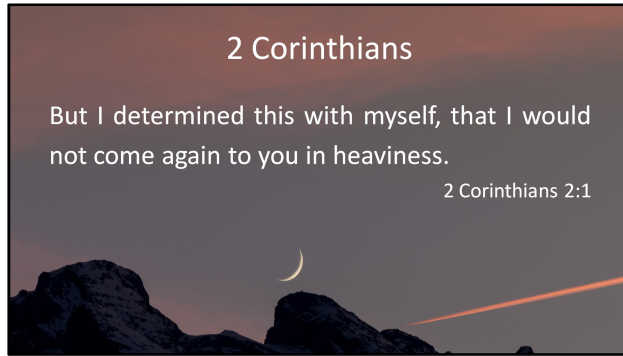
A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 2

2 Corinthians

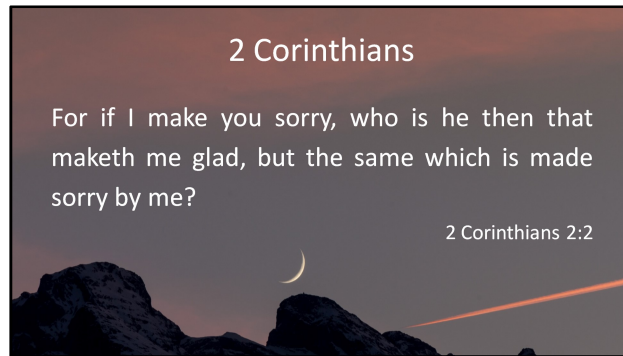
But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.

2 Corinthians 2:1



But I determined this with myself - I made up my mind on this point.

That I would not come again to you in heaviness - I would not come while there existed among you such irregularities as must have pained my heart, and as must have compelled me to resort to such acts of discipline as would be painful to you.



2 Corinthians 2:2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?

For if I make you sorry - "If when I should come among you I should be called on to inflict sorrow by punishing your offending brethren by an act of severe discipline as soon as I came, who would there be to give me comfort but those very persons whom I had affected with grief?"

2 Corinthians

And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.

2 Corinthians 2:3

2 Corinthians 2:3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.

And I wrote this same unto you - referring to what he had written to them in the former epistle, particularly to what he had written in regard to the incestuous person, requiring them to excommunicate him.

I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice – a congregation will either be a joy to a pastor or a source of sorrow. As well, each Christian in the congregation will bring joy or sorrow to a pastor's heart.

2 Corinthians

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

2 Corinthians 2:4

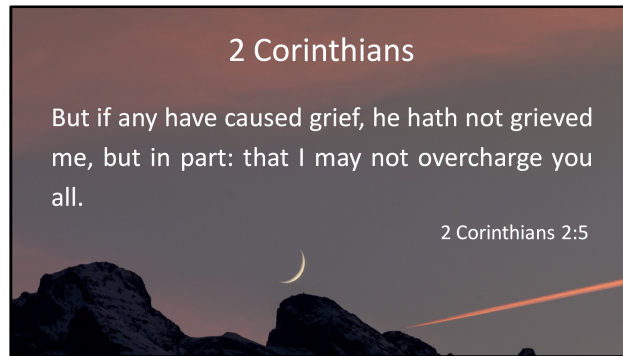
2 Corinthians 2:4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you

For out of much affliction - Possibly Paul's enemies had charged him with being harsh and overbearing. They may have said that there was much needless severity in his letter.

I wrote unto you with many tears - This was an instance of Paul's great tenderness of heart. With all his strength of mind and all his courage and readiness to face danger, Paul was not ashamed to weep.

Not that ye should be grieved - It was not my objective to give you pain.

But that ye might know the love - This was one of the best evidences of his great love to them. The highest proof of affection when we faithfully and affectionately admonish one of error and we do it with tears.



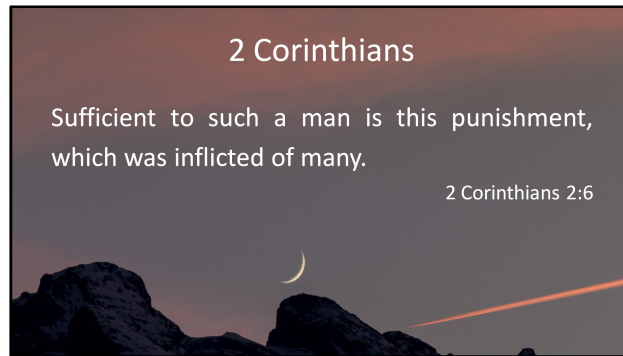
2 Corinthians 2:5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

If any have caused grief - There is an allusion to the incestuous person. He did not use any abusive or severe epithets but he gently insinuates that he "had caused grief" and pained the hearts of his brethren.

1 Corinthians 5:1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles, that one has his father's wife.

He hath not grieved me, but in part - He has not particularly offended or grieved me. He has grieved me only in common with others. I am but one of a great number who have felt the deepest concern on account of his conduct.

That I may not overcharge you all - That I may not *bear hard* on you all; that I may not accuse you all of having caused me grief.



2 Corinthians 2:6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many

Sufficient to such a man - The incestuous person that had been by Paul's direction removed from the church. The object of Paul here is to have him again restored. For that purpose he says that the punishment which they had indicted on him was "sufficient."

Which was inflicted of many - Paul had required the church to administer this act of discipline. It is evident that the *whole* church was concerned in the administration of the act of discipline, because of the words "of many."

2 Corinthians

So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

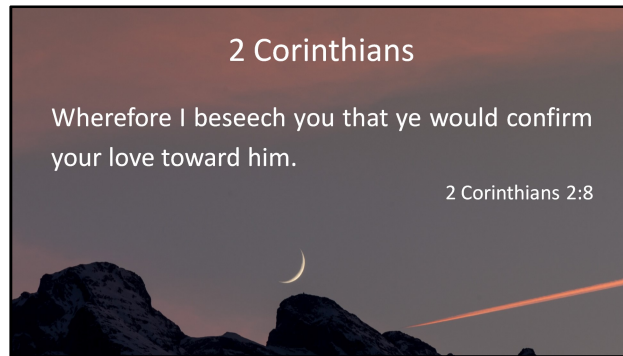
2 Corinthians 2:7

2 Corinthians 2:7 So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow

So that contrariwise, Ye ought rather to forgive him - Rather than continue the pain and disgrace of excommunication.

And comfort him - There is every reason to think that this man became a sincere penitent. We are not to comfort those who voluntarily sin without repentance.

Lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up - Should be overcome with grief and should be rendered incapable of usefulness by his excessive sorrow.



2 Corinthians 2:8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.

Tindal has well rendered it, "Wherefore I exhort you that love may have strength over him." Paul referred doubtless, here, to some public act of the church by which the sentence of excommunication might be removed and by which the offender might have a public assurance of their favour.

2 Corinthians

For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

2 Corinthians 2:9

2 Corinthians 2:9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

This was the main reason why he *wrote* to them rather than to come personally among them. The thing ought to have been done. The offender ought to be punished. Paul says that he adopted the method of writing to them, rather than of coming among them in person, in order to give them an opportunity to show whether they were disposed to be obedient.

2 Corinthians

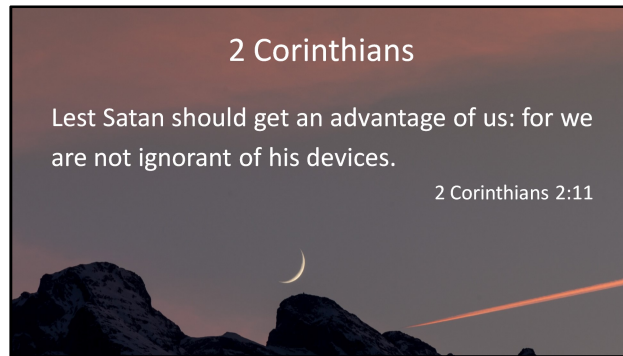
To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ;

2 Corinthians 2:10

2 Corinthians 2:10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ;

To whom ye forgive any thing - The sense here is, "I have confidence in you as a Christian society, and such confidence, that if you forgive an offence in one-of your members, I shall approve the act and shall also be ready to forgive."

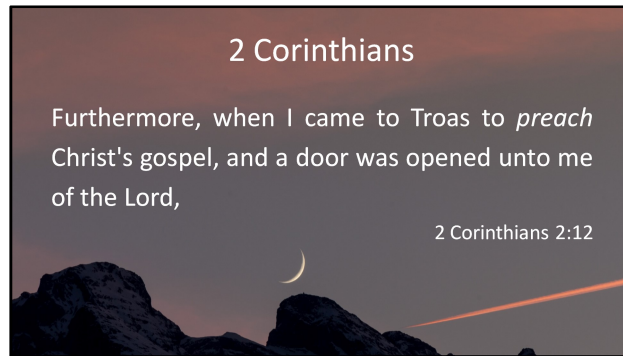
For your sakes - It is not on account of the offender alone; it is in order to promote the happiness and purity of the church.



2 Corinthians 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Should get an advantage of us - literally "That we may not be defrauded by Satan." Satan's purpose may be to be needlessly severe in discipline and to plant an unkind and unforgiving spirit. Thus, at the same time, he would injure the cause of religion and ruin him who had been the subject of discipline.

For we are not ignorant of his devices - We are not ignorant of the great number of stratagems. It is by the pretensions to great purity and love of truth --and by a harsh, severe, censorious spirit, Satan often takes advantage of the Church and advances his own dark and mischievous designs.



2 Corinthians 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

When I came to Troas - This was a city on the regular route from Ephesus to Macedonia. Paul took that route because on his journey to Macedonia he had resolved, for the reasons above stated, not to go to Corinth.

And a door was opened unto me - There was an opportunity of sharing the Gospel and the people were disposed to hear the Gospel.

2 Corinthians

I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

2 Corinthians 2:13

2 Corinthians 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: - Even though there was an open door, Paul felt he could not do all that he needed to if he did not have Titus there. Paul did not regard himself as a one-man show; he knew he needed other people with him and beside him.

2 Corinthians

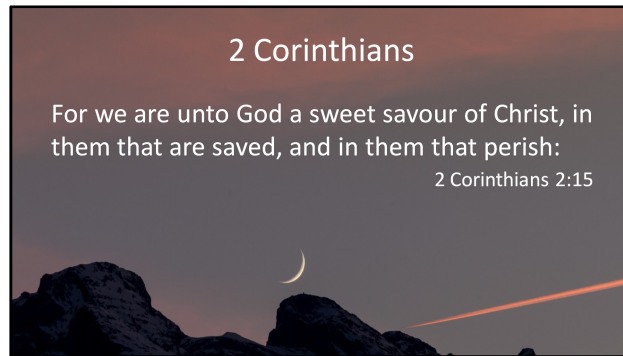
Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

2 Corinthians 2:14

2 Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ - Paul dealt with criticism from the Corinthian Christians who said he was unreliable and fickle because of his travel plans. More than anything, he wanted the Corinthian Christians to know he is following Jesus Christ .

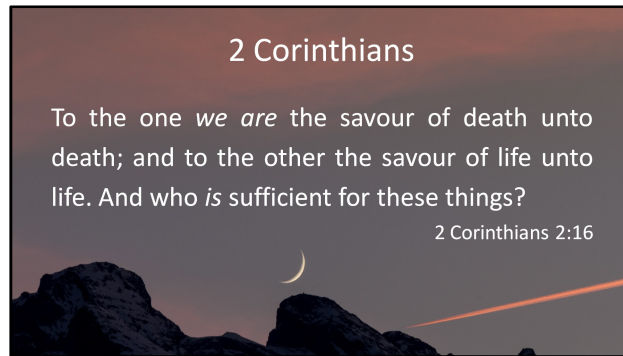
maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place - God uses Paul to share the pleasant spiritual fragrance of the Gospel everywhere he went.



2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

For we are unto God - The meaning is undoubtedly to counter the charges of his detractors, that his well-meant endeavours, and labours, and self-denials in preaching the Gospel, were acceptable to God.

a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish – based on the scent the fruit is identifiable. Paul states we are an identifiable *“fragrance of Christ”* both to those who are saved and to those who will be lost.

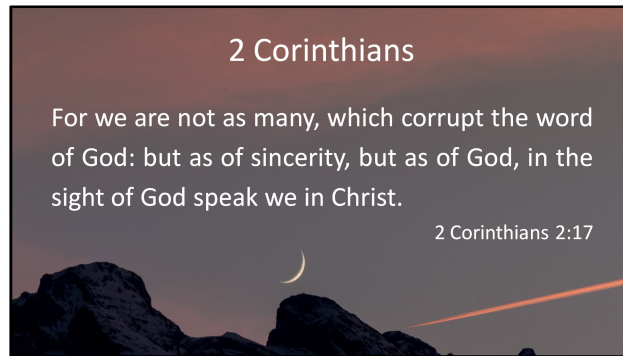


2 Corinthians 2:16 To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?

To the repentant, the "*fragrance of Christ*" is unto life; to the rebellious, the "*fragrance of Christ*" is unto death.

In the same way, the message of the Gospel is a message of life to some and a message of condemnation to those who reject it (John 3:17-21).

Who is sufficient for these things? - When Paul thinks of the greatness of God's plan, he wonders if anyone is sufficient to play a role in it. "In himself, no one is. But someone has to preach Christ and Paul proceeds to show that he is sufficient." (Robertson)



2 Corinthians 2:17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God - The word *corrupt* has the idea of “adulterating” or “watering down” for gain and was especially used of a wine seller who watered down the wine for bigger profits.

Corrupt: *kapeleuo* - to retail, to adulterate

but as of sincerity - Sincerity is the ancient Greek word *eilikrineia*, which means “pure” or “transparent.”

sincerity : *heilikrineia* - clearness, transparent, purity. “It may describe something which can bear the test of being held up to the light of the sun and looked at with the sun shining through it.”

in the sight of God speak we in Christ - Paul was always aware that his first audience in ministry was God Himself. Every word he spoke, he spoke in the sight of God.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 3

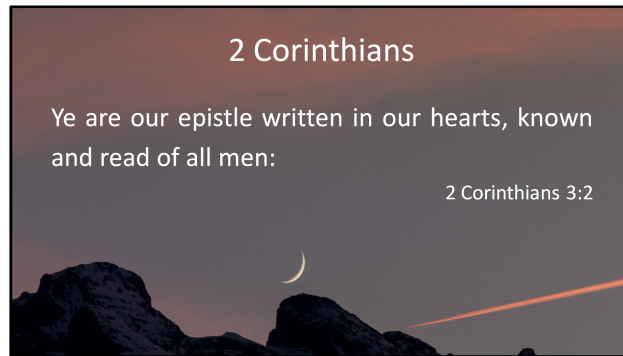
2 Corinthians

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you?

2 Corinthians 3:1

2 Corinthians 3:1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you?

need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation - A false prophet or apostle could travel from city to city and easily say, "Paul sent me, so you should support me." To help guard against problems like this, letters of recommendation were often sent with Christians as they traveled.



2 Corinthians 3:2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

You are our epistle - Paul has a letter of recommendation, but it isn't written on paper. Paul says the letter is written in our hearts, and it is known and read by all men.

There was nothing wrong with a letter of commendation written on paper but how much better to have a living letter of commendation! The Christians at Corinth, along with groups of Christians wherever Paul had worked, were his letters of commendation.

2 Corinthians

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

2 Corinthians 3:3

2 Corinthians 3:3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

Paul lays out his spiritual letter of recommendation

the epistle of Christ ministered by us - Paul's letter of recommendation has an author, Jesus Christ. The Corinthian Christians were indeed Paul's letter of recommendation, yet he realized that he did not write that letter - Jesus did. Paul is not trying to say, "I made you the Christians you are," but he is saying, "God used me to make you the Christians you are."

Ministered by us - Paul's letter of recommendation was written with a "pen" and the "pen" was Paul himself. He "wrote into" the lives of the people he served.

Written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God - Paul's letter of recommendation was written with "ink," and the "ink" was the Holy Spirit.

On tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart - Paul's letter of recommendation was written on "paper" or tablets, and the "paper" was the hearts of the Corinthian Christians.

2 Corinthians

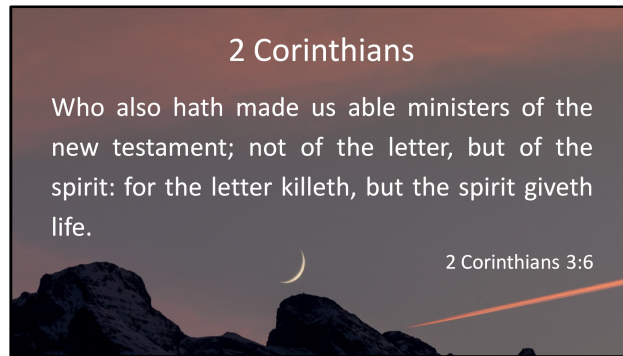
And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God;

2 Corinthians 3:4-5

2 Corinthians 3:4-5 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God;

We have such trust through Christ toward God - Paul knows it is no small thing to say, "You are my letter of recommendation" and "I am a pen in God's hand." But his place for thinking these big ideas is in Jesus, not in himself.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves - Paul doesn't consider himself sufficient for the great task of changing lives for Jesus. Only Jesus is sufficient for such a big job.



2 Corinthians 3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Ministers of the new covenant - The idea of a new covenant was prophesied in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 31:31) and put into practice by Jesus (Luke 22:19-20).

The ancient Greek word for covenant (*diatheke*) had the ordinary meaning of a “last will and testament.” Paul’s use of the word reinforces the sovereignty of God, because **it is not a negotiated settlement, but a divine decree.**

Not of the letter but of the Spirit - When Paul contrasts the letter and the Spirit, the “letter” is in reference to the Old testament and the “Spirit” to the New Testament

The letter is the Law in its outward sense, written on tablets of stone. The letter of the Law came by the Old Covenant. It was good in itself but it gave us no power to serve God.

The indwelling Spirit then becomes for us a Law written on our hearts. He is in us to guide us and be our “Law.” It isn’t that the Holy Spirit replaces the written Law but completes and fulfills the work of the written Law in our hearts.

2 Corinthians

But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away:

2 Corinthians 3:7

2 Corinthians 3:7 But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away:

the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones - refers to the Old Testament Law of Moses as a “*ministration of death*” written upon two table of stone (the 10 commandments). The Law was never given to produce life; neither can it produce life.

Romans 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the Law, **did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.**

was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance - the glory of the Old Covenant was shown in the face of Moses and the glory of his countenance.

Exodus 34:29-30 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that **Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.** And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.

which *glory* was to be done away: - The glory of the Old Covenant shining through the face of Moses was a fading glory but the glory of the New Covenant endures without fading.

2 Corinthians

How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

2 Corinthians 3:8-9

2 Corinthians 3:8-9 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious - If the Old Covenant, which brought death had this fading glory, we should expect greater glory in the New Covenant, which brings the ministry of the Spirit and life.

2 Corinthians

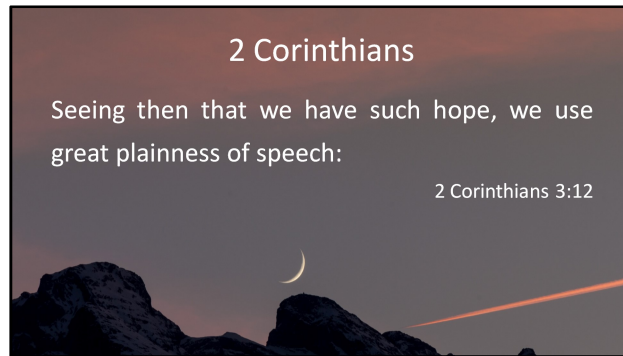
For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

2 Corinthians 3:10-11

2 Corinthians 3:10-11 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

The Old Covenant was a ministry of condemnation but the New Covenant is the ministry of righteousness. The Old Covenant is passing away but the New Covenant remains. No wonder the New Covenant is much more glorious!

The Old Covenant had glory but the glory of the New Covenant far outshines it just as the sun always outshines the brightest moon. Compared to the New Covenant, the Old Covenant had no glory because of the glory that excels in the New Covenant.



2 Corinthians 3:12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

Since our hope is in a more glorious covenant, we can have a more glorious hope. Because of this hope, Paul can use great boldness of speech. The old covenant restricted and separated men from God; the new covenant brings us to God and enables us to come boldly to Him.

2 Corinthians

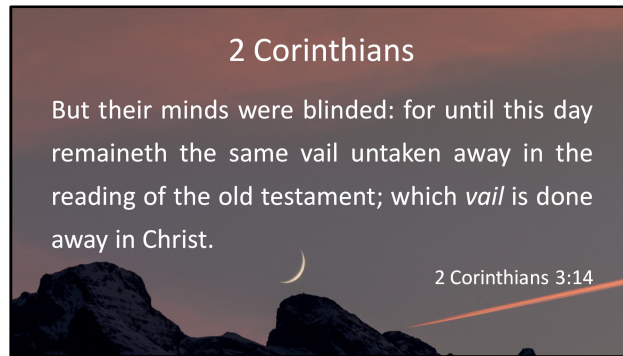
And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

2 Corinthians 3:13

2 Corinthians 3:13 And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face - Even Moses did not have real boldness under the Old Covenant. Whereas, Paul would say “come boldly to the throne of grace.” Moses put a fence around the Mount lest people should rush in on God and be consumed.

the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished - Paul explains one of the purposes of the veil was to hide the diminishing glory of his face because the glory was fading. The passing glory of the Old Covenant contrasts with the enduring glory of the new covenant.



2 Corinthians 3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ.

But their minds were blinded: - Since the veil hid the face of Moses, the children of Israel couldn't see any of the glory from his face. Therefore, the contrast isn't only between passing glory and enduring glory but also between concealed glory and revealed glory.

for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament - Paul says that most of the Jews of his day could not see that the glory of Moses' ministry faded in comparison to the ministry of Jesus.

which *vail* is done away in Christ - Paul knew this well because he was once veiled to the glory and superiority of Jesus but with the veil taken away, he understood the OT scripture with very great clarity.

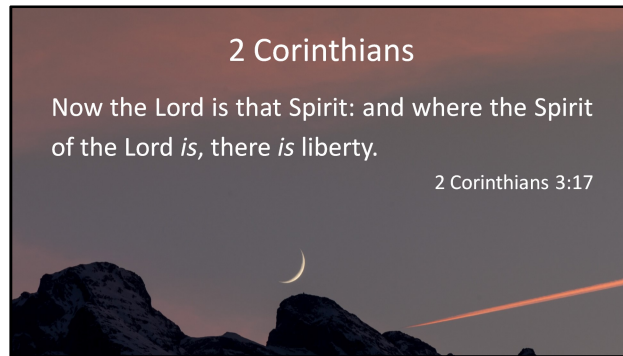
2 Corinthians

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

2 Corinthians 3:15-16

2 Corinthians 3:15-16 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

Gentiles also have “veils” that separate them from seeing Jesus clearly. Jesus is more than able to take those veils away. This points to the essential need of prayer in evangelism. It has been rightly said that it is more important to talk to God about men than it is to talk to men about God but we can do both of these important works.

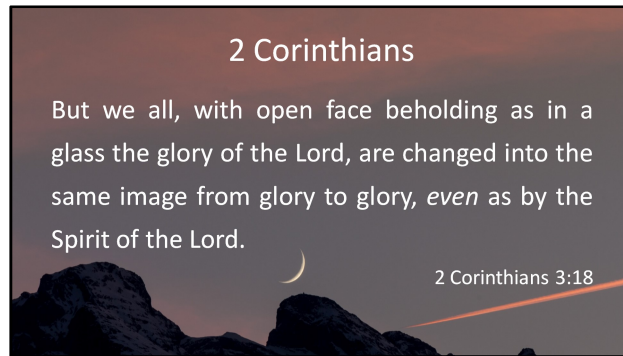


2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

The Lord is the Spirit - From the context of Exodus 34:34, we see that when Paul says the Lord is the Spirit, he means that the Holy Spirit is God just as Jesus and the Father are God.

Exodus 34:34 But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel *that* which he was commanded.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty - When Moses went into God's presence, he had the liberty to take off the veil; the presence of the Lord gave him this liberty. We have the Holy Spirit's presence because He is given to us under the New Covenant. So, just as Moses had the liberty to relate to God without the veil in the presence of the Lord, so we have liberty because of the presence of the Holy Spirit.



2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

But we all, with open face - Paul invites every Christian to a special, glorious intimacy with God. This is a relationship and transforming power that is not the property of just a few privileged Christians. It can belong to all, to everyone who has an unveiled face.

beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord - We can see the glory of the Lord but we cannot see His glory perfectly.

A mirror in the ancient world did not give nearly as good a reflection as our mirrors do today. Ancient mirrors were made of polished metal and gave a clouded, fuzzy, somewhat distorted image.

are changed - As we behold the glory of God, we will be transformed. God will change our lives and change us from the inside out. Though the Old Covenant had its glory, it could never transform lives through the Law. God uses the New Covenant to make us transformed people, not just nice people.

into the same image from glory to glory - As we look into “God’s mirror,” we are changed into the same image of the Lord.

From glory to glory - The work of transformation is a continual progression. It works from glory to glory. It doesn’t have to work from backsliding to glory to backsliding to glory. God’s work in our lives can be a continual progression, from glory to glory.

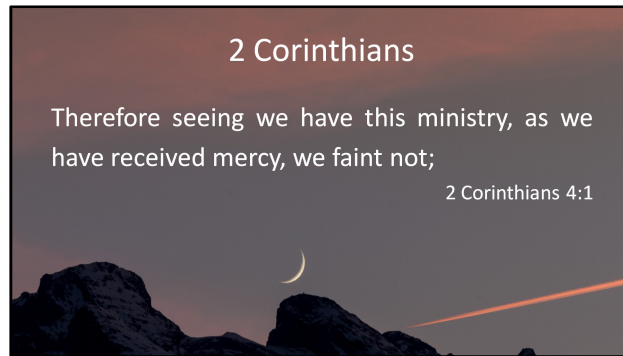
By the Spirit of the Lord - With these last words, Paul emphasizes two things:

1. This access to God and His transforming presence is ours by the New Covenant, because it is through the New Covenant we are given the Spirit of the Lord.
2. This work of transformation really is God’s work in us. It happens by the Spirit of the Lord, not by the will or effort of man.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 4



2 Corinthians 4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not - we do not lose heart: Paul preached his Gospel boldly. When Paul considered the greatness of his calling, it gave him the heart to face all his difficulties. We often lose heart because we do not consider how great a calling God gives us in Jesus.

as we have received mercy - Paul preached his Gospel humbly. He knew his glorious calling to ministry was not due to his own works but by mercy. Mercy, by its very nature, is undeserved.

we faint not - Paul began the chapter stating "*we faint not.*" Then, in the chapter, he describes all the death-like sufferings he had to endure in the ministry.

2 Corinthians

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 4:2

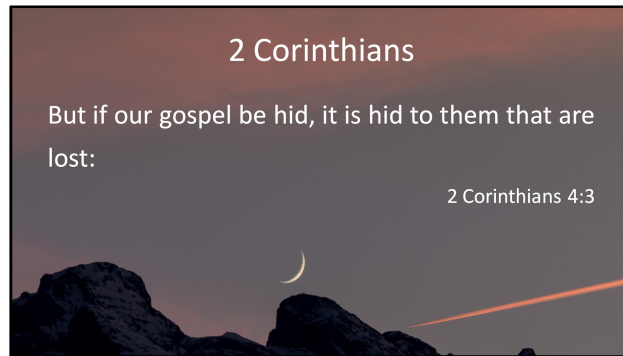
2 Corinthians 4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully - Paul preached his Gospel honestly. He did not “dilute or adulterate.” Paul preached plain truth not mixing the Message with human ingenuity or watering it down to accommodate his audience. Paul preached an honest Gospel.

Many preachers fail on this exact point. They have the true Gospel but they add to it things of human ingenuity and wisdom. Often, they add these corrupting or diluting things to the Gospel because they think adding them will make the Gospel more effective or give it a greater hearing. They are still doing what Paul insisted he would never do, ***handling the word of God deceitfully.***

By manifestation of the truth - Paul preached an openly true Gospel. Anyone could look at what Paul preached and see the plain truth of it. He did not preach an elaborate system of hidden mysteries.

Commending ourselves to every man's conscience: Paul preached a Gospel of integrity. Anyone could look at Paul's Gospel and ministry, then judge it by his or her own conscience and see that it was full of integrity.

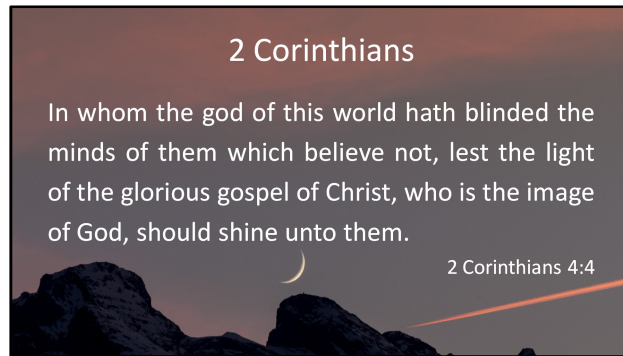


2 Corinthians 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

if our Gospel be hid - When Paul says “hid” here is still referring to the veiled face of Moses. If people do not respond to this glorious Gospel, it isn’t the preacher's fault or his Gospel’s fault. Only those who are perishing miss the Message.

“The blindness of unbelievers in no way detracts from the clearness of the Gospel for the sun is no less resplendent because the blind do not perceive its light.”
(Calvin)

it is hid to them that are lost - **Lost:** “According to the text, he that believes not on Jesus Christ is a lost man. God has lost you; you are not his servant. The church has lost you; you are not working for the truth. The world has lost you really; you yield no lasting service to it. You have lost yourself to right, to joy, to heaven. You are lost, lost, lost.. It is not only that you will be lost, but that you are lost . . . lost even now.”
- Spurgeon



2 Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not - It doesn't mean they are innocent victims of Satan's blinding work. Satan's work upon them is not the only reason they are blinded.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Though men love the darkness, and choose the darkness, Satan still works hard to keep them blinded to the glorious Gospel of light and salvation in Jesus.

the minds of them - It is the minds of the unbelieving that are blinded. Of course, Satan also works on the heart and the emotions of the lost, but his main battleground is the mind. This also is why God has chosen the Word to transmit the Gospel, because the Word touches our minds and can touch minds the god of this age has blinded.

the god of this world - There is a significant sense in which Satan "rules" this world. Satan is the "popularly elected" ruler of this age.

"The devil is referred to as the *god of this age* just as Baal was called the god of those who worshipped him or the dog was called the god of Egypt." - Calvin

Lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ . . . should shine on them - To see this glory is to be saved. Therefore, Satan directs his energies into blinding men from ever seeing the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.

Paul knew what he was talking about when he wrote this. He himself was completely blind to the truth until God broke through the darkness.



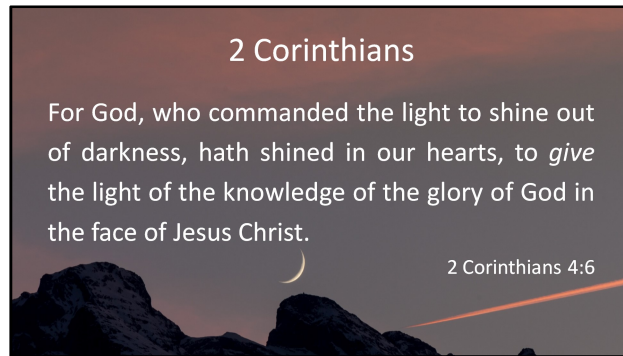
2 Corinthians 4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord - Paul's focus before an audience was never to preach himself. He wasn't important and he wasn't the focus. Jesus was the focus.

Not everyone who opens a Bible and starts talking is preaching Christ Jesus the Lord. Many well-intentioned preachers actually preach themselves instead of Jesus. If the focus is on the funny stories or the touching life experiences of the preacher, he may be preaching himself.

Is it wrong for a preacher to use a story from his own life? Of course not, but it is all a matter of proportion. It's like asking, "Is it all right to put salt in the steak?" Of course, but put in too much and the steak is ruined.

ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake - When Paul did present himself, this is how he did it. Not as a lord, not as a master, but simply as your servant for Jesus' sake. Paul always served others for Jesus' sake. He did it primarily to please Jesus, not to please man.



2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

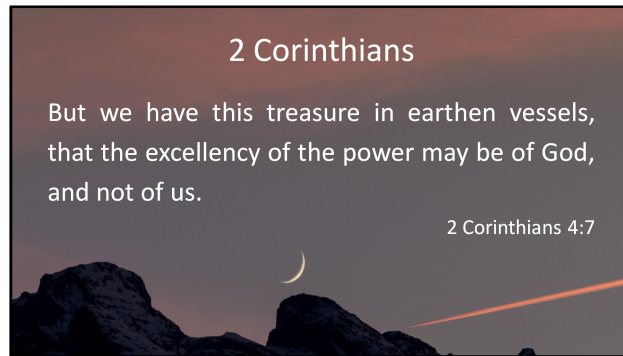
For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts - The Lord God who created light in the physical world can fill your heart with spiritual light, even if you are blinded by the god of this age. Satan's work of blinding

This is a direct quote of the idea of Genesis 1:3: Then God said, "*Let there be light*"; and there was light. God created light with a command, and can create spiritual light just as easily.

This should be a good way to describe every born-again Christian: people ***with shining hearts***. God shone in our hearts, and it should show in our shining lives.

To give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God - What exactly has God shone in our hearts? It is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. Every Christian should have some knowledge of the glory of God.

He "***shined it in***" so that we could "shine it out" instead of "shining it on" as some Christians seem to do. Imagine a man in a sunny room who enjoys the sunshine so much he wants to keep it all to himself. He says, "I'll shut the curtains so that none of this light gets out!" and puts himself back into darkness.

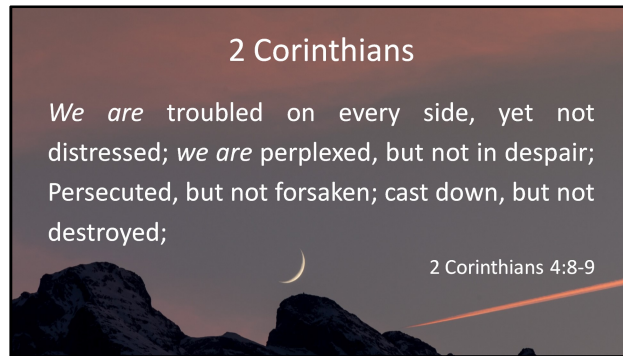


2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

we have this treasure - The treasure is the greatness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the glory of God made evident through that Gospel. It is:
the very light of God
the light of the knowledge of the glory of God
which is reflected in the face of Jesus Christ. This is the greatest treasure in all creation!

Earthen vessels - Earthenware vessels were common in every home in the ancient world. They were not very durable (compared to metal), and they were useless if broken. "They were thus cheap and of little intrinsic value."

that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us - Why does God put such a great treasure in such weak vessels? So that the greatness of the power may be of God and not of us. So that it would be evident to anyone who had eyes to see that the work was being done by the power of God, not the power of the vessel.

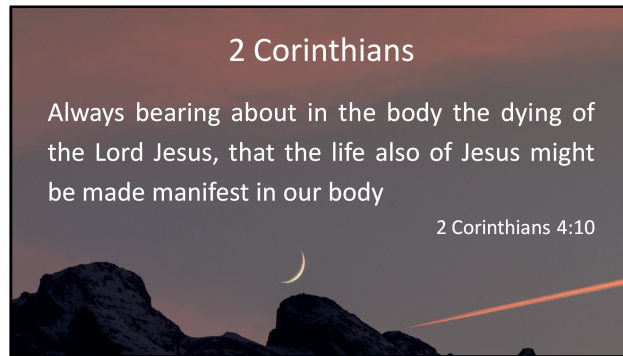


2 Corinthians 4:8-9 *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

***We are* troubled on every side** - This has the idea of “hunted.” Paul was a wanted, hunted man because of what he was for Jesus. In Acts 23:12, 40 men conspired together to not eat or drink until they had murdered Paul. Paul knew what it was like to be hunted.

yet not distressed - Living as a wanted, hunted man means terrible stress, experienced every moment of the day. Yet, Paul was not crushed by this stress. He could still serve the Lord gloriously.

troubled ..., perplexed ..., Persecuted..., cast down - Paul’s life was hard and it was hard because of his passionate devotion to Jesus Christ and His Gospel. Yet look at the triumph of Jesus in Paul’s life: **not distressed..., not in despair..., not forsaken..., not destroyed.** The power and victory of Jesus in Paul’s life was known, because he was continually in situations where only the power and victory of Jesus could meet his need.



2 Corinthians 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

Paul wanted the life of Jesus evident in him. Paul knew this could only happen if he also *carried about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus*. There are some aspects of God's great work in our lives that only happen through trials and suffering. The light of a match is not evident in daylight but at nightfall it becomes a beacon.

Philippians 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Many long to know the power of His resurrection but want nothing to do with the fellowship of His sufferings or being conformed to His death. However, Paul rejoiced in knowing both the suffering and the glory. He knew the two were connected.

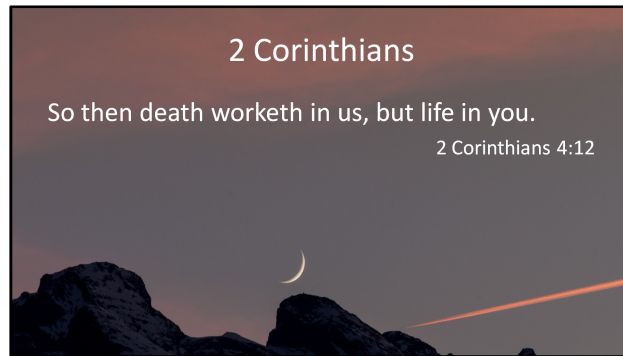
2 Corinthians

For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

2 Corinthians 4:11

2 Corinthians 4:11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake - Paul knew the spiritual riches that he brought to the Corinthian Christians came in part through the death-like suffering he endured in ministry. God made Paul more effective in ministry through his suffering.



2 Corinthians 4:12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

death worketh in us, but life in you - Here is the irony. The Corinthian Christians despised Paul because of his great sufferings and because of what they thought was their great lives of "victory." They did not see that their lives of victory were only possible because God made Paul such an effective servant through suffering.

2 Corinthians

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

2 Corinthians 4:13

2 Corinthians 4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

We also believe and therefore speak - This is a great principle - that faith creates the testimony. Paul really believed God had a purpose in his death-like sufferings and really believed he lived and experienced the resurrection life of Jesus. Therefore, he wasn't hesitant to speak about it.

If one cannot say "**we also believe,**" then you **should not speak.** " That is one great secret of power and success in the Christian ministry. One cannot lead into a faith walk that one has never experienced.

2 Corinthians

Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you.

2 Corinthians 4:14

2 Corinthians 4:14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you.

Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus - Paul knew this; therefore, he didn't despair in his sufferings. Every death-like trial was just the prelude to resurrection power.

2 Corinthians

For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 4:15

2 Corinthians 4:15 For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

All things are for your sakes - This was the immediate goal of Paul's ministry. His heart was to serve the Corinthian Christians. Paul's ministry also had an ultimate goal, that it may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

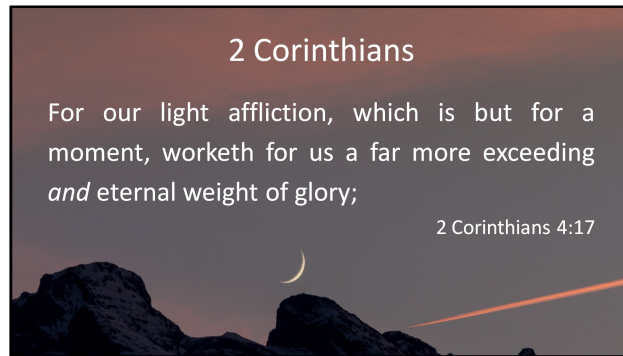
redound to the glory of God - Ultimately, Paul was motivated by the glory of God.



2 Corinthians 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

For which cause - (*Therefore*) is part of the answer, because it points us back to what Paul just wrote. Paul just explained that his death-like trials made for more effective, life giving ministry for the Corinthian Christians. Knowing this made him not lose heart in the midst of trials and suffering.

though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day - Another reason why Paul does not lose heart is because, though all his suffering takes a toll on the outward man, the inward man is being renewed and blessed. Outward man has the same idea as earthen vessels in 2 Corinthians 4:7 and mortal flesh in 2 Corinthians 4:11. The message is the same: "On the outside, we are suffering and taking a beating, but on the inside, God is blessing and renewing us!"



2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

Our light affliction: When Paul writes “our light affliction,” we might wonder if he ever knew any “real” trials.

Paul had an advanced graduate degree in sufferings . He described some of his suffering with these terms in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28:

- Stripes
- Prisons
- Beaten
- Stoned
- Shipwrecked
- Perils of waters
- Robbers
- In perils of my own countrymen
- In perils of the Gentiles
- In perils in the city
- In perils in the wilderness
- In perils in the sea
- In perils among false brethren
- In weariness and toil
- In sleeplessness often
- In hunger and thirst
- In fastings often
- In cold and nakedness

Why is our affliction light and not heavy?

Because even the worst of it, by the measure of eternity, is but for a moment. Because of what God accomplishes in us through our affliction: a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Weight of glory - It isn't easy to appreciate the weight of glory because it is an eternal weight. Often, the problem isn't so much in what we think about our light

2 Corinthians

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:18

2 Corinthians 4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

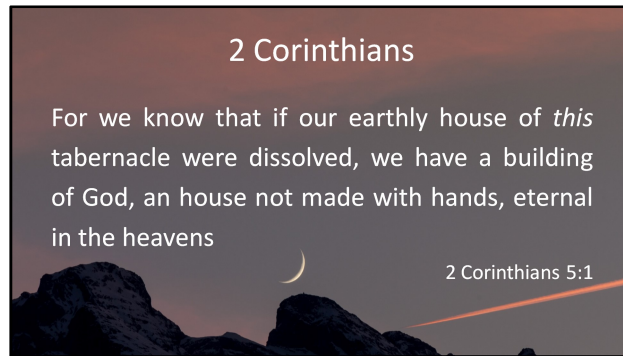
not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen - One of the things that make our affliction light is that we are to focus, "*not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.*"

When we look at the things which are seen, all we see is our light affliction - and then it doesn't seem very light! But when we look at the things which are not seen, then we see and appreciate the eternal weight of glory.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 5



2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

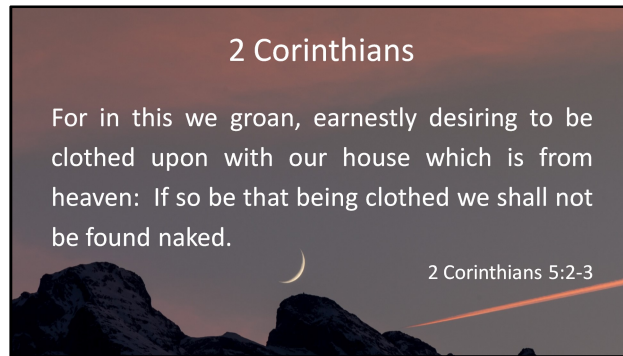
For we know - Pauline epistles emphasize knowledge, hence his constant use of, "Don't you know."

Paul has just contrasted:

- our light affliction with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory
- things which are seen and temporary with things that are not seen and eternal (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).
- Now, Paul will write more about this contrast between the earthly and the eternal.

if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle – Paul saw this natural body as only a tent, a temporary dwelling and not the whole person. If the tent is destroyed, we still have an eternal hope **building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**

an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens - Tell us that our present bodies are made from soil by God's hands and made animate by the breath of God only to later return the soil. The New bodies will be eternal, meaning they will last forever and ever.



2 Corinthians 5:2-3 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

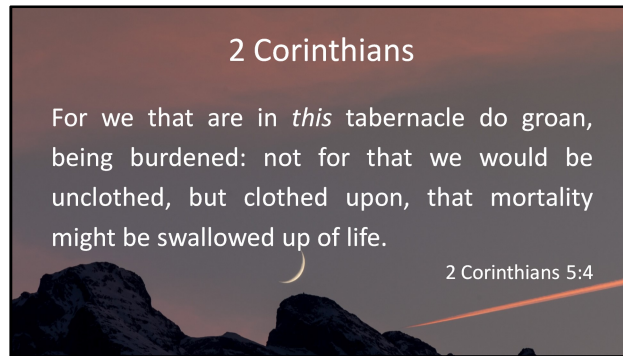
For in this we groan - Christians therefore groan because we see both the limitations of this body and superiority of the body to come. We should be earnestly desiring our new bodies.

Groan: *stenazo* - to sigh, to pray inaudibly

Salvation isn't just for the soul or spirit, but for the body also. Resurrection is how God saves our bodies. We have a glorious new body to come.

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked - Paul is simply saying that in eternity, we will be clothed and not be naked - that is, we will not be bodiless spirits.

- Demons** - are bodiless spirits (often seeking a body to possess)
- Devil** - there is only one devil whose name is Satan formerly Lucifer, He is a fallen angel and has a spiritual body
- Fallen Angels** - are angels that rebelled against God and are destined to destruction

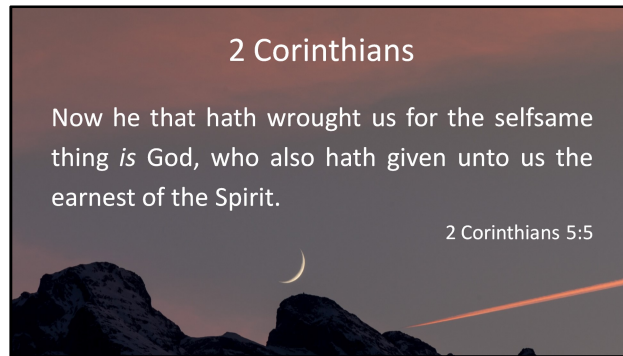


2 Corinthians 5:4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

being burdened - serving the Lord in these bodies defiled by original sin and hampered by the sin nature is a **burden**

not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon - As Christians, we have no earnest desire to be “pure spirit” and to escape the body. Instead, we are earnestly desiring to have a perfect resurrected body. That our redeemed soul and spirit man be clothed upon with a resurrected body that is fitted for eternity.

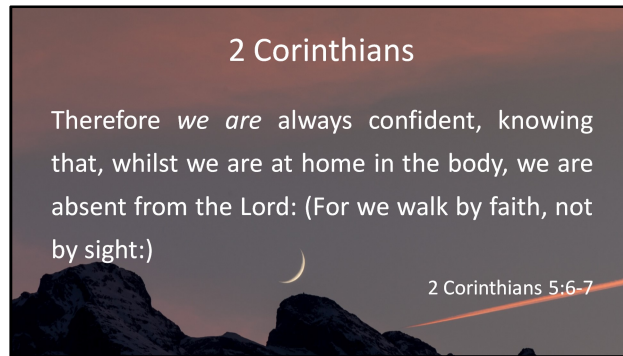
that mortality might be swallowed up of life - Our new bodies will not be subject to death (mortality). Instead, Death is swallowed up in victory. When we receive our eternal bodies, life completely conquers death. If a snake swallowed up a mouse, the mouse is completely conquered; it is no more. Even so, death will be swallowed up in life.



2 Corinthians 5:5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God - this selfsame thing refers to God preparing us right now for our eternal destiny. Here, Paul connects the ideas of our light affliction and the eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). Our light affliction is (in part) how God has prepared us.

who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. - God has given us His Spirit as a guarantee. He backs up the promise of Heaven with a down payment right now, the Holy Spirit.



2 Corinthians 5:6-7 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

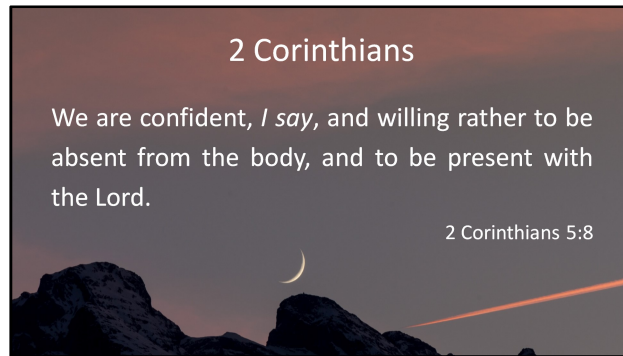
Therefore we are always confident - The presence of the Holy Spirit in Paul's life gave him confidence. It assured him that God was at work in him and would continue His work. If you cannot say of yourself that you are always confident, then ask God for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in your life.

knowing that - Again Paul emphasizes "*knowing*" as the foundation of his confidence. We are to understand this as, "*We are confident BECAUSE WE KNOW being absent...*"

whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) - Right now, the presence of God is a matter of faith. We are at home in the body (alive in the fleshly body) so there is a sense in which we are absent from the Lord's immediate, glorious presence. So now, we must walk by faith, not by sight.

To walk by faith, not by sight is one of the great - and difficult - principles of Christian living. It must amaze the angels that we live for, serve, and are willing to die for a God we have never seen. Yet we love Him and live for Him, living by faith, not by sight.

To walk by faith - means to make faith a part of every daily activity or to order our lifestyle around the principle of faith.



2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. - Because Paul is confident (in part, based on the guarantee of the Holy Spirit) of his eternal destiny, he is not afraid of the world beyond. In fact, he would be well pleased to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

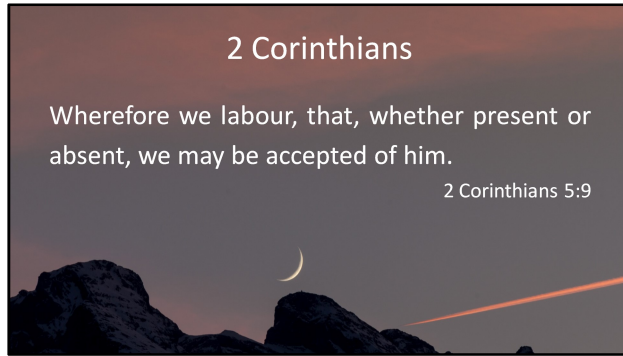
The question might be asked “will we live in Heaven for a time in an intermediate, bodiless state awaiting resurrection?”

- Some think so, based on passages like Revelation 6:9-11 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
- Others think that because of the nature of timeless eternity, they have received their resurrection bodies already because they live in the eternal “now.” (No future or past)

2 Corinthians

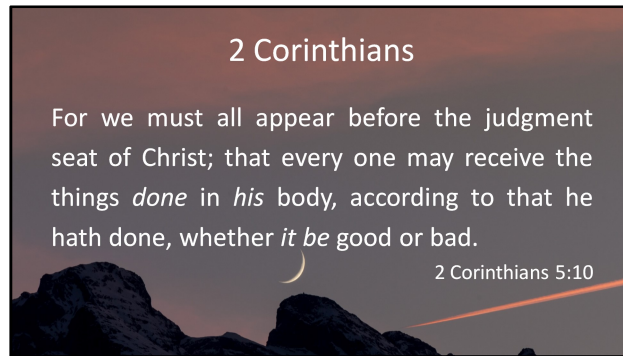
Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

2 Corinthians 5:9



2 Corinthians 5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him - Since what we do right now has eternal consequences, our goal must persistently be to please God.



2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ - This is not the Great White Throne judgment. This describes a judgment of the works of believers (the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad).

The judgment seat- is a single word in the ancient Greek language (Bema) literally means “step,” as in a raised platform or seat. This was where a Roman magistrate sat to act as a judge.

This is NOT the judgment of sins - What will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

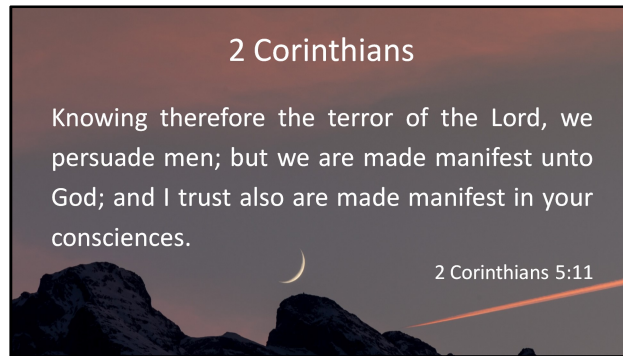
what we have done will be judged (*the things done*).

our motives for what we have done will be judged (*according to what he has done, whether good or bad*).

It is possible to have a saved soul and a wasted life; that will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

We must live understanding that (1) our motives as well as (2) what we do will be judged, but this is not the judgment of punishment.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.



2 Corinthians 5:11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men - Knowing, *the terror of the Lord* as reflected by the great flood and Revelation, and knowing Jesus is the only escape from the Terror of the Lord, *We persuade men*. Christians know the place of men (1) both apart from Jesus and the place of men (2) in Jesus, therefore, we persuade men to come to Jesus.

Paul knew that he was well known (*manifest*) to God. He also wished that he did not need to persuade the Corinthian Christians; he wanted to trust that his Message and his ministry were well known in their consciences.

2 Corinthians

For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

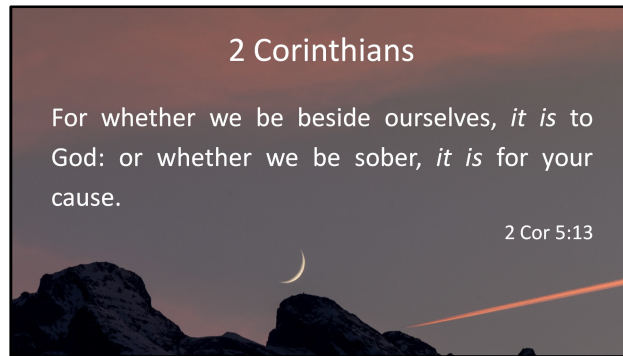
2 Corinthians 5:12

2 Corinthians 5:12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf - Paul is not boasting on himself but giving the Corinthians an opportunity to be proud of the Apostle's commitment to them.

ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart - One problem with the Corinthian Christians is that they liked those who glory in appearance and not in heart. They looked down on Paul because his glory was not in appearance and only in heart. By telling the Corinthian Christians how God worked through his struggles and trials, Paul gave them something to answer those who thought that way.

1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

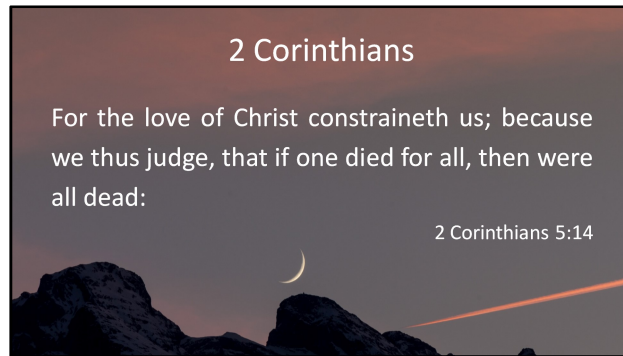


2 Cor 5:13 For whether we be beside ourselves, *it is* to God: or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause.

whether we be beside ourselves - To be “beside yourself” describes being crazy or deranged. Some Corinthians probably thought Paul was crazy because he seemed content with a life of pain, trials, and discomfort if it brought glory to God. In being accused of being beside himself, Paul is in good company. Jesus was also accused of being out of His mind

***it is* to God** - If Paul’s actions seemed crazed or deranged, Paul was such in his effort to work for God.

whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause - if the Corinthian Christians want to think Paul is of sound mind, they can think he is acting that way for them.



2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

For the love of Christ constraineth us - Jesus' love towards Paul constrained him to do what he did in ministry, because he received so much love from Jesus that it compelled him to serve others.

To say, "the love of Christ constrains us," is to say that the love of Christ has power. It has a force that can bind us and influence us.

if one died for all, then were all dead - In the sense that His death is **able** to save all who will come to Him and is a demonstration of **God's love** to all but not in the sense that all are saved because Jesus died (which is the false doctrine of universalism).

2 Corinthians

And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

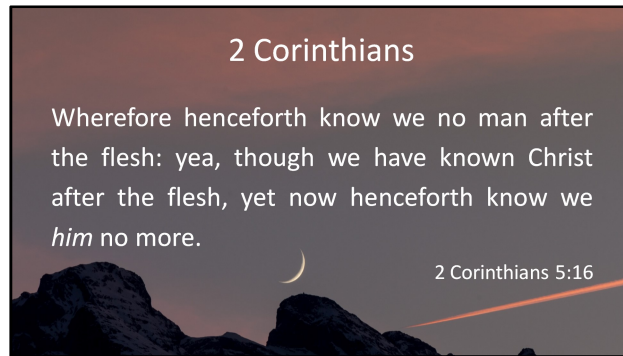
2 Corinthians 5:15

2 Corinthians 5:15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

***that* he died for all** - The phrase does not support universalism, but rather means that the death of Christ is sufficient to allow anyone to be saved but the threshold of faith must be met.

they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again - If Jesus died for us, it is only fitting that we live for Him. Jesus gave us new life, not to live for ourselves but to live for Him.

“He died for us that we might die to ourselves.” (Calvin)



2 Corinthians 5:16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

henceforth know we no man after the flesh -

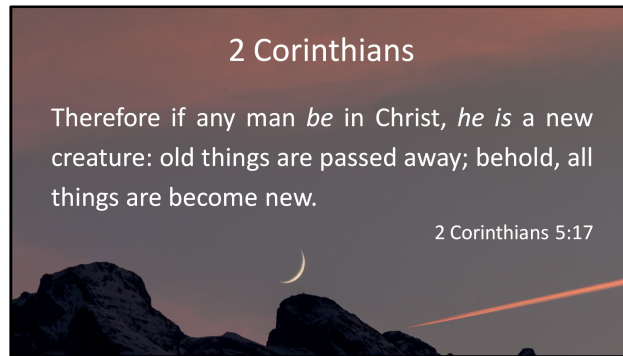
For all these reasons, we don't look to the image and appearance of the flesh but to the substance of the heart.

- Because we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen (2 Corinthians 4:18)
- Because our earthly tent will be destroyed but we will have a new body, eternal in the heavens (2 Corinthians 5:1)
- Because we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7)
- Because we do not glory in appearance but we glory in heart (2 Corinthians 5:12)

yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more - Even those who knew Jesus in the flesh found their new relationship with Him through the Holy Spirit far more rewarding.

Some think that it would be better if Jesus were present with us according to the flesh but it would not be and Jesus knew this. This is why Jesus told His disciples:

- John 16:7** Nevertheless I tell you the truth; **It is expedient for you** that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.



2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

if any man - This is a promise for anyone. Anyone! It doesn't matter what class, what race, what nationality, what language, or what level of intelligence. Anyone can be a new creation in Jesus Christ.

be in Christ - This is a promise for anyone who is in Christ. This is not a promise for those who are in themselves, or in the religion of men, or in someone or something else. This is for those *in Christ*.

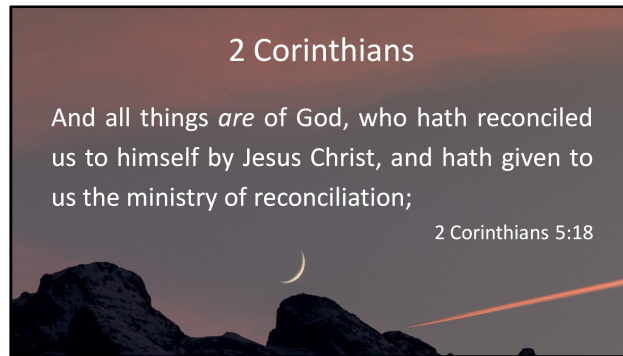
he is a new creature - teaches the great principle of regeneration. Jesus Christ changes those who come to Him by faith and who are in Christ. The saved are not "just forgiven." They are changed into a new creation.

Creature: ktisis (*ktis'-is*) – creation

New Creature - Being a new creation doesn't mean that we are perfect. It means that we are changed and that we are being changed.

The work of a new creation is even greater than God's work of creating the world.

- In the beginning there was nothing; and that "nothing" was at least passive. But our hearts and our stubborn wills, our deep prejudices and our ingrained love of iniquity, are not passive but in opposition to God's development of the new creation.



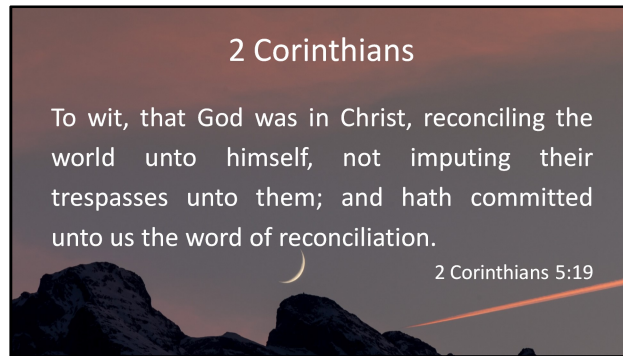
2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

All things are of God - Paul wants the Corinthian Christians to know that he is writing of things that are of God, not of man. This work of a new creation and our eternal destiny are works of God, not something we have to earn and achieve.

who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ - God initiated this ministry of reconciliation, even though Christ is the innocent party in the estranged relationship. He reconciled us to Himself; we did not reconcile ourselves to Him.

by Jesus Christ - means that this reconciliation was accomplished through the finished work of Calvary

hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation - Having **reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ**, now God expects us to take up **the ministry of reconciliation** and has therefore committed to us the **word of reconciliation**.



2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

To wit - That is to say:

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself - this is all the more amazing when understood in light of what happened on the cross. At some point before Jesus died, before the veil was torn in two, before Jesus cried out "it is finished," an awesome spiritual transaction took place. The Father set upon the Son all the guilt and wrath our sin deserved and Jesus bore it in Himself perfectly, totally satisfying the justice of God for us.

As horrible as the physical suffering of Jesus was, this spiritual suffering - the act of being judged for sin in our place - was what Jesus really dreaded about the cross. This was the cup - the cup of God's righteous wrath - that He trembled at drinking (Luke 22:39-46, Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). On the cross Jesus became, as it were, an enemy of God who was judged and forced to drink the cup of the Father's fury so that we would not have to drink that cup.

not imputing their trespasses unto them - it is because our trespasses were imputed to Jesus. The justice our sin demanded was not excused but rather is satisfied on the Cross. If sin could just be *excused*, then it never needed to be satisfied.

hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation - The message the church is to bear is a message of God's desire for reconciliation.

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked*; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

2 Corinthians

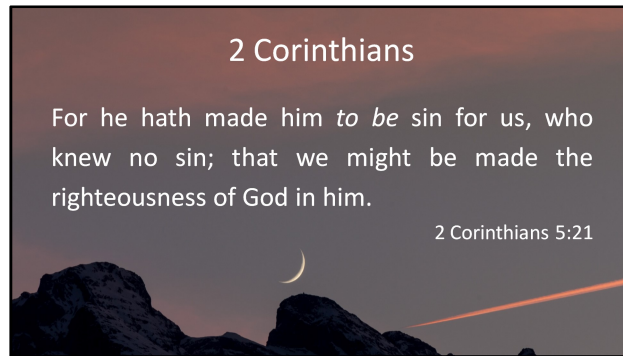
Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ - Paul sees that he serves in a foreign land as the representative of a King. The King has a Message and Paul is delivering that Message as though God were pleading through him.

be ye reconciled to God - As an ambassador, Paul makes a simple, strong and direct plea: be reconciled to God. This should be the underlying message of the Church, *"be ye reconciled to God."*



2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

For - can generally be understood as "*because.*"

He made Him - This is the work of God Himself! The Father and the Son (and the Spirit as well) were in perfect cooperation in the work on the cross. This means that the work of atonement on the cross was the work of God.

he hath made him *to be* sin for us - Paul does not say Jesus was made to be a sinner. Jesus never became a sinner but He did become sin for us (*i.e., a sin offering*). Even His being made to be sin was a righteous act of love, not an act of sin.

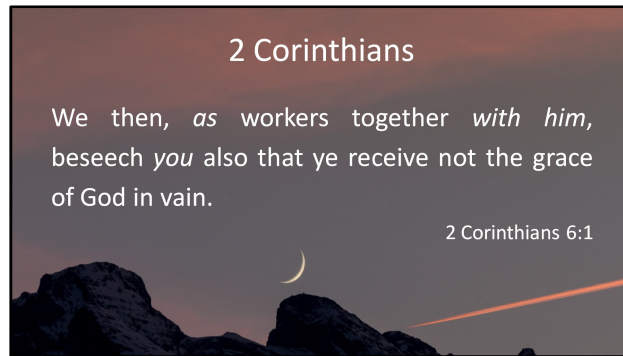
that we might be made the righteousness of God in him - Jesus took our sin but gave us His righteousness. It is a tremendous exchange all prompted by the love of God for us!

The righteousness of God in him - You are not the righteousness of God by your love for God or righteous living. You are so by your position "in Christ" which was given to you by the grace of God.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 6



2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

We then, *as* workers together *with him* - Paul sees himself as a co-worker with Jesus Christ. They are partners. Jesus has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). Since Paul is among the ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20), he works with Jesus.

It isn't that God needs any of us, rather it is that God wants us to be workers together with Him for our good. It's like the little boy with the toy lawnmower following dad as dad mows the lawn. The dad could ask the boy to go away because he is really just in the way. But it is so good for the boy to work with dad! And because dad loves his boy, he wants him to **work together with Him.**

workers - The word "workers" itself is important. There is something good and important in work itself, so much so that God wants us to be workers together with Him. God's best for our life is never a state of ease and comfort and indulgent inactivity.

receive not the grace of God in vain - It means to receive the goodness and favor of God, yet to hinder the work of grace in one's life. Grace does not only flow "to you." Grace is intended to flow "through you."

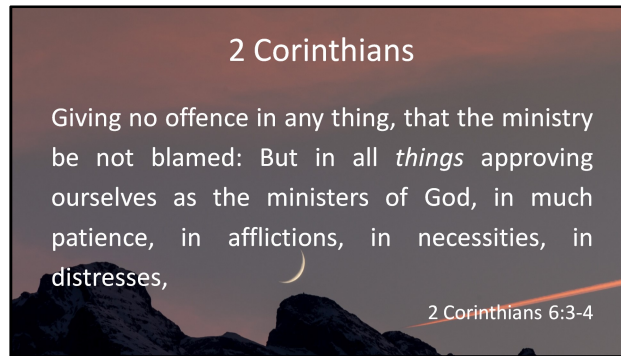
2 Corinthians

(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

2 Corinthians 6:2

2 Corinthians 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation - By quoting and applying Isaiah 49:8, Paul wants to give a sense of urgency. God has an acceptable time for us to work with His grace. God has a day of salvation that will not last forever. This is no time for Christian lives consumed with ease and comfort and self-focus. It is time to get busy for the Lord and to be workers together with Him.



2 Corinthians 6:3-4 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

Giving no offence in any thing - Paul was willing to do most anything to make sure he gave no offense in anything.

He was willing to forego his salary as a minister of the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:3-15).

He was willing to allow others to be more prominent.

He was willing to work hard and endure hardship.

He was not afraid to offend anyone over the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18-25) but he would not allow his style of ministry to offend anyone.

that the ministry be not blamed - Of course, Paul's ministry was blamed and discredited by the Corinthian Christians. What Paul means is that our ministry may not *rightly* be blamed.

But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God - Paul will now recount his resume to the Corinthian Christians. Here are the things he will list to commend himself before them.

Patience: has the idea of endurance instead of simply "*waiting*."

Afflictions: in anguish, burdened, persecution

Necessities: to be In a state of want

Distresses: to be severely afflicted; harassed; oppressed

2 Corinthians

In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

2 Corinthians 6:5

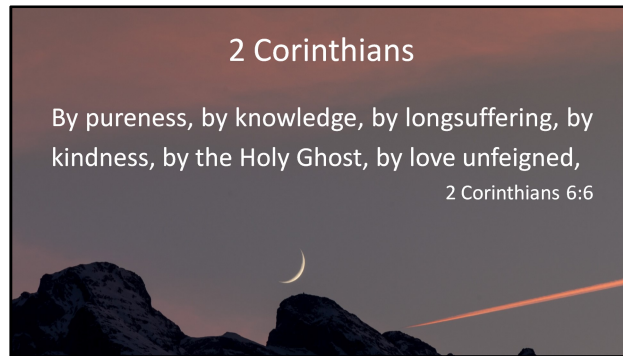
2 Corinthians 6:5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

Paul continues his resume; he writes of sufferings directly inflicted by men.

- Stripes:** were the wounds on the back from a whipping
- imprisonments:** referred to the frequent time Paul spent in jail
- tumults:** speak of violence from an angry mob.

Paul continues his resume with describing his self-inflicted hardships.

- Labours:** His voluntary toil for the work of God
- Watchings:** sleeplessness in time of prayer
- Fastings:** abstinence from food



2 Corinthians 6:6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

Here, Paul begins to describe the resources he took advantage of in triumphing over adversity. If he honestly listed his trials, he will also honestly list the fruit of the Spirit and the power of God in his life.

pureness: cleanness, maintaining a state of blamelessness

knowledge: the act of knowing, specifically the will and design of God

longsuffering: forbearance or fortitude

kindness: gentleness or morally excellence (in character or demeanor)

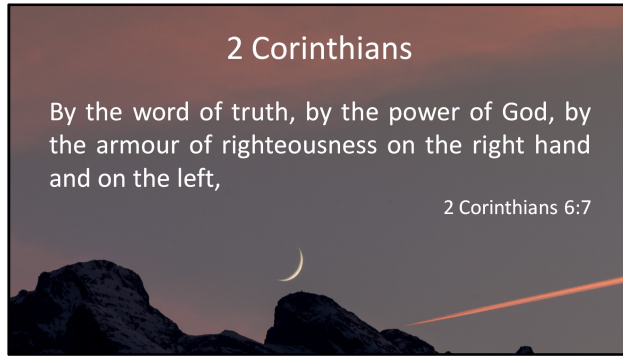
by the Holy Ghost: the power, comfort, and leading of the Spirit

love unfeigned: by true love for God and God's love expressed through his person

2 Corinthians

By the word of truth, by the power of God, by
the armour of righteousness on the right hand
and on the left,

2 Corinthians 6:7



2 Corinthians 6:7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

on the right hand and on the left - The idea of on the *right hand and on the left* is of holding both offensive and defensive weapons. It probably has in mind “both advancing and being attacked.”

2 Corinthians

By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

2 Corinthians 6:8-10

2 Corinthians 6:8-10 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

In concluding his resume, Paul will list his references, describing both what the world thought of him and what God thought of him. This describes the points of tension between Christian and non-Christian view points.

The World's View

Unknown
Dying
Chastened
Sorrowful
Poor
having nothing

God's View

yet well known
we live
not killed
always rejoicing
making many rich
possessing all things.

2 Corinthians

O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto *my* children,) be ye also enlarged.

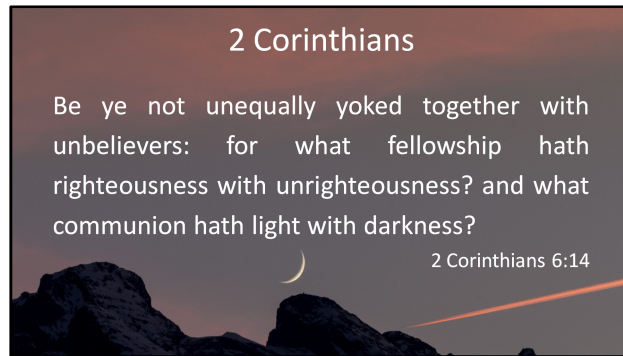
2 Corinthians 6:11-13

our mouth is open unto you - Paul is practicing what he preached in Ephesians 4:15: speaking the truth in love. He genuinely loved the Corinthians with an open heart, yet he would also speak openly to them.

Ye are not straitened (*restricted*) in us - The Corinthian Christians played the “*victim*” before Paul. Paul was firm with them (1 Corinthians 4:18-21, 2 Corinthians 1:23). Now, they probably claimed to be restricted by the “hurt” Paul caused them.

ye are straitened (*restricted*) in your own bowels - What did they love too much? First, they loved the world too much and Paul will deal with that love in following verses. They also loved themselves too much and refused to really deal with their selfish and worldly attitudes towards Paul.

be ye also enlarged (*open*) - Paul wants to see the same self-searching honesty in the Corinthian Christians that he just displayed to them. They had to do this so that they could be reconciled. The rift between Paul and the Corinthian church could be healed. They had to also be open and honest.
nest.

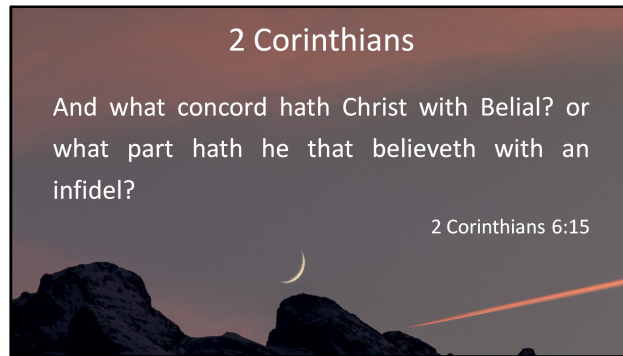


2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers - It applies to any environment where we let the world influence our thinking. When we are being conformed to this world and are not being transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2), we join together with unbelievers in an ungodly way.

An unequal yoke, or ungodly influence, may come through a book, a movie, a television show, a magazine, or even through worldly Christian friends. Most Christians are far too indiscriminate about the things they allow to influence their minds and lives.

for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? The Corinthian Christians were **too loving and too affectionate** in the sense that they thought it was “accepting” of them to allow lawlessness with righteousness, to accept darkness along with the light, and to admit Belial along with Christ.



2 Corinthians 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

Belial - a word borrowed from Hebrew, meaning worthlessness or wickedness. Here it is used as another word for Satan.

what part hath he that believeth with an infidel - The idea is, that on the subject of religion there is no union; nothing in common; no participation. They are governed by different principles; have different feelings; are looking to different rewards; and are tending to a different destiny.

2 Corinthians

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ☾

2 Corinthians 6:16

2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? - Apparently, the Corinthian Christians still struggled with the idolatry problem Paul referred to in 1 Corinthians 8-10. Their association with idols influenced their thinking making it more and more worldly.

ye are the temple of the living God - Paul refers to the Church as a whole being the temple of God. Because temples are holy places and should be protected against things that might defile the holy place, we should protect our hearts and minds as holy places before the Lord.

I will dwell in them - I will take up my indwelling in them. There is an allusion, doubtless, to the fact that God would be present among His people by the Shechinah, or the visible symbol of His presence.

And walk in them - That is, I will walk among them. He was present among the Jews by the public manifestation of His presence by a symbol; He is present with Christians by the presence and guidance of His Holy Spirit.

And I will be their God - God would protect and bless them. He will take them under my peculiar protection, and they shall enjoy my favour.

2 Corinthians

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

2 Corinthians 6:17

2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

Wherefore come out from among them - This call deals with the problem of “too much affection”, thinking we may just add the love of God without renouncing the ideas of Satan and this world. *Remember that one of the seeds that failed in the parable of the soils had ground that was too fertile. It would grow everything.*

And be ye separate - Separate from the world and all its corrupting influences.

and touch not the unclean thing - The sense is, "Have no close connection with an idolater, or an unholy person. Be pure; and feel that you belong to a community that is under its own laws, and that is to be distinguished in moral purity from all the rest of the world."

And I will receive you - That is, I will receive and recognize you as my friends and my adopted children.

2 Corinthians

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

2 Corinthians 6:18

2 Corinthians 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

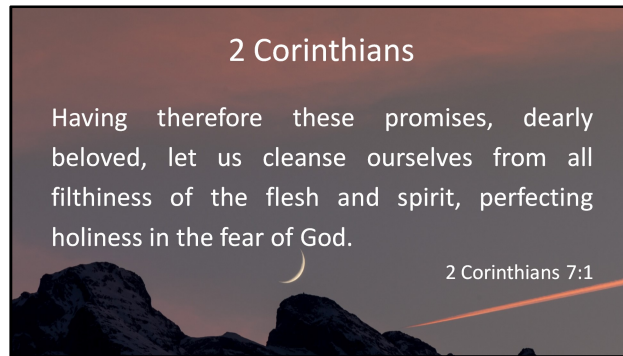
And will be a Father unto you - A father is the protector, counselor and guide of his children. He instructs them, provides for them and counsels them in time of perplexity. No relation is more tender than this.

Says the Lord Almighty - The title Almighty uses the ancient Greek word *pantokrater*, which means, "the one who has his hand on everything." In the whole New Testament, the word is used only here and in the book of Revelation. Paul wants us to understand that it is the sovereign God of Heaven who offers us adoption as His children as we separate unto Him.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 7



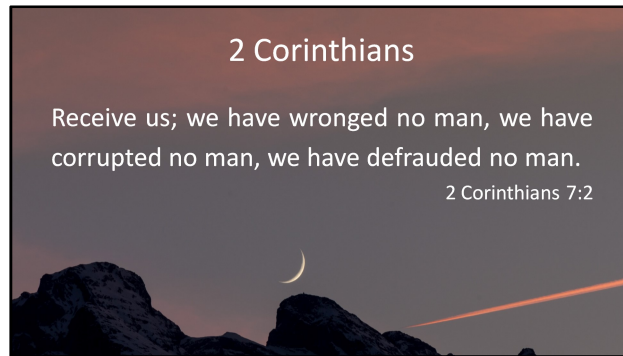
2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Based on the promises that Paul outlined:

1. I will receive you
2. I will be a Father unto you
3. ye shall be my sons and daughters

let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit: There is a cleansing that God alone does in our lives, but there is also a cleansing that God wants to do in cooperation with us. Here, Paul writes about a cleansing that isn't just something God does for us as we sit passively; this is a self-cleansing for intimacy with God that goes beyond a general cleansing for sin.

perfecting holiness in the fear of God: Perfecting has the idea of "complete" and "holistic." It isn't enough to only cleanse ourselves from all filthiness. The Christian life is not only getting rid of evil but continually doing and becoming good.



2 Corinthians 7:2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

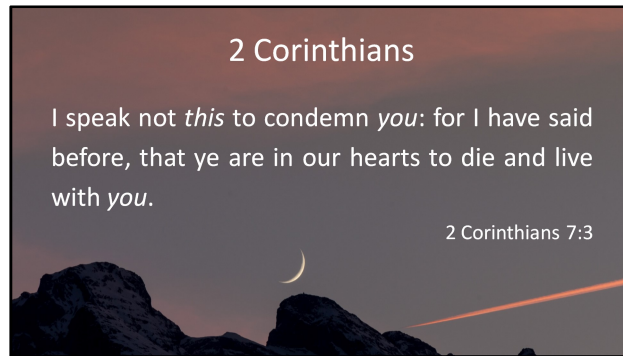
In 2 Corinthians 6:11-13, Paul wrote - We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open . . . you also be open. Then, in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, he dealt with the worldliness that kept the Corinthians from having the kind of open relationship they should have with Paul. Now, in writing open your hearts to us, Paul returns to idea he left off with in 2 Corinthians 6:11-13.

Receive us - Tindal renders this, "understand us."

We have wronged no man - We have done injustice to no man. This is given as a reason why they should admit him to their full confidence and affection.

We have corrupted no man - This means that he had corrupted no man in his morals, either by his precept or by his example.

We have defrauded no man - We have taken no man's property, by cunning, by trick, or by deception.



2 Corinthians 7:3 I speak not *this* to condemn *you*: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you*.

I speak not *this* to condemn *you* - Paul's desire isn't to condemn the Corinthian Christians but to confront it so that he could restore the fellowship he once had with them.

To die and live with you - If it were the will of God, we would be glad to spend our lives among you and to die with you.

2 Corinthians

Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

2 Corinthians 7:4-5

2 Corinthians 7:4-5 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you - Paul has been bold in his criticism to the Corinthians, but he was also bold in his boasting about them.

exceeding joyful in all our tribulation - Despite the many trials Paul faced he found joy when he heard good news from the Corinthian Christians. This phrase **exceedingly joyful** could be expressed as "I super-abound in joy."

Outside were conflicts, inside were fears - This was Paul's life in ministry. It was a life of great blessing but also a life of many conflicts and fears. On the outside, Paul was constantly in conflict with enemies of the Gospel and worldly-minded Christians. On the inside, Paul daily battled with the stress and anxiety of ministry.



2 Corinthians 7:6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

God that comforteth those that are cast down - Whose characteristic is that He gives consolation to those who are anxious and depressed.

by the coming of Titus - This reflects how just our presence can sometimes have a great and profound impact on others who may be cast down or discouraged.

2 Corinthians

And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

2 Corinthians 7:7

2 Corinthians 7:7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me - Titus was satisfied and delighted with his interview with you. He had been kindly treated, and therefore, been much comforted by his visit to Corinth; and this was a source of additional joy to Paul.

2 Corinthians

For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

2 Corinthians 7:8

2 Corinthians 7:8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

For even if I made you sorry with my letter - What letter? This probably is not the letter of 1 Corinthians but a letter that Paul wrote in between 1 and 2 Corinthians.

I do not repent, though I did repent - (*I do not regret it; though I did regret it*)

When Paul first wrote the “sorrowful letter” carried by Titus, he didn’t enjoy the idea of being so confrontational with the Corinthian Christians, even though they deserved it. That’s why he wrote, “though I did regret it.”

for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season - “In sin, the pleasure passeth, the sorrow remaineth; but in repentance, the sorrow passeth, the pleasure abideth for ever. God soon poureth the oil of gladness into broken hearts.” (Trapp)

2 Corinthians

Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

2 Corinthians 7:9

2 Corinthians 7:9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance - Paul makes a clear separation between sorrow and repentance. They are not the same things! One can be sorry for their sin without repenting from their sin. Sorrow describes a feeling, but repentance describes a change in both the mind and in the life.

ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing - it is important to only make others *sorrow in a godly manner*. You may succeed in making them feel bad (sorrow) but the relationship you have with that person will *receive damage by us*. You can win the "battle" yet lose the "war."

2 Corinthians

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

2 Corinthians 7:10

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation - Repentance is not the ground of our salvation but it is a part of it and necessary condition of it.

Sorrow in itself doesn't produce anything except bad feelings but godly sorrow produces repentance.

2 Corinthians

For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

2 Corinthians 7:11

2 Corinthians 7:11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

All of these things showed that the sorrow of the Corinthian Christians, caused by Paul's letter, worked real repentance. Sometimes tough love is what is required to wake people up to their condition and provoke them to rise to the challenge.

In this matter - Paul is using godly discretion by not bringing up the whole affair again from the beginning.

2 Corinthians

Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

2 Corinthians 7:12

2 Corinthians 7:12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

***I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong** - There was someone who had done wrong (him who had done the wrong) and there was someone who had been wronged (him who suffered wrong). But there was no need to go through the whole mess again.

that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you - Paul's purpose in writing the "sorrowful letter" was not to take sides in a dispute among the Corinthian Christians. His purpose was to demonstrate his concern (that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you).

2 Corinthians

Therefore we were comforted in your comfort:
yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy
of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you
all.

2 Corinthians 7:13

2 Corinthians 7:13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus - Titus had been kindly received, and hospitably entertained, and had become much attached to them. This was to Paul an additional occasion of joy.

2 Corinthians

For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth.

2 Corinthians 7:14

2 Corinthians 7:14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth.

if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed - seems to imply that Paul had spoken most favorably to Titus of the Corinthians before he went among them. He had probably expressed his belief that he would be kindly received.

even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth - My boasting of your character, and of your disposition to do right, which I made before Titus, has turned out to be true.

2 Corinthians

And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all *things*.

2 Corinthians 7:15-16

2 Corinthians 7:15-16 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all *things*.

And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all - He has become deeply and tenderly attached to you. His affectionate regard for you has been greatly increased by his visit.

How with fear and trembling ye received him - With fear of offending, and with deep apprehension of the consequences of remaining in sin. He saw what a fear there was of doing wrong and what evidence there was, therefore, that you were solicitous to do right.

I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things - Paul rejoices that he maintained confidence in the Corinthians especially since it appears they were intent on doing right.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 8

2 Corinthians

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

2 Corinthians 8:1-2

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

we do you to wit - we want you to know

to wit of the grace of God - Paul will now write about other churches and their example in giving. In his first few words on this subject, Paul shows he considers both the *opportunity* and the *willingness* to give **a gift from the grace of God.**

in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality - Paul reports to the Corinthian Christians the example of the Macedonian Christians. The Macedonians, though they were in a great trial of affliction and though they were in deep poverty, still gave generously (abounded in the riches of their liberality).

2 Corinthians

For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

2 Corinthians 8:3-4

2 Corinthians 8:3-4 For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

I bear record - Paul knew that the Macedonians gave in two ways. First, they gave ***to their power (ability)***, in the sense that, in total their gift wasn't very much. It was not a "large" gift in a total dollar sense. Secondly, since their heart was freely willing to give, and they gave in proportion to the little they did have, they gave ***and beyond their power***.

Luke 21:1-4 And he looked up, and saw the rich men that were casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than they all: for all these did of their superfluity cast in unto the gifts; but she of her want did cast in all the living that she had.

they gave of their own accord, beseeching us with much entreaty - Paul didn't have to beg for money from the Macedonian Christians. Instead, they "***gave of their own accord***" and were "***beseeching us with much entreaty***" to receive the gift!

Although the Macedonian Christians didn't have much to give, they really wanted to give. They saw it as a privilege to give. True Christian generosity can't be measured by how much one has to give. Often those who have less are more generous with what they have.

2 Corinthians

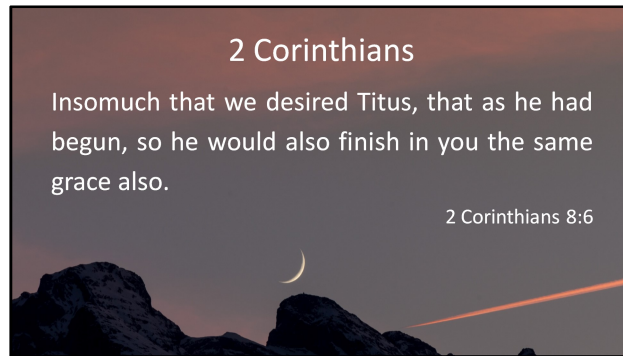
And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

2 Corinthians 8:5

2 Corinthians 8:5-6 And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

Not as we hoped - The Macedonian Christians gave far beyond what Paul hoped for. What made their giving so spectacular? It wasn't the dollar amount. It was that they first **gave themselves to the Lord and then to us by the will of God.**

In giving, the real issue isn't giving money. It is giving ourselves to the Lord. If we really give ourselves to the Lord, then the right kind of material giving will naturally follow.



2 Corinthians 8:6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

It is one thing to take up a collection but when things became difficult, between Paul and the Corinthians, they may have been less willing to put that collection in Paul's hands.

One reason Titus was sent with this letter was to **finish in you the same grace** in the Corinthian Christians and make certain they followed through on their original intent.

The Corinthian Christians may have intended to give. They may have (1) thought about giving. They may have been (2) favorable to the idea of giving. Yet all of this was useless unless they did in fact complete this grace.

2 Corinthians

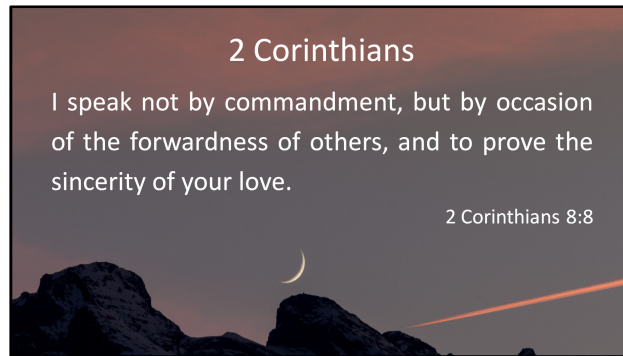
Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

2 Corinthians 8:7

2 Corinthians 8:7 Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

as ye abound in every *thing* - If the Corinthian Christians did indeed **abound in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in . . . love** for Paul, they had just started to do these things. But the Corinthian Christians probably thought of themselves as abounding in all those things. So it is as if Paul is saying, "Very well, I'll take your word for it. You do abound in all these things. So now, abound in this grace also."

This grace also - Now, for the fourth time since the beginning of the chapter, Paul refers to giving money as a grace (*grace of God . . . receive the gift . . . complete this grace*).



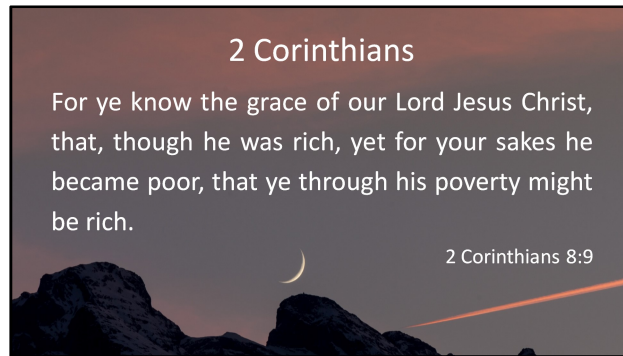
2 Corinthians 8:8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

I speak not by commandment - Paul isn't commanding the Corinthian Christians to give. Paul knew that giving from commandment isn't giving at all; we call that kind of giving taxation.

by occasion of the forwardness of others - *I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others*: Paul makes two important points here:

Giving can measure the sincerity of your love.

Paul openly compared the giving of the Corinthian Christians to the giving of the Macedonian Christians (*by occasion of the forwardness of others*).



2 Corinthians 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

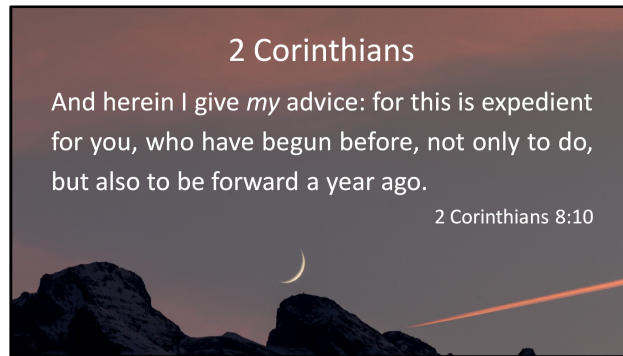
the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ - From the context, and from how Paul has used the word grace in this passage, we know that Paul means, “You know the giving of our Lord Jesus.”

though he was rich - Before Jesus added humanity to His deity and walked this earth, He was owner of the entire creation. Rich doesn’t quite describe the abundance of His pre-incarnate riches.

for your sakes he became poor - Notice that it says that Jesus became poor when He was rich. Just as Jesus added humanity but never lost His deity, so He also “added” poverty but never “lost” His riches.

Why would Jesus need to become poor for your sakes? How does His poverty benefit us?

- Because it shows us the giving heart of God
- Because it shows us the relative importance of material things
- Because it makes Jesus open and accessible to all
- Because it rebukes the pride that might refuse to come to a poor Savior
- Because it gave others the privilege of giving to Jesus
- Because it fulfilled the heart and will and plan of God, making our salvation possible



2 Corinthians 8:10 And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

And herein I give my advice - Generally speaking, advice will go much farther than commands on the subject of charity and giving.

expedient for you - Paul informs the Corinthians that it is better for them to give to the work of the Lord.

Who have begun before - Who commenced the collection a year before. See **2Co** 8:6. The giving of the offering may have been interrupted probably by the dissensions which arose in the church.

But also to be forward (*willing*) - They were voluntary in this, and they set about it with vigorous and determined zeal and courage.

2 Corinthians

Now therefore perform the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have.

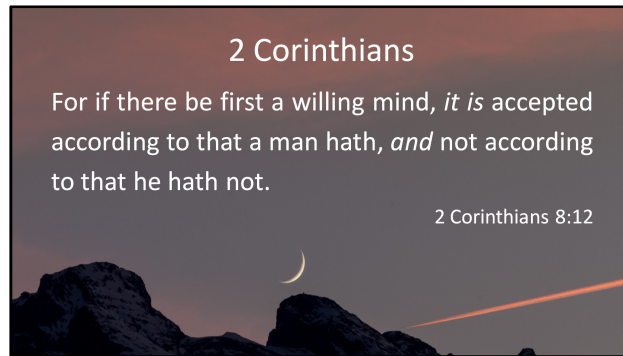
2 Corinthians 8:11

2 Corinthians 8:11 Now therefore perform the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have.

Now therefore perform the doing of it - The Corinthian Christians previously expressed a desiring and a readiness to give. Now, they actually had to do it!

The Devil will let you resolve as much as you like - the more the better - just as long as you never carry it out. "The tragedy of life so often is, not that we have no high impulses, but that we fail to turn them into actions." (Barclay)

there may be a performance also out of that which ye have - We can't give what we don't have. God judges our giving against what resources we have. However, the issue of what and how we spend is relevant to **what you have**. If you overspend and therefore never have any to give, you can't excuse it before God by saying, "Well, I don't have anything to give."

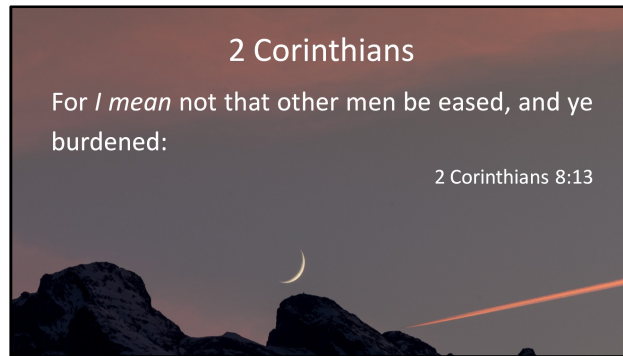


2 Corinthians 8:12 For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

if there be first a willing mind - When we give, God looks for readiness and a willing mind. These are the true marks of a generous heart before God and are no more likely among the rich than the poor.

***it is* accepted according to that a man hath** - and not according to what he does not have: Again, God does not expect us to give what we do not have. God is not only concerned with what we give, he is concerned about what we have left after we give.

If a man with 1,000,000 dollars gave \$1000 offering and a man with \$2000 gave a \$1000 offering, which of the two gave the greater offering.



2 Corinthians 8:13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

Not that other men be eased, and ye burdened - The Corinthian Christians were not giving so that the Jerusalem Christians would get rich and lazy at their expense. Paul was taking the collection so the Jerusalem Christians could merely survive. The goal was not to burden the Corinthian Christians, nor was it to make it easy for the Jerusalem Christians.

2 Corinthians

But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want: that there may be equality:

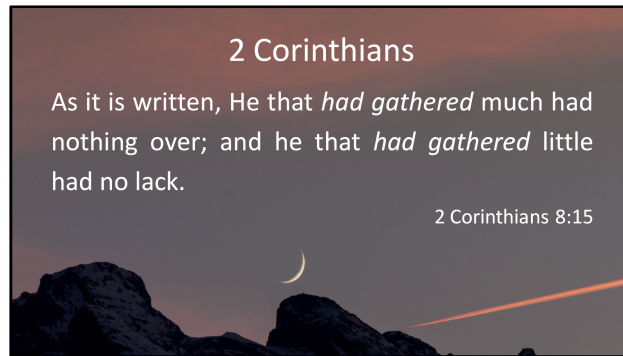
2 Corinthians 8:14

2 Corinthians 8:14 But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want: that there may be equality:

But by an equality - Paul sees that the spiritual abundance of the Jerusalem Christians has blessed the Corinthian Christians. Therefore, it should be a small thing for the Corinthian Christians to share with them their material abundance.

The equality Paul mentions here isn't meant to imply Socialism or Communism, where all are said to live at the same economic level, and none are supposed to be richer than others are. Of course, Communism and Socialism themselves are evil, being noble ideas in theory but absolute tyrannies when sharing is commanded at the end of a gun.

Now at this time – Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians that this is just the way it is right now and is not establishing socialism as a Christian norm.



2 Corinthians 8:15 As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack.

Paul refers to Exodus 16:18 which illustrates his principle. Everyone gathered what they could, some more and some less; but they all shared what they gathered.

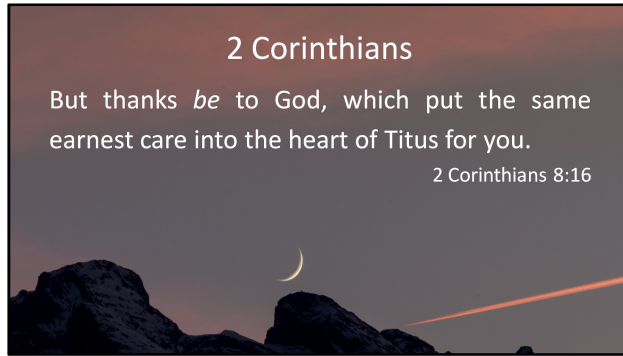
Exodus 16:18 And when they did mete *it* with an omer, **he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack;** they gathered every man according to his eating.

** "All that we have is manna . . . And just as manna, which was hoarded to excess out of greed or lack of faith, immediately putrefied, so we should have no doubt that riches which are heaped up at the expense of our brethren are accursed and will soon perish and their owner will be ruined with them." (Calvin)

2 Corinthians

But thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

2 Corinthians 8:16



2 Corinthians 8:16 But thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

Paul's intention is to introduce and recommend Titus to them as a trustworthy bearer of their money.

When dealing with God's money, a committee does not insure integrity. It is not the number of people that give accountability, rather the integrity of people that insures the integrity of using God's money.

2 Corinthians

For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;

2 Corinthians 8:17-18

2 Corinthians 8:17-18 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;

But being more forward - The idea here is that he was very ready to engage in this; he was more ready to engage in it than Paul was to exhort him to it. He anticipated his request and had already resolved to engage in it.

Of his own accord he went - he went voluntarily and without urging.

we have sent with him the brother - Bible commentators have been ready to say whom they believe "*the brother*" to be. Some of the candidates have been Luke, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, and a variety of others but no one really knows. We can confidently say that it doesn't really matter, otherwise, God would have made it clear.

2 Corinthians

And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration of your ready mind*:

2 Corinthians 8:19

2 Corinthians 8:19 And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration of your ready mind*:

And not that only - Not only is he esteemed on account of other services which he has rendered by his preaching and writings but he has had a new mark of the confidence of the churches in being appointed to convey the collection to Jerusalem.

Chosen of the churches - Chosen by the churches. Many concurred in the choice, showing that they had entire confidence in him.

2 Corinthians

Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

2 Corinthians 8:20-21

2 Corinthians 8:20-21 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

Avoiding this - That is, I intend to prevent any blame from being cast upon me in regard to the management of these funds. For this purpose Paul had refused to have the entire management of the funds, (see **1Co 16:3-4**,) and had secured the appointment of one who had the entire confidence of all the churches.

That no man should blame us - That no one should have any occasion to say that I had appropriated it to my own use, or contrary to the will of the donors.

In this abundance - referring to the large amount which was contributed by the churches.

Providing for honest things - refers to the right way of using property and resources

2 Corinthians

And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you.

2 Corinthians 8:22

2 Corinthians 8:22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you.

Whom we have oftentimes proved diligent - Although the identity of this person remains unknown, it was evidence that he has been faithful. It is evident, therefore, that he had been the companion and fellow-labourer of Paul.

Upon the great confidence - The idea is, that this brother had great confidence in the Corinthians that they would give liberally, and that he would, therefore, evince special diligence in the business.

2 Corinthians

Whether *any do inquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren *be inquired of*, *they are* the messengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Christ. Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

Corinthians 8:23-24

Corinthians 8:23-24 Whether *any do inquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren *be inquired of*, *they are* the messengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Christ. Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

Whether any do inquire of Titus - The apostle here sums up the character of each of the above persons. As for Titus, he says:

- he is my partner** - he had been his companion in his travels, a partner with him in preaching the Gospel, as well as in the troubles and persecutions he had met with. He was one with whom he had had sweet communion and fellowship.

- and fellow helper** - or worker.

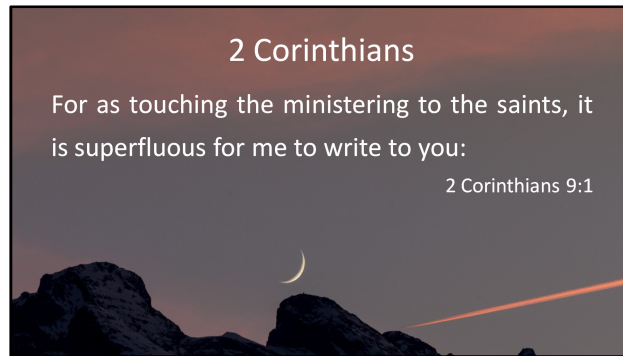
The two brethren who were sent along with Titus, what may be truly said of them is:

- they are the messengers of the churches** - they were chosen and sent forth by the churches, not only to preach the Gospel, but particularly to take care of the ministration to the poor saints. They were messengers appointed by the churches for this service, and were also appointed to the service of the churches.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 9



2 Corinthians 9:1 For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

For as touching the ministering to the saints - In regard to the collection that was to be taken up for the aid of the poor Christians in Judea.

It is superfluous - It is needless to urge that matter on you, because I know that you acknowledge the obligation to do it and have already purposed it.

2 Corinthians

For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

2 Corinthians 9:2

I know your promptitude, or your readiness to do it.

For which I boast of you to them of Macedonia - So well assured was he that the church at Corinth would make the collection as it had proposed, that he boasted of it to the churches of Macedonia as if it were already done.

“was ready” means that they had been preparing themselves for this collection, and doubtless Paul had stated that the collection was already made and was waiting.

That Achaia was ready a year ago - Achaia was that part of Greece of which Corinth was the capital.

2 Corinthians

Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

2 Corinthians 9:3-4

2 Corinthians 9:3-4 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

Yet have I sent the brethren - The brethren referred to in **2Co 8:18,22-23**.

lest our boasting of you should be in vain - Lest anything should have occurred to prevent the collection, I have sent them.

Lest haply if they of Macedonia - If any of the Macedonians should happen to come with Paul and should find that you had done nothing.

We (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed - Paul had boasted confidently that the Corinthians would be ready with their collection. He had excited and stimulated the Macedonians by this consideration; he had induced them in this way to give liberally, **2Co 8:1-4**. If now it should turn out after all that the Corinthians had given nothing, the character of Paul and his judgment would suffer.

2 Corinthians

Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetousness

2 Corinthians 9:5

2 Corinthians 9:5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetousness.

Therefore I thought it necessary - necessary to secure the collection and to avoid all unpleasant feeling on all hands.

And make up beforehand your bounty - Prepare it before I come.

the same might be ready, as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetousness - That it may truly appear as a liberal and voluntary offering, as an act of generosity, and not as *wrung* or extorted from you.

2 Corinthians

But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

But this I say - This I say in order to induce you to give liberally. This I say to prevent your supposing that because it is to be a voluntary offering you may give only from your superfluity and may give sparingly.

He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully - Shall reap in proportion to what he sowed. This everyone knows is true in regard to grain that is sowed. It is also no less true in regard to deeds of charity. The idea is, that God will bestow rewards in proportion to what is given.

And the man who wishes to make the most out of his money for future use and personal comfort, will give liberally to deserving objects of charity--just as the man who wishes to make the most out of his grain will not suffer it to lie in his granary but will commit the seed to the fertile earth.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart - The main idea in this verse is, that the act of giving should be voluntary and cheerful. It should not seem to be extorted. It should be given as an offering of the heart. the heart is usually more concerned in the business of giving than the head. If liberality is evinced, it will be the heart which prompts to it. We should follow the dictates of the heart in giving. A man will usually give more correctly who follows the first promptings of his heart than he will if he takes much time to deliberate.

Giving should be voluntary and cheerful. It should be from the heart.

Not grudgingly - Greek, "Not of grief," not as if he were sorry to part with his money or were constrained to do a thing that was extremely painful to him.

Or of necessity - As if he were compelled to do it.

for God loveth a cheerful giver - God desires the heart in every service. No service

2 Corinthians

And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

2 Corinthians 9:8

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

And God is able - Do not suppose that by giving liberally you will be impoverished and reduced to want. You should rather confide in God, who is able to furnish you abundantly with what is needful for the supply of our necessities.

All grace - All kinds of favour. He is able to impart to you those things which are needful for your welfare.

ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work - The sense is, "If you give liberally, you are to expect that God will furnish you with the means, so that you will be able to abound more and more in it.

2 Corinthians

(As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

2 Corinthians 9:9-10

2 Corinthians 9:9-10 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever - In this quotation from Psalm 112:9, Paul is not trying to say that generous giving makes us righteous but rather gives evidence of a right standing with God.

he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food - Paul is recognizing God as the Great Supplier. Whatever we have to give, we must understand that it was first given to us by God.

2 Corinthians

Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

2 Corinthians 9:11-12

2 Corinthians 9:11-12 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

Being enriched in every thing - God's blessing on one life. It was not for luxury and self-gratification. Not for parade and display. It is that it might be distributed to others in such a way as to cause thanksgiving to God.

to all bountifulness - It means blessings and property is given for this purpose, in order that there may be liberality evinced in doing good to others.

which causeth through us thanksgiving to God - That is, we should so distribute our blessings as to cause thanksgiving to God.

For the administration of this service - The distribution of this proof of your liberality. The word *service* here, says Doddridge, intimates that this was to be regarded not merely as an act of *humanity, but religion*.

The want of the saints - Of the poor Christians in Judea on whose behalf it was contributed.

But is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God - The result will be that it will produce abundant thanksgiving in their hearts to God.

2 Corinthians

Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*;

2 Corinthians 9:13

2 Corinthians 9:13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*;

Whiles by the experiment of this ministration - Or rather, by the *experience* of this ministration; the proof of your liberality. They shall in this ministration have experience or proof of your Christian principle.

They glorify God - They will praise God as the source of your liberality, as having given you the means of being liberal, and having inclined your hearts to it.

For your professed subjection, etc - meaning "For the obedience of your profession of the gospel." It does not imply merely that there was a profession of religion but that there was a real subjection to the gospel which they professed.

2 Corinthians

And by their prayer for you, which long after
you for the exceeding grace of God in you.
Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

2 Corinthians 9:14-15

2 Corinthians 9:14-15 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

And by their prayer for you - Your graciousness will excite the prayers of the saints for you, and thus produce important benefits to yourselves. They will earnestly desire your welfare; they will anxiously pray to be united in Christian friendship with those who have been endowed with the grace of God."

Which long after you - Who earnestly desire to see and know you. Who will sincerely desire your welfare and who will thus be led to pray for you.

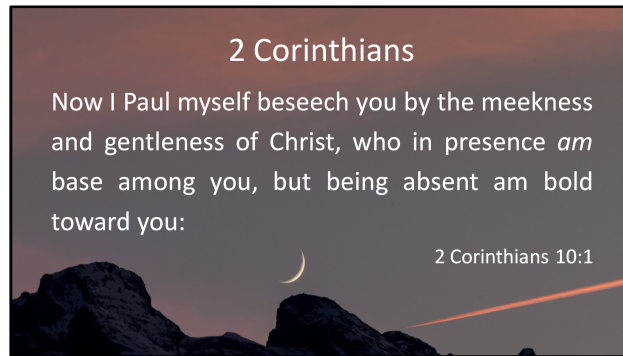
For the exceeding grace of God in you - On account of the favour which God has shown to you. The apostle means that the exercise of a charitable disposition is to be traced entirely to God.

His unspeakable gift - The word here used (*anekdiēgētos*) means, what cannot be related, unutterable. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The idea is, that no words can properly express the greatness of the gift thus bestowed on man. It is higher than the mind can conceive; higher than language can express.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 10



2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:

Now I Paul myself beseech you - I entreat you who are members of the church not to give me occasion for the exercise of severity in discipline. Instead of *commanding* them, I *entreat* them not to give me occasion for the exercise of discipline.

By the meekness and gentleness of Christ - In view of the meekness and mildness of the Redeemer and desiring to imitate his gentleness and kindness. Paul did not wish to have occasion for severity

who in presence *am* base among you - Base (Gk: *tapeinos*) humble, or of low degree

But being absent am bold toward you - That is, in my letters. This they charged him with, that he was bold enough when away from them, but that he would be tame enough when he should meet them face to face, and that they had nothing to fear from him.

2 Corinthians

But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

2 Corinthians 10:2

2 Corinthians 10:2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

wherewith I think to be bold against some - *Some* reminds us that we shouldn't think that all the Corinthian Christians had a bad opinion of Paul. It may have been merely a vocal minority.

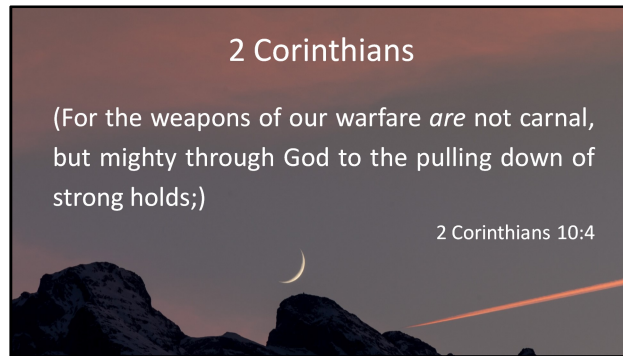
According to the flesh - He is accused of this because of the perceived contradiction between his gentleness and his severity. As if we were governed by the weak and corrupt principles of human nature.



2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

For though we walk in the flesh - Paul admits that he walks according to the flesh in the sense that we all do. He is a flesh and blood human being and he struggles with the same things the Corinthian Christians struggled with. However, Paul wants to make it clear that he does not war according to the flesh.

The carnal weapons Paul refuses were not material weapons such as swords and spears. The carnal weapons he renounced were the manipulative and deceitful ways his opponents used. Paul would not defend his apostolic credentials with carnal weapons others used.



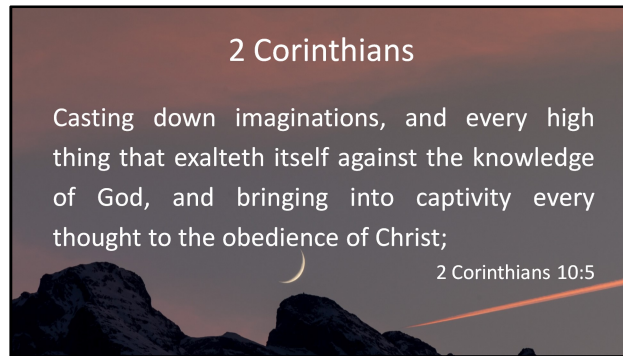
2 Corinthians 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

weapons of our warfare - In Ephesians 6, Paul lists the spiritual weapons he used: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. To rely on these weapons took faith in God instead of carnal methods. But truly, these weapons are mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.

Ephesians 6:14-18 - Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

The carnal, human way is to overpower, dominate, manipulate, and out-manuever. The spiritual, Jesus way, is to humble yourself, die to yourself, and let God show His resurrection power through you.

Pulling down strongholds - Strongholds in this context are wrong thoughts and perceptions, contradicting the true knowledge of God and the nature of God.



2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Imaginations - Grk: *logismos* computation, logic,

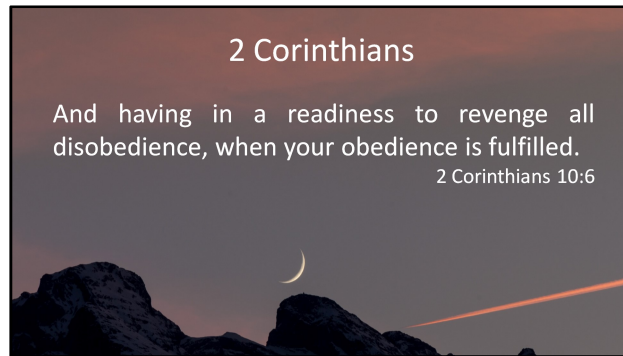
down imaginations, and every high thing - These things that want to debate God, saying they have a better way. They exalt themselves against the knowledge of God.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God - This reliance on carnal methods and the habit of carnal reasoning is a true stronghold.

Redpath writes of a practical way to battle with spiritual weapons and break down a stronghold: "When the thought comes and the person is reported to have said what he has said, and the unkindness is known to us, and the criticism has been made, whereas carnality would say, 'Counterattack!' spirituality recognizes that nothing that any person could ever say about any one is really one hundredth part as bad as the truth if he only knew it.

bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ - To battle against this carnal way of thinking and doing, our thoughts must be brought captive and made obedient to Jesus.

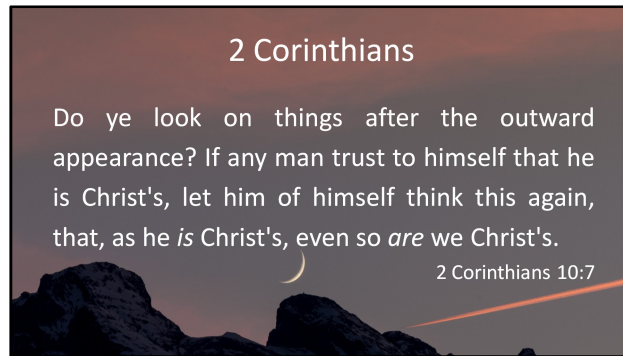
Thoughts of lust, thoughts of anger, thoughts of fear, thoughts of greed, bitter thoughts, evil thoughts - they are part of every thought that may be and must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.



2 Corinthians 10:6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

a readiness to revenge all disobedience - Many commentators think the phrase to punish all disobedience is taken from the Roman military court. Paul says, “We are all soldiers together in this battle, and I am ready to bring in some discipline among these troops.”

When your obedience is fulfilled - Paul sees no point in coming to confront disobedience until those who have obeyed Jesus have made up their mind to do so. He will give time for those who want to renounce carnal weapons to do so. Then he will come to punish the disobedience of those who will not renounce those carnal weapons.



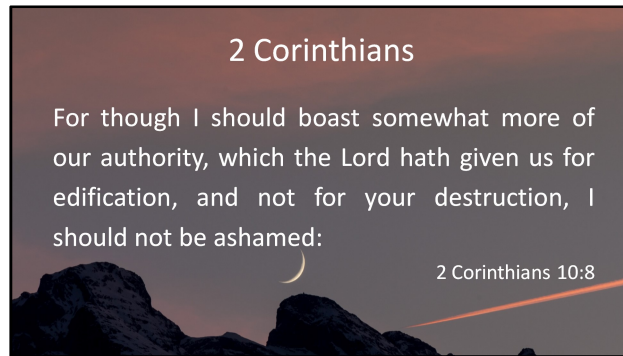
2 Corinthians 10:7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's.

Do ye look on things after the outward appearance - Paul diagnoses the problem with the Corinthian troublemakers. They are looking only at the outward appearances, and by outward appearances, Paul was weak and unimpressive.

The people who criticized Paul and said that there were “two Pauls” - one reflected in his letters and one evident in person - really didn’t know Paul except on a surface level.

If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's - Paul is saying, “If you claim to belong to Jesus, look at yourself. You may not be mighty in outward appearance, yet you belong to Jesus. Well, so we are Christ’s as well.”

Paul doesn’t say that it is wrong to test an apostle’s credentials but that the Corinthians used the wrong test. They judged only by outward appearance.



2 Corinthians 10:8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:

For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority - It seems that Paul is uncomfortable writing about his own authority. This is because he is a humble, godly man. He uses “boast” here in an exaggerated, almost sarcastic sense to show he would prefer not to talk about his own authority; it feels like “boast[ing]” to him.

our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification - Paul recognizes that Jesus grants authority in the Church for one reason. He does it to build the body of believers up (edification), not to tear it down (destruction).

This is true of every level of authority God has granted. In the Church, in the home, in the workplace, and in government, God has established levels of authority and submission. He did this to build up, not to destroy.

2 Corinthians

That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.

2 Corinthians 10:9-10

2 Corinthians 10:9-10 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.

That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters - Paul's despisers among the Corinthian Christians felt they had "evidence" against him. The "evidence" was that Paul seemed to be tough in his letters but weak and unimpressive in person. So they used this as "evidence" to despise him as weak and two-faced.

***his* speech contemptible** - hearing only the style and presentation of his sermons, not the message itself.

2 Corinthians

Let such an one think this, that, such as we are
in word by letters when we are absent, such *will*
we be also in deed when we are present.

2 Corinthians 10:11

2 Corinthians 10:11 Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *will we be* also in deed when we are present.

Paul writes to his despisers with perfect clarity. “If you want the ‘tough’ Paul, you will get him. I will come to you with all the authority I have shown in my letters.” If the Corinthian Christians knew how serious Paul was, they would have received this as a solemn warning.

2 Corinthians

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

2 Corinthians 10:12

2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves - Whoever Paul's opponents and critics were among the Corinthian Christians, they certainly thought highly of themselves. Paul will not class or compare himself with these carnal, worldly people at all.

some that commend themselves - There are many who are ready to commend themselves; most do not do it publicly but do it privately in their own minds. *"They are also full of pride and self-conceit; they look within themselves for accomplishments which their self-love will soon find out; for to it real and fictitious are the same."* (Clarke)

comparing themselves among themselves - This means two things. First, it means making yourself the measure of others. Second, it means making others the measure of yourself.

This explains why Paul's carnal Corinthian critics could think so highly of themselves. In their worldly ways of thinking, they simply **measured themselves by themselves** and only **compared themselves among themselves**.

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 10:13 But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

2 Corinthians 10:13

2 Corinthians 10:13-14 But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

Paul's authority in the church was not unlimited. God had granted him **the measure of the rule which God hath distributed**, especially since he had founded that church (for it was to you that we came with the Gospel of Christ).

All godly authority has a sphere. It is important for the person in authority to not exercise that authority outside the sphere, and it is important for the person under authority to recognize the sphere of authority they are under.

2 Corinthians

For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ:

2 Corinthians 10:14

2 Corinthians 10:14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ:

For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure - In coming to preach to you, we have not gone beyond the proper limits assigned us. We have not endeavoured to enlarge the proper boundaries, to *stretch the line* which limited us but have kept honestly within the proper limits.

As though we reached not unto you - That is, as if our boundaries did not extend so far as to comprehend you. We have not overstepped the proper limits as if Greece was not within the proper sphere of action.

2 Corinthians

Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

2 Corinthians 10:15

2 Corinthians 10:15 Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men's labours - not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment: Paul is stressing the point that he will not, take authority in another man's sphere? Probably because that is exactly what his opponents among the Corinthian Christians did. They tried to boast in Paul's sphere of accomplishment.

2 Corinthians

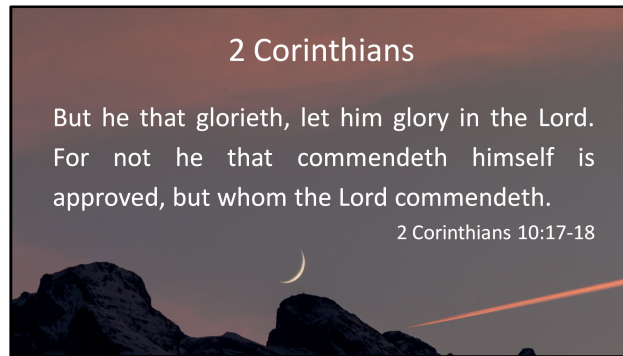
To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you,
and not to boast in another man's line of things
made ready to our hand.

2 Corinthians 10:16

2 Corinthians 10:16 To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

To preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you - Here the apostle clearly expresses what he hoped for, and explains what he meant by being enlarged according to rule; namely, that he should be at liberty to preach the Gospel elsewhere; and hoped he should be directed by the providence of God, to carry it into the more remote and distant parts of the world, where as yet Christ had not been named.

and not to boast in another man's line - or enter into another man's province, glory in other men's labours, as did the false apostles, and boast.



2 Corinthians 10:17-18 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord - By using this quotation from Jeremiah 9:24, Paul rebukes the Corinthian Christians who found their glory either in Paul or against Paul. Paul sweeps all that away, showing we should not glory in ourselves, in another, or against another - we should only glory in the Lord.

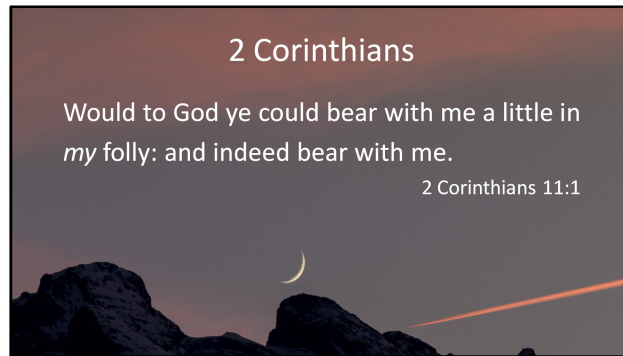
let him glory in the Lord - The great thing about glorying in the Lord is that we can always do it. No one is so high that they cannot glory in the Lord. No one is so low that they cannot glory in the Lord. We can all glory in the Lord!

For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth - It doesn't matter how you testify about your own accomplishments. It is what God says about us that matters and will endure.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 11



2 Corinthians 11:1 Would to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me.

Paul does not call the defense of his apostleship folly because it is stupid or nonsense. He calls it folly because he does it reluctantly, knowing his time and effort could be spent on far better things. Also he knows that the things he believed to be honorable about his apostleship would be regarded as foolish by some of the Corinthian Christians.



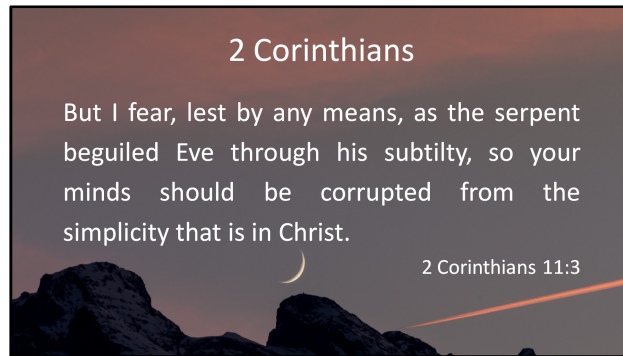
2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.

I am jealous over you - Human jealousy is a vice but the Lord said, I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. (Exodus 20:5) "God's jealousy is love in action. He refuses to share the human heart with any rival, not because He is selfish and wants us all for Himself, but because He knows that upon that loyalty to Him depends our very moral life.

with godly jealousy - God's jealousy, therefore, is a concern for the holiness, integrity, purity of ethics, and Christian standards for His people.

I have espoused you to one husband - Paul's apostolic credentials because Paul is like the friend of the groom, who watches out for the bride in the period between the betrothal and the wedding.

that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ - In the Jewish culture of that day, the friend of the bridegroom (mentioned also in John 3:29) had an important job. "To procure a husband for the virgin, to guard her, and to bear testimony to her corporeal and marital endowments; and it was upon this testimony of this friend that the bridegroom chose his bride. He was the messenger/protector between her and her spouse elect; carrying all messages from her to him, and from him to her: for before marriage you women were strictly guarded at home with their parents or friends." Also, the friend of the bridegroom was called upon, if necessary, "To vindicate the character of the bride." (Clarke)



2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

But I fear . . . your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ - It is important that the Corinthian Christians understand and trust Paul's apostolic credentials because Paul knows the subtle nature of Satan's deceptions.

as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty - Paul did not mean that they were in danger of being corrupted in the same way, but that similar efforts would be made to seduce them. Satan adapts his temptations to the character and circumstances

corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ - From simple and single-hearted devotedness to him--from pure and unmixed attachment to him.

2 Corinthians

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

2 Corinthians 11:4

2 Corinthians 11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

he that cometh preacheth another Jesus - The troublemakers among the Corinthian Christians who stirred up contention against Paul didn't only attack Paul; they also attacked the true Jesus by preaching another Jesus.

whom we have not preached - Paul warned the Galatians against receiving another Jesus. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8-9)

***if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted** - The problem wasn't so much that these false teachers had come among the Christians in Corinth. The problem was that the Corinthian Christians put up with them.

ye might well bear with *him* -The sense is, There would then be some excuse for your conduct. There would be some reason why you should welcome such teachers; But if this cannot be done; if they can preach no other and no better gospel and Savior than I have done, then there is no excuse.

2 Corinthians

For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

2 Corinthians 11:5-6

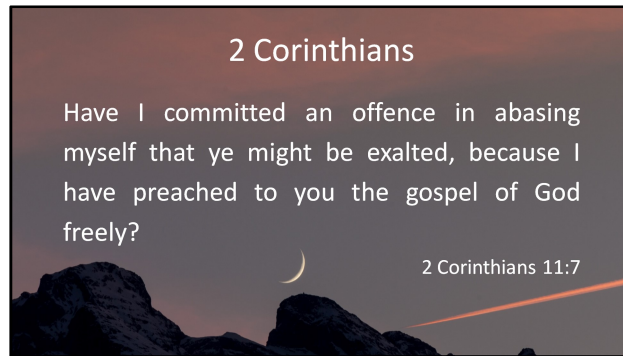
2 Corinthians 11:5-6 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles - Paul here compares himself to some he refers to as the most eminent apostles. Apparently, these were apostles that the Corinthian Christians preferred over Paul.

Paul speaks sarcastically of the false apostles who claimed to be superior to Paul. the idea behind the phrase “**very chiefest apostles**” is “extra-super apostles.” Paul sarcastically to them as “super-duper apostles.”

though *I be* rude in speech - Paul, according to the standards of Greek rhetoric, was untrained in speech. In Paul’s day, the ability to speak in a polished, sophisticated, entertaining way was popular. but Paul was either unable or unwilling to preach in this way. It didn’t matter to Paul because he wasn’t concerned with meeting people’s standards for a “polished” or “entertaining” speaker; he was concerned with faithfully preaching the gospel.

we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things - Paul couldn’t - or wouldn’t - give the Corinthian Christians the polished and entertaining preaching they wanted, but he did give them himself. He **thoroughly manifested himself** among the Corinthian Christians **in all things**. He wasn’t a polished speaker (according to the standards of his day), but he was an honest and transparent speaker.



2 Corinthians 11:7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?

Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted - In the culture of that day, if a public speaker didn't take money for his speaking he was often disregarded as a poor speaker, with worthless teaching.

This shows Paul at his most ironic. The Corinthian Christians who despised Paul were so worldly in their thinking they actually thought Paul might be in sin because he preached the gospel of God to you free of charge!

2 Corinthians

I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.

2 Corinthians 11:8

“Robbed” here Paul does not mean that he had obtained anything from them in a violent or unlawful manner.

The idea of Paul here is he “robbed” them because he did not render an equivalent for what they gave him.

2 Corinthians

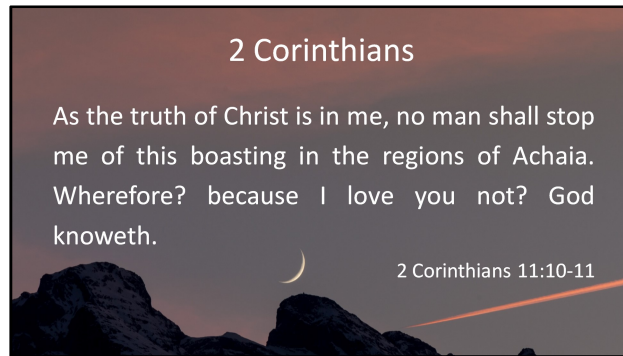
And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.

2 Corinthians 11:9

2 Corinthians 11:9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.

I was chargeable to no man - No one in Corinth supported or help Paul in his ministry efforts. Paul makes this known that other churches supported him so that he could bless the Corinthian people.

that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied - Paul received his support while in Corinth, from the churches in the region of Macedonia, including the Philippian church.



2 Corinthians 11:10-11 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia - As a true apostle, Paul could “boast” that he took no money and that he was more interested in the integrity of the message than in his own needs.

Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth - Paul’s boasting in his weakness and unimpressive image was an embarrassment to the Corinthian Christians. Why did he embarrass them this way? It was only because he loved them and would find a way to bring them back from their worldly thinking.

2 Corinthians

But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

2 Corinthians 11:12

2 Corinthians 11:12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion - Paul wanted to expose these false apostles as frauds. If it took biting sarcasm or embarrassing the Corinthian Christians to expose them, Paul would use those tools.

2 Corinthians

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

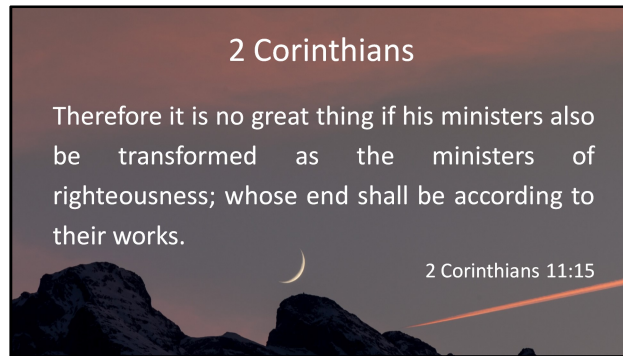
2 Corinthians 11:13-14

2 Corinthians 11:13-14 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers - Paul becomes even more direct. Without sarcasm, he plainly calls his detractors in Corinth (or at least the leaders among them) false apostles and deceitful workers.

transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ - "They were never apostles of Christ, only they put themselves into such a shape and form, that they might have more advantage to deceive."

Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light - so false apostles may have a "good" appearance. Paul is showing the Corinthian Christians how foolish it is to rely on image and outward appearances.



2 Corinthians 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness - Paul is stating that those who transform themselves are more like Satan than they are like God.

whose end shall be according to their works - This is the terrible condemnation reserved for these false apostles - to be judged according to their works.

2 Corinthians

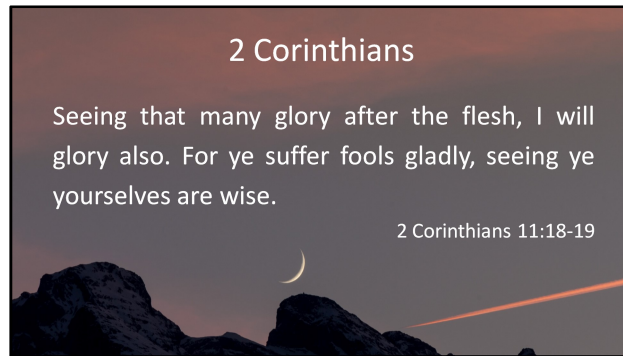
I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

2 Corinthians 11:16-17

2 Corinthians 11:16-17 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little - It is easy to sense both Paul's sarcasm and his hesitancy to promote himself. He would rather talk about Jesus, but that message is hindered by the Corinthians' disregard of Paul's credentials as a true apostle, a true representative of Jesus.

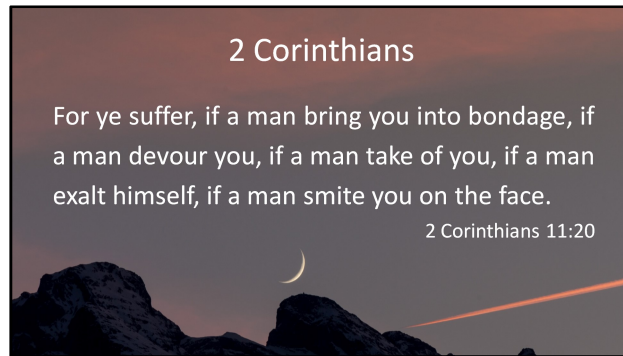
Paul is not like the "real" fools who boast of their credentials. This will become evident when Paul starts stating his credentials as a true apostle.



2 Corinthians 11:18-19 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.

Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also - Paul feels forced into writing about himself. Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. But Paul's boasting will be nothing like the boasting of the many who boast **according to the flesh.**

For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise - Again, Paul uses biting sarcasm. If the Corinthian Christians are wise enough to put up with so many fools, surely they can listen to Paul for a while!



2 Corinthians 11:20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.

For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage - Like many of the deceived today, the Corinthian Christians would put up with abuse from “so-called super apostles,” thinking that it is somehow spiritual to endure such bondage.

The bondage Paul speaks of may indicate that these false apostles were legalists, trying to put people under the bondage of the Law. However, it is just as likely that the bondage Paul refers to is the personal domination and authority.

if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face - If one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. The Corinthian Christians were so taken with their “super apostles” they would accept all kind of ill treatment from them. They were so impressed with the image of authority and power of the “super apostles,” they meekly submitted to this kind of treatment.

2 Corinthians

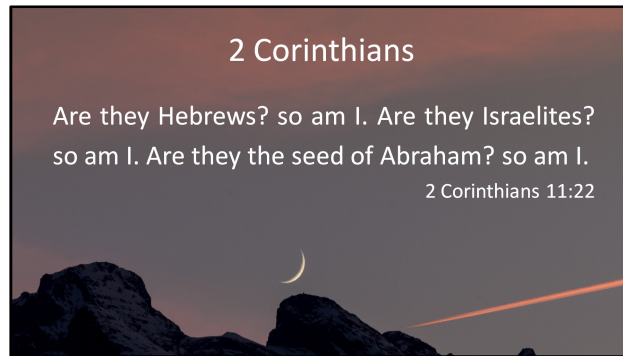
I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

2 Corinthians 11:21

2 Corinthians 11:21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak - Paul continues the sarcasm, confessing that he is too “weak” to abuse his sheep the way the so-called “super apostles” do.

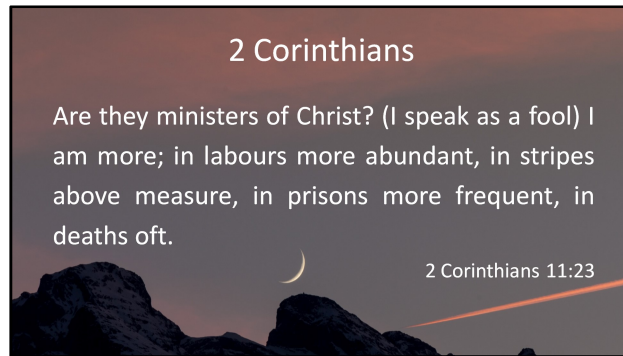
whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also - The most eminent apostles were bold in proclaiming their greatness. So, Paul will be bold also but in doing so, he will speak foolishly. The rest of the chapter contains Paul’s “foolish boasting” about the things that prove him to be a true apostle.



2 Corinthians 11:22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

Are they Hebrews? So am I - Paul's human ancestry was more than enough to qualify him as an apostle.

Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I - Not only was he the seed of Abraham, he was also of the Israelites. Not only was he of the Israelites, he was of the Hebrews, meaning he was a Jew of Judean descent, as opposed to Jews who were born from people coming from areas far from Judea.



2 Corinthians 11:23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more - The “*most eminent apostles*” claimed to be ministers of Christ. When they used this term, it probably sounded like an honored, privileged title. Paul, he was also a ministers of Christ, but he will explain that he means something far different from the false Apostles.

Minister - comes from the ancient Greek word *diakonos*, which describes a humble servant or a menial worker.

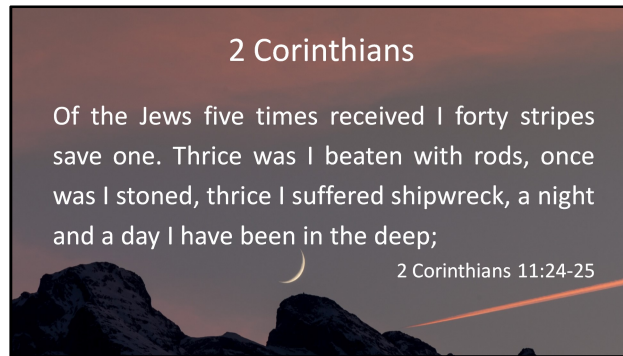
In labors more abundant – He’s saying, “I am a minister of Christ because I work harder than any of the other apostles for Jesus’ sake.”

1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; **but I laboured more abundantly than they all:** yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

In stripes above measure - Paul received beatings from both the Jews (five times I received forty stripes minus one) and the Romans (three times I beaten with rods).

in prisons more frequent - Paul speaks of being in prison several times for the cause of Christ. This gives the Corinthians insight to his dedication even during hardship something the false Apostles would certainly flee from.

In deaths often - We know Paul was close to death when an angry crowd tried to execute him by stoning in Lystra but there were many other times as well.



2 Corinthians 11:24-25 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one - Paul received beatings from both the Jews (five times I received forty stripes minus one) and the Romans (three times I beaten with rods).

The incident in Lystra (recorded in Acts 14:19) must be what Paul refers to when he says once I was stoned.

Acts 14:19-20 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, **having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city**, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, **he rose up, and came into the city**: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep - Through the book of Acts, we read of no less than 18 journeys Paul took by ship. Since the book of Acts is an incomplete record, there were many more in addition to this. Some historians have said that there is no other man in the ancient world who is recorded to have traveled as extensively as Paul did.

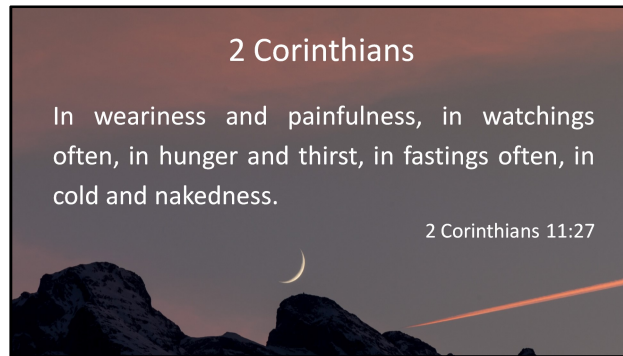
2 Corinthians

In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

2 Corinthians 11:26

2 Corinthians 11:26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

All these many perils simply add up to a hard, stress-filled life that Paul endured because of his Apostolic calling and service to Christ. None of the false Apostle could tell this type of story.



2 Corinthians 11:27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Paul simply lived a hard life as a missionary, traveling and preaching the Gospel. In our modern world, we are isolated from so many of the difficulties Paul faced. We can get water and food and warmth so much more easily than Paul ever could.

It wasn't the mere fact of a hard life that made Paul a true minister of Christ. Many people have hard lives but are in no way servants of Jesus. But for Paul, all these perils and hardships were freely chosen because he could have lived differently if he wanted to. But he didn't want to. He wanted to serve Christ

The perils of Paul's life were really plenty enough to kill any man, but nothing or no one could kill him until God finished His purpose for Paul on this earth.

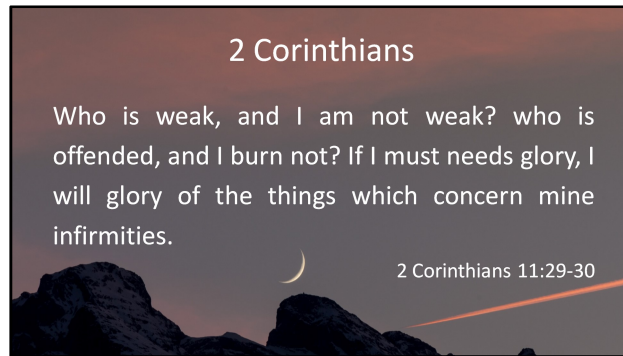
2 Corinthians

Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

2 Corinthians 11:28-29

2 Corinthians 11:28-29 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily - In addition to all the stressful perils Paul previously mentioned, he lived daily with another with a deep concern for all the churches.



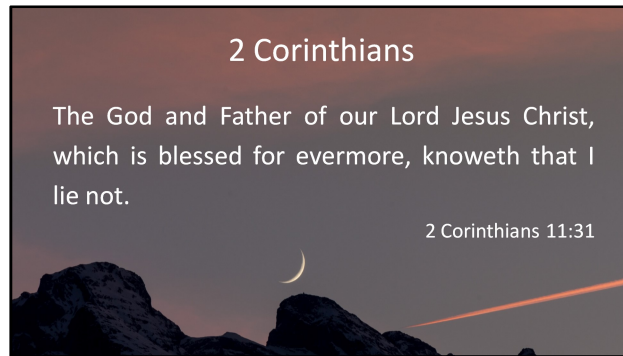
2 Corinthians 11:29-30 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

Who is weak, and I am not weak - whoever was weak in the Faith he was concerned for them, to instruct, establish, and strengthen them. But this concerned was in addition to all the hardships and stress he mentioned.

who is offended, and I burn not - Offended = “made to stumble”. The phrase is literally: *Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?*

I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities - What is Paul’s boast? What are his credentials as an apostle? Only his scars, **the things which concern my infirmity**. The infirmity Paul refers to may be a specific illness or weakness; more likely, it is the life of hardship and stress he lived as a whole.

“I will not boast of my natural or acquired powers; neither in what God has done by me; but rather in what I have suffered for him.” (Clarke)



2 Corinthians 11:31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

Paul recognizes that what he just wrote may seem incredible to some, and some may doubt Paul actually lived such hardship. Probably even more doubted that Paul could actually boast of such hardship. So Paul uses strong language to declare God is his witness that he tells the truth.

2 Corinthians

In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

2 Corinthians 11:32-33

2 Corinthians 11:32-33 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

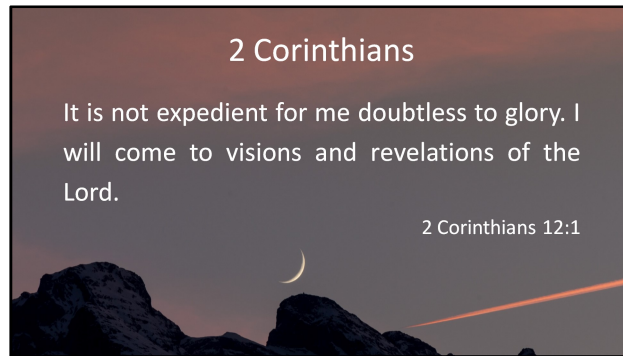
This was perhaps the first real peril or hardship Paul faced for Jesus' sake (Acts 9:23-25). He thinks way back to this beginning event, perhaps thinking that his escape from Damascus was his "apprenticeship in persecution." It is as if he says, "This is how my ministry began and this is how it continues."

It illustrates with power the contrast between Saul of Tarsus and Paul the Apostle. Saul of Tarsus traveled to Damascus full of man's power and authority, directed against God's people. Paul the Apostle left Damascus humbly in a basket.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 12



2 Corinthians 12:1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory - Paul is reluctant describes his vision.

I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord -The “super apostles” among the Corinthians claimed many spectacular spiritual experiences, such as visions and revelations of the Lord. Paul has “reluctantly boasted” since the last chapter, so now he will boast of his own visions and revelations of the Lord.

2 Corinthians

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

2 Corinthians 12:2-3

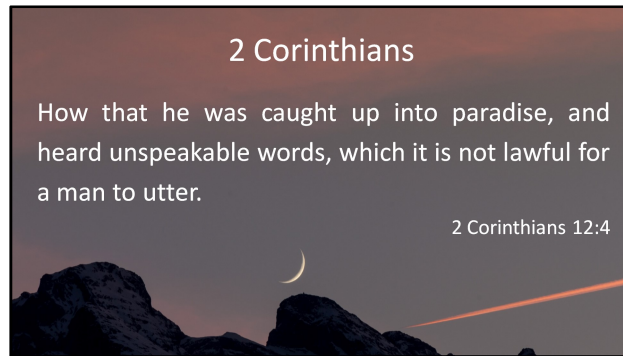
2 Corinthians 12:2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

Visions and revelation: Whether they concern angels, Jesus, heaven, or other things, these things are more common in the New Testament than we might think.

- Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, had a vision of an angel (Luke 1:8-23)
- Jesus' transfiguration is described as a vision for the disciples (Matthew 17:9)
- The women who came to visit Jesus' tomb had a vision of angels (Luke 24:22-24)
- Stephen saw a vision of Jesus at his death (Acts 7:55-56)
- Ananias experienced a vision telling him to go to Saul (Acts 9:10)
- Peter had a vision of the clean and unclean animals (Acts 10:17-19 and 11:5)
- Peter had a vision of an angel at his release from prison (Acts 12:9)
- John had many visions on Patmos (Revelation 1:1)
- Paul had a revelation of Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:6-11 and 26:12-20)
- Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia, asking him to come to that region to help (Acts 16:9-10)
- Paul had an encouraging vision while in Corinth (Acts 18:9-11)
- Paul had a vision of an angel on the ship that was about to be wrecked (Acts 27:23-25)

Visions and revelation are more common in the New Testament than we might think. So we should not be surprised if God should speak to us through some type of visions and revelations of the Lord. But we do understand that such experiences are subjective and prone to misunderstanding

visions and revelations of the Lord - they are almost always limited to the person who receives the visions and revelations. We should be rather cautious when someone reports a vision or revelation they have regarding us. *We should see how different Paul is from most of those who describe their so-called "visions" of heaven today. There is no self-alorvina. self-aarandizina. or foolish in the description*



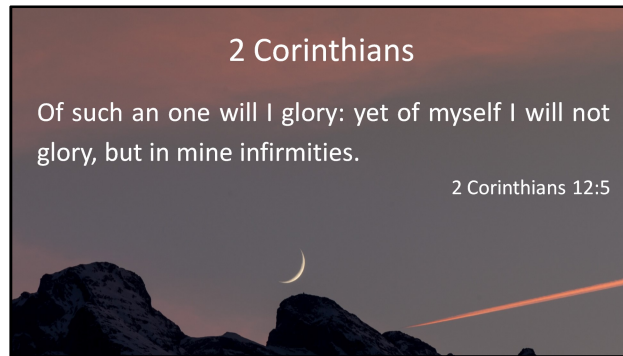
2 Corinthians 12:4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

How that he was caught up into paradise - Paul identifies this third heaven as Paradise. The word Paradise is taken from the Persian word for an enclosed, luxurious garden often only found among royalty in the ancient world.

heard unspeakable words - In describing this heavenly vision, Paul doesn't relate anything he saw, only a shadowy description of what he heard.

unspeakable words = inexpressible words

which it is not lawful for a man to utter - Although Paul did not relate what he saw, many commentators believe it was at this time he was giving the meaning of the New Testament and God's intentions of the Body of Christ as they stretch out into eternity future.



2 Corinthians 12:5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

Of such an one will I glory - Unlike the “super apostles”, Paul essentially says that this “nameless” man who had the vision really had something to boast about. But “Paul himself” really could only boast in his infirmities, which was exactly what he did in 2 Corinthians 11:23-30.

2 Corinthians

For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

2 Corinthians 12:6

2 Corinthians 12:6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool - Again, Paul is sharply - and humorously - contrasting himself with the “super apostles” among the Corinthian Christians. They would not hesitate to boast about the kind of vision Paul had. In fact, they would write books, make tapes and videos, and go on speaking tours about such a vision!

for I will say the truth: but now I forbear - Paul felt it was important to mention this experience but not to dwell on it in any way. He wasn't trying to “sell” himself to the Corinthian Christians.

lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me - In fact, he holds back from his description (But I forbear), because he didn't want to persuade the Corinthian Christians that he was just another “super apostle”

2 Corinthians

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.)

2 Corinthians 12:7

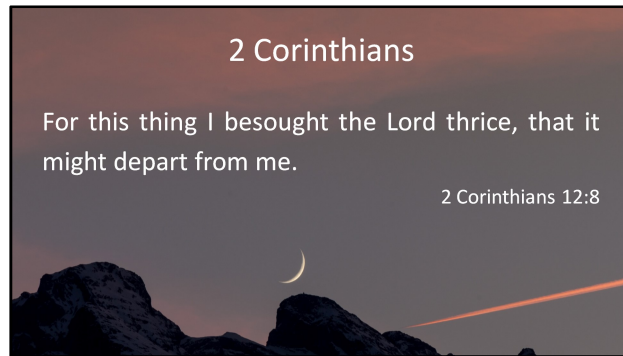
2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations - Paul's vision was so impressive that it would have been easy for him to be **exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations**

there was given to me a thorn in the flesh - It seems that everyone could see the thorn in the flesh Paul suffered from - it was no secret. His heavenly vision was a secret until now, but everyone saw the thorn. In a strange way, the thorn was given - ultimately given by God - but it was **also a messenger of Satan.**

Thorn (*Grk: skólops*) - a point or prickle; it represents not a mortal wound but an irritation in everyday life

the messenger of Satan to buffet me To buffet me - means that this **thorn in the flesh** - the **messenger of Satan** - "punched" Paul. He felt that he was beaten black and blue by this **messenger of Satan**. The purpose of God however was to prevent Paul from being **exalted above measure.**



2 Corinthians 12:8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me - Paul did exactly what he told others to do in a time of trouble. Paul believed for himself what he wrote in

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

No doubt “thrice” represents three periods of intense prayer concerning this thorn BEFORE God gave Paul answer.

Jesus also prayed **three times** in His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane:

Matthew 26:42-44 **He went away again the second time**, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and **went away again, and prayed the third time**, saying the same words. My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness

2 Corinthians

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness - God did give Paul an answer and that answer was NO. NO is a very legitimate answer from God.

Paul was desperate in his desire to find relief from this burden, but there are two ways of relief. It can come by removing the load or by strengthening the shoulder that bears the load.

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities - We do not know how God's grace manifested in Paul's life, but we plainly see the impact it had on Paul.

- He had prayed **thrice** but never a fourth time
- He bore the burden **"Most gladly"**
- He seems to have preferred the grace to the removal of the thorn **"I rather glory in my infirmities"**

that the power of Christ may rest upon me - Through his infirmities, God made Paul completely dependent on His grace and on His strength. God made him stronger than he would have ever been if his revelations had made him proud and self-sufficient.

2 Corinthians

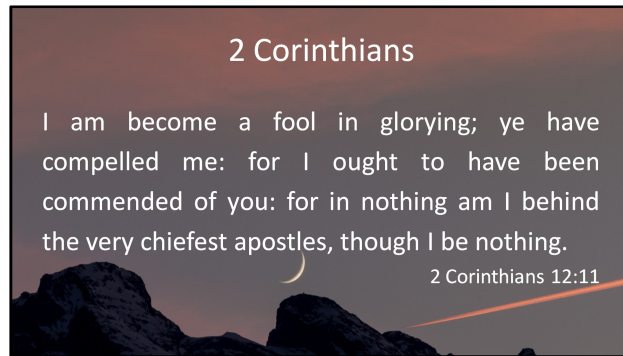
Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

2 Corinthians 12:10

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Paul does not resign himself to his fate; he welcomes it. He rejoices that God has forced him to rely on the grace and strength of God all the more so he can say, **“when I am weak, then I am strong.”**

when I am weak, then I am strong - What triumph! What can the world do to such a man so firm in the grip of Jesus?



2 Corinthians 12:11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me - Since he began this section in 2 Corinthians 10:1, Paul was forced to boast more than he wanted to before the Corinthian Christians. Paul is almost apologizing for writing so much about himself, because he would much rather write about Jesus.

for I ought to have been commended of you - The Corinthians did not defend Paul's character and standing as an apostle before the "most eminent false apostles" who criticized and undermined Paul.

It wasn't so much that the presence of the most eminent apostles bothered Paul. It was their influence among the Corinthian Christians that bothered the true apostle.

for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing - This is the reason that Paul has revealed so much about himself, it was to make the Corinthians see that he was inferior to none of these false apostles. Additionally, even the original 11 disciples (Apostles) efforts or knowledge were not superior to Paul.

2 Corinthians

Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

2 Corinthians 12:12

2 Corinthians 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

the signs of an apostle were wrought among you - Paul could also point to **the signs and wonders and mighty deeds** that were accomplished among the Corinthian Christians. Each of these was evidence of Paul's apostolic standing.

2 Corinthians

For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.

2 Corinthians 12:13

2 Corinthians 12:13 For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.

For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches - If Paul is inferior in any way, it is only in that he refused to take money from the Corinthian Christians. So, he sarcastically asks their forgiveness: **Forgive me this wrong!**

2 Corinthians

Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

2 Corinthians 12:14

2 Corinthians 12:14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

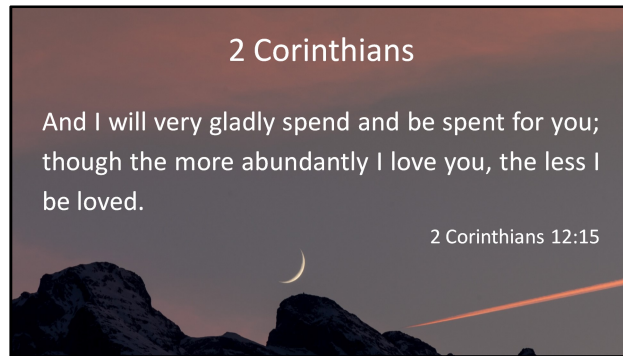
On his **first visit** to Corinth, Paul founded the church and stayed a year and six months (Acts 18:11). His **second visit** was a brief, painful visit in between the writing of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. Now he is prepared to come for a **third time**.

and I will not be burdensome to you - A minister may be burdensome to a congregation by receiving support when it is not appropriate or by receiving too much support.

“He who labours for the cause of God should be supported by the cause of God; but woe to that man who aggrandizes himself and grows rich by the spoils of the faithful!” (Clarke)

for I seek not yours, but you - This is the testimony of every godly minister. They do not serve for what they can get from God’s people but for what they can give to God’s people. They are shepherds, not hirelings.

the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. It is as if Paul is saying - “You Corinthian Christians (*children*) are not mature enough to support me yet (*Parent*). You are still spiritual children. When you grow up some, you can be partners with me in the work and support me. But until then I am glad to support myself.”



2 Corinthians 12:15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

I will very gladly spend and be spent for you - Paul did not resent the lack of support from the Corinthian Christians. Certainly, he would have appreciated it, but more for what it said about them than for what it did for him. For himself, Paul was glad to give; he would very gladly spend and be spent for your souls.

though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved - There is hurt in those words! Yet, Paul did not allow that hurt to cripple him or even to rob his joy in serving and living. Paul is still very gladly spend and be spent for the Corinthian Christians.

2 Corinthians

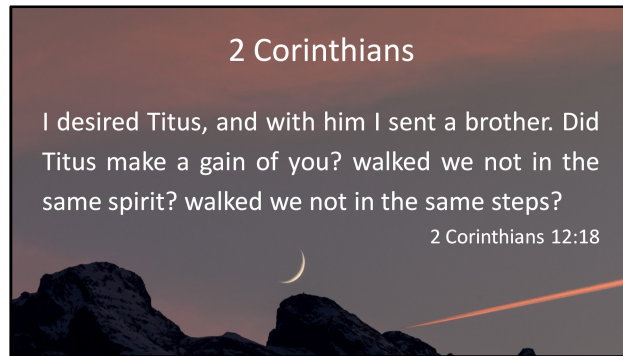
But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?

2 Corinthians 12:16-17

2 Corinthians 12:16-17 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?

being crafty, I caught you with guile - Paul is here sarcastically mocking his false accusers among the Corinthians. Paul had received no support from them but now mocks as though their false charges were true.

Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you - Paul proves that the charge he is being crafty is false. He reminds the Corinthian Christians that neither Paul nor any of his associates had ever behaved in a financially inappropriate way before the Corinthians.



2 Corinthians 12:18 I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?

I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother - He sent Titus to go and complete the collection which had commenced

Did Titus make a gain of you? - They knew that he did not. They had received him kindly, treated him with affection, and sent him away with every proof of confidence and respect.

Walked we not in the same spirit? - Did not all his actions resemble mine? Was there not the same proof of honesty, sincerity, and love which I have ever manifested?

2 Corinthians

Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

2 Corinthians 12:19

2 Corinthians 12:19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ - Paul is concerned that he may be accused of just excuse-making. Paul is not making excuses; he has nothing to excuse. Instead he boldly says, **“We speak before God in Christ.”** Paul proclaimed the truth before God, not excusing himself before the Corinthian Christians.

we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying - Everything Paul did for the Corinthian Christians he did to build them up in the Lord. Every letter he wrote, every visit he made, every prayer he prayed was with one goal: to build up the Corinthian Christians in Jesus Christ. His heart was for them, not for himself.

2 Corinthians

For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

2 Corinthians 12:20

2 Corinthians 12:20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not - Paul is worried that he will find the same old problems among the Corinthian Christians when he visits a third time and that they would still be unrepentant.

lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults - Just so they know exactly what Paul is writing about, he makes it clear: lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults. All these were the fruit of the worldly thinking the Corinthian Christians bought into, and these must change before Paul comes for his third visit to Corinth.

2 Corinthians

And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

2 Corinthians 12:21

2 Corinthians 12:21 And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

when I come again, my God will humble me among you - If the Corinthian Christians were still stuck in their worldly thinking, Paul would be humbled among them. He would have reason to think, "I must not be a very good apostle or leader because these Corinthian Christians will not respond to me." That was not the whole truth, but it would still humble Paul.

I shall bewail many - If the Corinthian Christians were mired in their worldliness when Paul came the third time, he would be angry, and he would be firm. But he would also be humbled, and he would also mourn. As much as anything, the worldliness of the Corinthian Christians grieved Paul and made him mourn for many.

which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed - Paul's anger and mourning would not be directed to those who had sinned. More specifically, it would be directed to those who have sinned before and have not repented. Paul did not ask for perfection; he only asked for repentance.

2 CORINTHIANS

A CHURCH UNDER DISCIPLINE

Chapter 13

2 Corinthians

This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

2 Corinthians 13:1

2 Corinthians 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

This is the third time I am coming to you - On his first visit to Corinth, Paul founded the church and stayed a year and six months (Acts 18:11). His second visit was a brief, painful visit in-between the writing of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. Now he is prepared to come for a third time.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established - Paul quotes this passage from Deuteronomy 19:15 and quotes it in reference to his coming visit. The point of the quotation is to remind the Corinthian Christians that he comes this time as a judge, not an investigator. He has enough evidence to write, "If I come again I will not spare."

2 Corinthians

I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare:

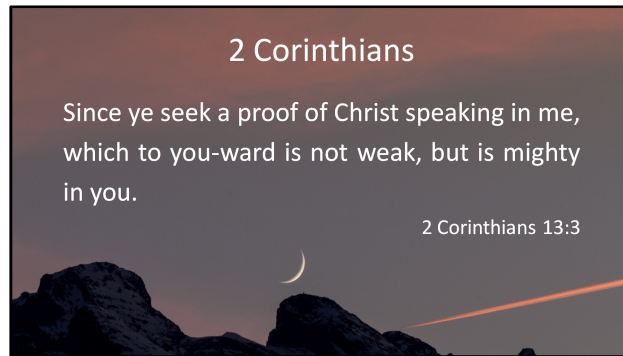
2 Corinthians 13:2

2 Corinthians 13:2 I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare:

I told you before - That I would not spare offenders; that I would certainly punish them. He had intimated this before in the first epistle.

1 Corinthians 4:21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?

I write to them which heretofore have sinned - To all the offenders in the church. They had supposed that he would not come to them, 1Co 4:18, or that if he came he would not dare to inflict punishment. Therefore, they had given themselves greater liberty and had pursued their own course, regardless of his authority and commands.



2 Corinthians 13:3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

Since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me - Paul's opponents, the most eminent false apostles said they wanted to see more "power" from Paul. He seemed too weak and humble for their liking. So Paul addressed this thinking: "You want to see proof of Christ speaking in me?"

which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you - meaning Christ is not weak, etc. Christ has manifested His power either by the miracles that had been wrought in His name or by the diseases and calamities which they had suffered on account of their disorders and offences.

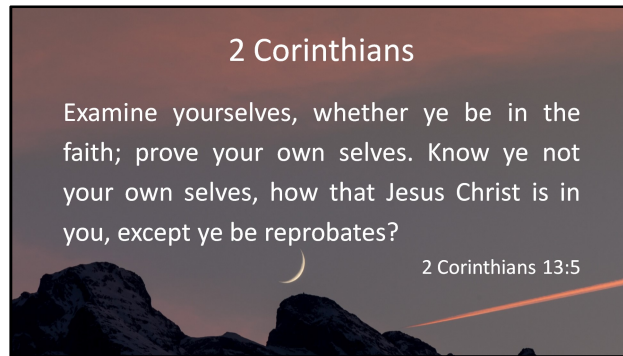
2 Corinthians

For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

2 Corinthians 13:4

2 Corinthians 13:4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

Just as Jesus displayed weakness yet now reigns in power, so Paul will come with similar power after showing the Corinthian Christians his weakness.



2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

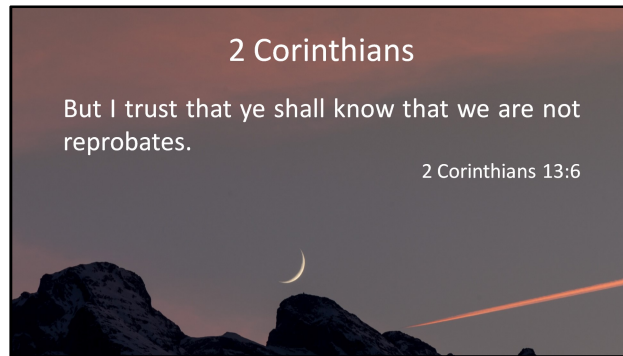
Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith - Paul asks the Corinthian Christians to consider a sobering question: "Am I really a Christian?"

Every believer should have the assurance of salvation. At the same time we also understand that there are some who assume or presume they are Christians when they are not.

prove (test) your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you - We are often very ready to examine and test others but first - and always first - we must examine and test ourselves. "That was the trouble at Corinth. They criticized Paul and failed to examine themselves."

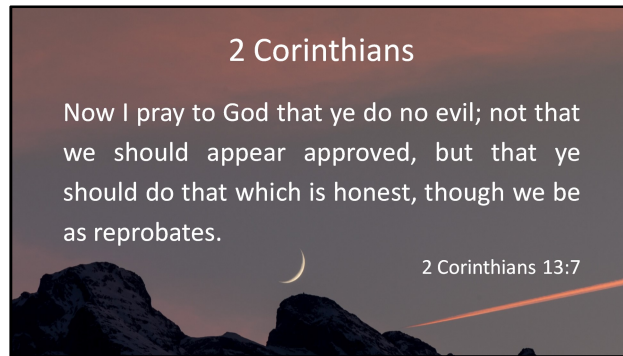
Examine then prove - Do not merely sit in your closet and look at yourselves alone but go out into this busy world and see what kind of piety you have. Remember, many a man's religion will stand examination that will not stand proof. **(Proof of concept)**

except ye be reprobates (disqualified) - Paul knew there were some among the Corinthian Christians who were disqualified from eternal life and salvation. Their thinking was worldly because they were of the world, not of the Lord.



2 Corinthians 13:6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

Paul anticipates a counter-question. “Paul, you ask us to examine ourselves. Well, why don’t you examine yourself? Maybe you aren’t a Christian after all!” Paul dismisses this question out of hand. It is so apparent that we are not reprobates (disqualified) that he simply trusts that they recognize the truth of it.



2 Corinthians 13:7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

Now I pray to God that ye do no evil - I earnestly desire that you may do right and only right.

not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest - my main desire is not to urge my claims to the apostolic office and clear up my own character; it is that you should lead honest lives, whatever may become of me and my reputation.

though we be as reprobates - Paul might seem to be disqualified. It was by these standards that Job's friends were convinced that his hardships were the result of sin in his life. However, one could say that only by judging with worldly standards.

2 Corinthians

For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, *even* your perfection.

2 Corinthians 13:8-9

2 Corinthians 13:8-9 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, *even* your perfection.

we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth - Paul, even as an apostle, could do nothing against the truth. Even the apostles were not above the truth. Paul could only work effectively for the truth, not against the truth.

we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong - If Paul's weakness could contribute to the strength of the Corinthian Christians, he would be glad. His real concern was that the Corinthians may be made complete.

even your perfection - To be made complete is basically the same idea as in 2 Corinthians 12:19: we do all things, beloved, for your edification. Paul wanted to build up the Corinthian Christians, to make them complete.

2 Corinthians

Therefore I write these things being absent,
lest being present I should use sharpness,
according to the power which the Lord hath
given me to edification, and not to
destruction.

2 Corinthians 13:10

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

Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness - Paul preferred that the Corinthian Christians would clean up their act before he came to see them. He wanted to use his authority for edification, not destruction.



2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Farewell - is much better translated rejoice. Even though Paul has been severe with the Corinthian Christians, all was written to the end that they would enjoy the joy of walking in a right relationship with God.

Be perfect - Paul revealed that he prayed that they may be made *perfect* (complete). Now he exhorts them to help answer his prayer as he challenges them to become complete.

be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace - By exhorting the Corinthian Christians to do these things, Paul proves an important point. These are at least partially in our power to do. We often think that our comfort, or being of one mind, and our being at peace with others just depends on them. In part that is true, but it also depends on us.



2 Corinthians 13:12-13 Greet one another with an holy kiss. All the saints salute you.

Greet one another with an holy kiss - The idea of greeting one another with a holy kiss was common in that ancient culture. Our cultural equivalent is a handshake or a hug and a warm greeting.

2 Corinthians

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen. The second *epistle* to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, *a city* of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.

2 Corinthians 13:14

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen. The second *epistle* to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, *a city* of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.

This is the only place in the New Testament where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are mentioned together in this kind of blessing. Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to be completely blessed by everything God is.