

- I) V1-6 INTRO: This will be the third time I am coming to you. By the mouth of two or
- II) Paul just clearly stated his concern for the Church in Corinth
He said: ***I fear lest*** when I come I shall not find you ***such as I wish***
- III) He was coming to Corinth and was concerned at what he might find
He was aware there were some who were not ***living properly*** (12:20-21)
- IV) These were things he had written to them about in his first letter
It seems that some had not repented, and he would have to address them
1 Co 4:21 What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod (of correction), or in love and a spirit of gentleness?
HE DID NOT DESIRE THIS
- V) ***What he desired*** was that the church would be spiritually maturing
He was concerned because the false apostles were undermining their faith
2 Co 11:20 (he said) you put up with it if one brings you into bondage
- VI) These false teachers were ***enslaving their consciences*** by undermining the gospel
Their false teaching had produced lives that were unholy
- VII) It seems that the false teachers were giving a message that produced bondage
Gal 4:9 Now that you know God or rather are known by God, how is it that you are turning back to those weak and worthless principles? ***Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?***
FACT
- VIII) Jesus came to set us free from the bondage of sin and death: its oppression
He came to set us free by fulfilling the requirements that God has given to us
- IX) We couldn't perfectly keep God's requirements and are guilty before Him
Even when we did our best, we still were not perfect
Jas 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it
- X) This is why Jesus came: to satisfy the demands of the law
This is why we are saved by grace, and not by works
- XI) The false teachers were bringing the Corinthians into bondage

- I) Paul was concerned for them because some were being enslaved by bad teaching
His desire was for them to reject the false teachers and to walk in God's truth
- II) As the founder of the church, his desire was for them to grow in spiritual maturity
- III) This is the hope and purpose of the pastor teacher: spiritual growth
Heb 6:1 let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and **go on to maturity**,
not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith in God.

APPLICATION

- IV) It comforts the pastor when he knows that the church he pastors loves Jesus
It blesses and encourages him when they are in God's word, and growing
- V) I often read social media comments that grieve me
It concerns and grieves me when I read some of the things that people post
What they write reveals if they read the bible or attend a bible teaching church

WHY SHOULD THIS MATTER?

- VI) A true pastor actually sorrows when believers are not healthy
Paul showed this when he wrote to the Galatians
Gal 4:19 Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you
again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives.
- VII) My beloved children, I agonize for you to become mature believers
I want you to grow deep in your faith and to reap the fruit of it
1 Pe 1:9 Receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls
- VIII) The pastors greatest joy comes from when the church is living for Jesus
3 Jn 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children **walk in truth**.
This was Paul's desire for them

- IX) When Paul opened this letter he stated that he had put off this trip
He had planned to come see them earlier, but had delayed coming
Ch 1:23 Now I call upon God as my witness that I am telling the truth. The reason
I didn't return to Corinth **was to spare you** from a severe rebuke.

- X) He is now able to make the trip and when he comes he will deal with his detractors
The infiltrators accused him of changing his mind easily: he is now on his way

BEGIN STUDY

- I) V1 This will be the third time I am coming to you: By the mouth of two or three
Third time?
- II) This speaks of his first visit (Ac 18), the abandoned visit and the upcoming one
He had already alluded to this in 2 Co 12:14
QUESTION
- III) Why say by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established
He is anticipating exercising church discipline when he arrives
- IV) His reference to these three visits would confirm his need to exercise discipline
WHY THREE WITNESSES?
- V) The requirement of three witnesses is established by Jewish law
Dt 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity or for any
sin in any sin that he sins: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three
witnesses, shall the matter be established.
HIS POINT
- VI) This will serve as **the third witness** against those who are influencing them
- VII) V2 I have told you **before** and **foretell** as if I were present the second time and **now**
This follows the pattern of establishing the threefold witness
HE FIRST SAYS
- VIII) V2b **I write** to those who have **sinned before** and foretell as if I were present
These are the ones who were **in unrepentant sin** (12:20-21)
- IX) I write to you as if I were **standing in front of you**, on a personal level
He had said something like this in his first letter
1 Co 5:3 For my part, even though I am not physically present, **I am with you in
spirit.** As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the
name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this.
HIS POINT
- X) He will deal **with them** when he gets there because sin does not go unchallenged
If it remains unchallenged, it permeates the entire church (1 Co 5:6)
Gal 5:9 A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough!
- XI) V2 And to **all the rest** that if I come again I will not spare
These are the Corinthians who have been influenced by the false teachers
HIS PROMISE

- I) V2 If I come again ***I will not spare***
I will deal with you as ***your deeds deserve***
He is ready to exercise his authority through church discipline
- II) He had earlier told them that he had delayed coming to them ***for a reason***
2 Co 1:23 I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you (a severe rebuke) I (refrained from coming) to Corinth.
- III) The false teachers had said that he wrote powerful letters but was in fact, weak
He is all bark and no bite! A paper tiger, keyboard warrior!
- IV) To this he replied
2 Co 10:11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are ***in word by*** letters when we are absent, such we will also be ***in deed*** when we are present.
- V) He had, from a distance, commanded them to expel a sinning church member
What he had done in the past while absent he would do soon, when with them
- VI) He warns them in order to give opportunity to repent and mend their ways
They need to reject the false teachers and their false teachings
They need to deal with the sin that still is allowed to fester and infect
- VII) If they repent of these things, ***they will be restored***
If they don't they will be removed from the church
They are infecting the church with sin and bad doctrine
- VIII) ***Repentance*** is not feeling bad and going on as if nothing had happened
True repentance was demonstrated by a change in attitude and actions
2 Co 7:10-11 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.
THERE IS A TOUCH OF SORROW
- IX) V3 Since you seek a ***proof of Christ*** speaking in me who is not weak toward you
The infiltrators convinced some that Paul was a phony, so they wanted evidence

- I) He had dealt with this challenge of **his authority** both in 1st and 2nd Co
1 Co 9:1-2 **Am I not an apostle?** Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? **Are you not my work in the Lord?** If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless *I am to you*. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord
IN HIS SECOND LETTER HE WROTE
- II) 2 Co 3:1-2 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men
2 Co 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds
- III) What is it that they desired him to prove?
They wanted proof of his ministerial authority, that Christ spoke through Paul
- IV) He had already stated that he had all of the qualifications of an apostle
He was selected to be one by the Lord
He had seen the risen Christ
His letters were being circulated in the churches as authoritative writings
He performed the signs of an apostle (12:12)
- V) They said they needed proof that Jesus was **speaking in him**
This refers to Paul being **inspired by Jesus** to communicate God's word to others
- VI) This is something Jesus had taught the apostles when still with them
Mt 10:20 it will not be you speaking, but the **Spirit of your Father** speaking through you.
- VII) In challenging Paul to exercise his authority, they were actually challenging Jesus
IN WHAT WAY?
- VIII) This was because it **was Jesus who gave** Paul his authority
1 Co 1:17 **Christ** did not send me to baptize, **but to preach the gospel** --not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.
- IX) The fact that he hadn't come to them seemed to reinforce the false apostles
They could claim that he didn't want to come because he was afraid of them
- X) In delaying he gave them time to repent and deal with the situation (2 Pe. 3:9)

- I) They shouldn't think this was proof that he was afraid to deal with the problems
Ro 2:4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?
- II) Being immature, they mistook his patience and gentleness for weakness (10:1-2)
They thought he was weak and the false teachers strong: Paul will correct this
He was about to demonstrate to them the authority he had been given by Jesus
- III) V4 For **though He was crucified in weakness** yet He lives by the power of God
When Jesus was died, He did not resist those who killed Him, appearing weak
Is 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.
- IV) His death on the cross was not a **spectacle of weakness**, but rather of triumph
- V) Jesus submitted Himself unto death, choosing **the weakness of mortality**
He did so with a purpose
Heb 2:14-15 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death --that is, the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death
- THE THOUGHT**
- VI) What appeared **weak to some** was in reality what true strength actually is
Paul had already said God's strength **is made perfect in weakness**
The strength of salvation was revealed in the humility and love of the cross
- CONTINUING**
- VII) V4 Yet He lives by **the power of God**
By the power of God he was raised from death to life
- VIII) His Father, the Supreme manifestation of Power, resurrected Him from the dead
Ac 13:29-30 (Paul) When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But **God raised him from the dead**
1 Co 6:14 By His power **God raised the Lord from the dead** and He will raise us also
- IX) V4 For we also are weak in Him but **we shall live with Him** by the power of God
We too are in some ways outwardly strong, but within we have God's power
We shall show the strength of the risen Lord as we deal with the false teachers

OUTWARDLY

- I) I may **appear** weak, but I have the proper authority through Jesus, and I will use it
Because he is empowered by Christ, he will wield the authority God gave him
- II) V4 We shall live **with Him** by the power of God **toward you**
His life is in us: We will show you that we are not as weak as our opponents say
By His authority we will, as His apostles, deal strongly with the false teachers
- III) V5 **Examine yourselves** as to whether you are in the faith
Some among you expect me to defend my ministry to prove Jesus is with me
As an apostle, **I challenge you** to examine yourselves to see if you are saved
- IV) Instead of cross-examining me, I exhort you to **test yourselves!**
Check their own hearts: **Are you sure that you are saved?**
Are you living as a believer in Jesus? Is your life bringing glory to Him?
- V) If you **are** saved, then it will prove my ministry to you is from Christ
Phil 3:15 Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree
on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you.

QUESTION

- VI) How do you know you are saved? Many church goers are not saved

FIRST

- VII) Do you **believe** that Jesus is God in the flesh, who died and rose for **you**
Have you **openly confessed** Jesus as your Lord
Ro 10:9 if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart
that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved

SECOND

- VIII) Have you **repented** of your sins, turning away from them and turning to God?
Lu 5:32 (Jesus) I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance
Ac 3:19 Repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away

THIRD

- IX) Do you desire to obey God, to do what He says, in His Word?
1 Jn 2:3-4 We know that we have come to know him *if we obey his commands*.
The man who says, *I know him*, but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the
truth is not in him.

Jn 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments

FOURTH

I) Do you have genuine love for others
Love for God and for others is the earmark of a believer
1 Jn 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

II) Do you have a growing desire to know God
Mt 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

FIFTH

III) Do you have the internal witness of the Spirit
Ro 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God
1 Jn 5:10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself

FINALLY

IV) We desire to tell the world about Jesus
To tell people of the love of the Lord and His saving power
1 Jn 4:14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

V) V5-6 **Examine yourselves** as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves
On one hand, a genuine believer has confidence that the Lord truly is in them

ON THE OTHER HAND

VI) It is good to do a personal inventory because of the effect of deception
He was confident that the majority would pass the inventory, others might not

VII) Disqualified: Used of metals and coins; not standing the test, not approved
That which does not prove itself such as it ought; unfit for, unproved, reprobate
Money counting machines spit out counterfeits

VIII) They could still repent, exercise saving faith, and be forgiven and saved
They could know that Jesus had saved them, but some might be disqualified

THE FACT IS

IX) Genuine saving faith is revealed in repentance, a desire for righteousness, sincere holiness, obedience to God (through His Word), and a love for the Lord and others

TO PAUL'S GRIEF

X) Some in the Church were actually unsaved, and were open to the false prophets

FINALLY

- I) This condition continues to exist in the Church today
The abundance of opportunities to be deceived exist
From TV, print, movies, traveling teachers and the internet, opportunities abound
- II) A sadly great amount of innocent believers are not instant in prayer, or in the word
The result is a propensity of being deceived
- III) The pastor has the responsibility of teaching the whole counsel of God
This is intended to safeguard the sheep and reveals the heart of a true pastor
- IV) This is so critical that Paul made a strong statement to them earlier
1 Co 15:34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. ***I speak this to your shame.***
- V) The leadership failed to teach clearly, and unbelievers were now comfortable
Unbelievers should never feel completely comfortable in church
They should sense that they are loved, but that sin is never welcome
- VI) In contrast to these false teachers, Paul was the genuine article