

Thursday, January 22, 2026

This week's devotions are written by Rev. James Lee. Born in Orange County, raised in the San Gabriel Valley, James desperately holds onto his SoCal roots while currently serving on the opposite coast as the lead pastor of Christ Community CRC on Long Island (about 60 miles east of NYC). He has also had the privilege to serve in various capacities for the Christian Reformed Church denomination. James is married to his better half Jin-Young and together, they have three beautiful children.

2 Corinthians 13:11

*11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.*

Before we analyze today's verse, let's zoom out to see the main picture of 2 Corinthians 13. As Paul concluded his letter before his third missionary journey, he spoke with tough love to focus on spiritual integrity. Chapter 13 began with a stark warning against those who were unrepentant and who were assertive about "proof."

I often think of the movie "Jerry Maguire," when Rod Tidwell, a professional football player desperate for his agent, Jerry Maguire, to focus on maximizing his contract's financial rewards - yelled over the phone: "Show me the money!"

Likewise, the twenty-first century Christians seek proof. We cry out, "Show me the results, Jesus!" even before we even make a move in faith.

The Church in Corinth also wanted proof. Paul called out their motive in verse 3, "since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me." But rather than defend himself, Paul challenged the church instead in verse 5, "*Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you- unless, of course, you fail the test?*"

Self-examination is not only a test to see whether you're right with God; it's also a spiritual discipline to ensure spiritual integrity and response to the faithfulness of God.

Paul then gave a five-point lesson that we see in our verse for today:

- *Rejoice*: Have joy, knowing that God is sovereign! He is in control! Your source to rejoice isn't based on your situations or circumstances - it's based on the Lord's will and power!
- *Restoration*: Our Lord is a God who redeems and restores! It's never about hiding or erasing - it's always about restoring.
- *Encourage*: And that's why and how we can encourage one another - through the joy and restoration that only our Lord can bring.
- *Be of one mind*: And that call helps us center on mission, purpose and goal of unity
- *Live in peace*: And once we're centered on that mission, purpose, and goal of unity, we can live in peace and experience the peace that surpasses all understanding

Chapter 13 concludes with a blessing that is used as a benediction for churches across nations in verse 14, "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

How can we daily strive for restoration as we seek unity in Christ? How can we encourage one another to be of one mind and one spirit? What does it look like to live in peace?