

2 CORINTHIANS 13

As Paul planned his trip to Corinth, he envisioned the different kinds of people he would meet there.

The disobedient (1–4). Why would God’s people want to disobey Him (12:20) and create problems for Paul and grief for the Lord, not to speak of problems for their church? Disobedient children must be dealt with, and Paul intended to be a faithful and loving father.

The disqualified (5–10). Some church members have never been born again, and that is why they create problems. Paul urges us to examine our hearts to be sure we are in the faith.

The devoted (11–14). These are the true brothers and sisters in the Lord, the set-apart ones (saints), the people who love one another and promote the peace and purity of the church. They are the mature ones in the fellowship who encourage spiritual growth.

GALATIANS 1

To Paul, the gospel was much more than a message he preached: it was a miracle he had experienced (vv. 1–5). The gospel is “the power of God to salvation” (Rom. 1:16) and it brings freedom. Christ died “that He might deliver us” (v. 4). When Paul trusted Christ, he became a free man. The shackles of sin and legalistic religion were broken!

But the gospel was also a treasure that Paul guarded (vv. 6–17). Paul did not invent the gospel or learn it from others; God gave it to him (1 Cor. 15:1–11). *There is no other gospel*. To add to this message, take from it, or substitute another message is to destroy it. No wonder Paul attacked those who attacked the gospel; when you lose the gospel, you lose everything.

The gospel is a tie that binds God’s people together (vv. 18–24). Saul the enemy became Paul the brother, and he was able to fellowship with people he once had persecuted. Christians may disagree on minor matters of interpretation and organization, but they agree on the message of the gospel.

GALATIANS 2

The runner (1–5). Paul saw himself as a man running a race, and he was sure he was on the right track and headed for the right goal. The Judaizers were trying to move the church into bondage and get them on a detour (5:7; Acts 15).

The steward (6–10). God has committed the gospel to His people, and we must guard it and share it with others. God is not looking for popular celebrities; He is looking for faithful stewards (1 Cor. 4:1–2).

The watchman (11–13). Paul was not afraid to confront the apostle Peter when Peter moved away from the truth of the gospel. “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty!” said Wendell Phillips, and that applies to our spiritual liberty as well.

The destroyer (14–21). Jesus destroyed the law by fulfilling it (Matt. 5:17–20). His death tore the temple veil (Luke 23:44–45) and removed the wall between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14–18). To go back to Moses is to rebuild what Jesus tore down and say that He did not really save us when we trusted Him.

GALATIANS 3

Examination (1–14). It does us good to examine ourselves to make sure our spiritual experience is valid (2 Cor. 13:5). Do you have the Spirit living within? (See Rom. 8:9.) If you began in the Spirit (which is the only way to begin), are you trying to continue in the power of the flesh? Like Abraham, were you saved by faith; and are you now, like Abraham, walking by faith?

Explanation (15–25). The Judaizers wanted the Galatians to go back to Moses, but that was not far enough. *We must go back to Abraham where the promise started.* The law did not annul the promise; the law was given to reveal sin and prepare the way for Christ to come and fulfill the promise. The law is a tutor, not a savior; a mirror, not a cleanser.

Exhortation (26–29). Beware! A false gospel robs you of salvation and of membership in the family of God where all believers are one in Christ. It robs you of your spiritual riches as an heir of the promise. Are you rejoicing in the freedom you have in Christ?

GALATIANS 4

Are you a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ? Then you are also an heir, and all of Christ's riches are yours (Eph. 1:3)! A child must wait until maturity to inherit the family wealth, but God's children can have His wealth now (Phil. 4:19).

Are you a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ? Then you are free! A child is in bondage and must be guarded by adults, but a grown son or daughter enjoys freedom. To live under Law is to be a slave, and God wants His children to enjoy their freedom in Christ.

Are you a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ? Then you can become like Him as you yield to the Spirit (v. 19; 2 Cor. 3:18).

Are you a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ? Then your citizenship is secure in heaven because you are a child of promise (vv. 21–31; Gen. 16). You were born free!