

2 Corinthians

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2 Corinthians

Chapter 1 – Study #1 (1:1-11)

Greetings 1:1-2

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

Paul Knew he was in God's Will / Beloved – Rest in Him

Verse 1 - by the will of God - Paul knew what the will of God was for his life. Paul didn't fight or strive to find it, and you don't either Christian. Paul's life was simply an unfolding of the will of God in his life. Can I say this to you today to put you at rest today, for those of you who you are seeking the Lord and wanting to be in His will and you wonder maybe even worry if you are.....just relax, better yet just rest (.....in Him) and He will unfold to you what His will is for your life.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV) ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

One of Most Asked Questions / Matthew 22:34-40

Probably one the most asked questions, if not the most asked questions, how do I know if I am doing what God called me to do. My answer is simple.....love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, love your neighbor as yourself.....and then do whatever you want. You see if you are loving your Lord with all your heart, making Him first in your life, you will naturally love your neighbor (those around you), and wherever you are doing that at (whether it is in the workplace, or a pulpit, or on the street), you can be sure you are in God's will. If you are doing these two things, then you can be sure that Proverbs 3:5-6 will unfold before you. Key is trust, key is rest.....in the Lord.

Matthew 22:34-40 (NKJV) ³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Study this Book / Written to Know God's will

Study this book we are in today and you will continue to unfold God's will for your life, as this letter was written to men and woman just like us, so that they may learn and grow in what God's will was for them. This letter was written so they would know God's will for them, and thus know God's will for their life. His will for our life will always be greater than any plan we could assemble, for God has amazing plans for our life, but will honor our free-will and not force them upon us.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Founding of the Church in Corinth / 2nd Missionary Journey

To the church of God which is at Corinth - Paul first came to Corinth on his second missionary journey. He had been preaching and working in Macedonian/Greek cities for some time. From Philippi (where he first ministered in Europe), he had gone to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and then Corinth (Acts 16:11—18:1). Upon arriving in Corinth he met Aquila and Priscilla, Jews who had been driven out of Rome, and who were, like himself, tentmakers. He stayed with them for a while and began to preach regularly in the synagogue every Sabbath. Silas and Timothy joined him from Macedonia, and, as Paul's preaching intensified, so did resistance to his message. Soon, however, many Corinthians, including Jews, began to believe in Christ. Even Crispus, leader of the synagogue, along with his household, trusted in the Lord (Acts 18:8). Paul continued to minister in Corinth for one and a half years (Acts 18:11). Jewish opposition became so strong that he was brought before a Roman tribunal. Since the charges were purely religious, however, the proconsul, Gallio, refused to hear the case. After staying a while longer, Paul left Corinth with Priscilla and Aquila and went to Ephesus. Leaving his friends there, he returned to Palestine (Acts 18:12-22). The second leader of the Corinthian church was Apollos. An eloquent Jewish convert from Alexandria, Apollos had come to Ephesus and begun preaching while Aquila and Priscilla were there. Although "he was mighty in the Scriptures," he had some doctrinal deficiencies, which Aquila and Priscilla were

instrumental in correcting. When he wanted to preach in Achaia, the Ephesian church not only encouraged him but gave him a letter of commendation, and he began ministering in Corinth as its next pastor (Acts 18:24—19:1). So Paul's heart is here, for he gave them his heart as he planted the church there in Corinth.

Acts 18:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." ¹¹ And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Corinth was Booming City

Corinth was a booming city, it was strategic from a commercial and military aspect as it had a narrow land bridge (about 2.5 miles long) between the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea where they would transport whole ships with cargo over it to avoid the dangerous seas of having to sail around it (today they built a canal for ships to pass through). With that economic wealth brought a boom town, and this boom town was filled with all kinds of immorality as we will study in the weeks to come. They had idol worship, with idol temples, and temple prostitutes. This letter could be called the Letter to Las Vegas. But God had His people there (Acts 18:10), He was calling them out of the darkness into the light, and God's spirit was moving in this town. So God does still today no matter how dark and hopeless it may seem, so don't give up on that person you are praying for, because the Light of the World can break through any darkness, we see the testimony of it here in this town of Corinth.

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

2nd Letter / Correction or Instruction

This is Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth. His first letter was a little heavy, he had to write them a letter of what some will call correction, but I call it instruction. For those who are teachable, when someone comes with a word that shows them a place they are in error, and they receive it (they lay their pride down) and they make the change so to become more Christ-like, that is being teachable. Paul in his first letter had to call this church out for getting drunk when they came together for the love feast, a man that was sleeping with his father's second wife, and they were suing each other in court, all kinds of various sexual immoralities, it was a total mess in that church. Paul wrote them a letter that many took to be instruction, and they changed their life and were grateful to Paul for his letter. But there were some who took offense to Paul's letter, turned in anger towards Paul, and thus it wasn't a letter of instruction but of correction; when a person is faced with repentance (believer or unbeliever) then you will know what is truly in their heart.

2 Corinthians 2:3–4 (NKJV) ³ And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. ⁴ For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

A Gracious way to Correct a Brother

Great example for us, as there are times we have to speak to that brother or sister and say, not sure you realize what you are doing is sin before the Holy God, but here are the passages and here is what God would have you to do. Then walk away, and leave them to God to work on their heart. See an immediate response required, will often cause pride to come first, and we all have that "defend first" sin in us called pride, and then once the confrontation happens, it is hard to recover the unity because often other things get said that have nothing to do with the primary issue, but now all things are on the table. One of the things I do, because I don't want an immediate response, is to write a letter and give it to the person stating what I see. Then I say please do not respond to me by email or phone immediately, but let's talk in a few days. Then I put a date out there of when we will meet and discuss (or talk on the phone). Now they are not put in an immediate response position, they can think it through, I can be praying over that time period for them (because the help of our prayers does matter before God). Sometimes people repent, sometimes they don't even respond and the friendship is over, and sometimes they respond and tell me what a horrible person I am and the friendship is over, but in the end I know I did what God called me to do.

The Man Repented – Paul says Receive Him back in Love / Paul's Heart

In fact, that man in the adulterous affair repented and in next week's chapter we read Paul telling the church to receive him back into the fellowship. That isn't just Paul's heart, Paul's words are the heart of God. Christian can you hear God saying to you "grace and peace"? He means it, He extends it, He loves you. And He is saying to you

to not let any of your past failings keep you from returning unto Him, for when He says grace (Gods Riches At Christ's Expense) He means it, the blood of Jesus covers every sin of yours past-present-future. When He says Peace, He means that too, that you are at peace with Him, and as a loving father He says you are still my son/daughter no matter what you have done, come on back home the door is open and the light is on.....and I have a cup of hot coffee (or cocoa) ready for you to sit and enjoy each other again.

2 Corinthians 2:6-7 (NKJV) ⁶ This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, ⁷ so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.

Saints – Most Holy Ones

In verse 1 Paul says to the "saints" in Corinth. Paul calls them saints, even though they were still maturing in the Lord. Saint means "most holy one", and to the Lord you are. God calls you a saint now, even when you are struggling with your sin. The qualification to being a saint is coming to Jesus and receiving Him as Lord and Savior. He calls them saints, even when they are at their worst, and we see many of the Corinthian Believers now separating for their sins, and walking set apart for the Lord. You see when you realize you are a saint, set apart by Him and for Him, you will start to live like a saint.

2 Corinthians 1:1 (NKJV) ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:

Romans 8:1 (NKJV) ¹ There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

A Father

Verse 2 - Grace to you and peace from God our Father – God is a father, that is how He identifies Himself to you. A loving Father, a forgiving Father, a Father who wants to grow you into a beautiful man and woman of God. You have a Father that loves you and will never leave you, even in your worst failures. He is a Father who says that is my child, I am so proud of them. He is a Father that claims you, even when you don't want to claim yourself (when you are so down on yourself). Hey, I don't know what type of relationship you may have had with your earthly father, but don't confuse your heavenly father with your earthly father if your earthly father left you abandoned or abused. Your heavenly Father calls you His own, and love you, and is proud of you.

Calls you saint.....now go live like one.

Paul says Grace – to some who Hate him / Can you – Will you extend Grace & Peace

Verse 2 - Grace to you and peace - Paul says grace and peace, and his words are from his heart and extended to others in this church of Corinth, for they didn't see Paul's letter as a letter of instruction, but correction, and they didn't like his tone, and they are trying to divide the church from Paul, turn the people against him, they challenge Paul's authority to speak as an authority of God. Yet, Paul still writes them and says, grace to you and peace. Christian, can you and will you, give grace and peace to that person who deserves it not for how they have treated you, grace and peace to that person or persons who lay charges against you? If you can you will be able to say verse three (Blessed be the God), if not, you will find yourself consumed with the thoughts of them, and be robbed of enjoying the thoughts on and upon God.

Comfort in Suffering 1:3-7

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

2 Corinthians 1:4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Comfort / Comfort by a Loving Father

Pau uses the word comfort or consolation 10 times in verses 3-7. Paul is going to speak comfort to those who are hurting. This letter is a very emotional letter, Paul is pouring out his heart to these people that he loves, as he wants to see them do well, he wants to see them grow closer to the Lord, he is greatly concerned by those who are trying to counter his words, because he knows his words are from God and from God's heart, and Paul wants the

people who are hurting to know where to find comfort, and that in in God. Comfort by a loving Father, not a distant far off God, but a Father who draws near to His children.

Paul knows Tribulation

Paul is going to talk about some serious tribulations that he has been through in chapter 11. Paul knows a thing or two about suffering and tribulation, and thus he knows a thing or two about comfort and consolation.

- V. 11:23 in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.
- V. 11:24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.
- V. 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;
- V. 11:26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of 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;
- V. 11:27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—
- V. 11:28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches

How has your week Been / Pastor Chuck - Wimps

So how has your week been? I remember Pastor Chuck teaching on this passage at a pastor's conference and when he was finished he said "you bunch of wimps" (hahaha).

By Will of God / I find Peace

Paul started his letter out by saying "by the will of God"; all these things we have just read therefore fall in the same category "by the will of God". God allowed these things to happen to Paul, we have to look at that and recognize that. One thing I remind myself when something happens, I find myself in a situation that is pressing, I say ok Lord you could have intervened but you choose to allow this to happen, I need get upset that it happened, I need to now say what do You want to do in and through it.

Fallen World

Why do we have trials in this world? Because sin entered into the world. The perfect environment was destroyed in a moment, and the world has been suffering the curse ever since, and will continue until Christ returns to set it straight. In order to set it straight means to take out what is causing the suffering and that is sin. To remove sin means to remove the sinner, and all who have not had their sin covered by the blood of Jesus will face the judgment for their sin, which is eternal separation from God in hell.

Romans 5:12 (NKJV) ¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

We Live in Fallen World / Not Excluded

So we live in this fallen world and are not excluded from the pains and suffering of it.

Key – where to Find Place of All Comfort / Don't Sell yourself Short / Man can't meet Qualifications

Verse 3 - God of all comfort - The key for us in our sufferings, trials, and hardships is that the place of all comfort is in God the Father (verse 3), and God is with us in every tribulation (verse 4). The comfort of others when we are going through hard times is great, but people comforting us, even lots and lots of people comforting us, still cannot sum up to "all" as only God the Father can be the God of "all" comfort. Only He can be the God of "all" comfort because only He has the ability to be there (literally present) in all our tribulations. Beloved, be blessed by the comfort of other Christians, but don't sell yourself short on expecting them to meet your "all" comfort, as that is reserved for God Himself. If you ever find yourself saying the church or that person was not there for me in my time of need, cast that thought away as from the flesh or the devil, as God will say but I was there and if you felt that you were left short of "all" comfort, then your statement is against me not them. But what you will see from this verse, you did not set yourself looking to the God of "all" comfort, as you looked to man who could never meet the "all" qualification.

We not Excluded / God will use our Pain

We need to also take away the point – the Bible is clear, the life of the Christian is not pain-excluded. And in our pain, God will use us to be hands and feet to minister to the person who is suffering, look at the next verses.

2 Corinthians 1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:6 Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

2 Corinthians 1:7 And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.

Paul was Challenged because Suffered / We think we are in Sin when Suffer / Can Suffer while in Will of God

One of the challenges Paul is going to be challenged with is that some will ask how he can be an apostle if he goes through so much suffering, if he was really an apostle he would never be sick or have hardship. I doubt there is a one of us in this room who haven't questioned along the same lines when bad things happened to us, and we wonder if we did something wrong that brought God's judgment against us, and we wonder if we are out of God's will. Now sin will bring its own consequences upon us. Drink away your paycheck and lose your house is hardly God's judgment, that is just reaping what you sowed. But I get laid off, or I get sick, or the engine in my car goes up and I/we can ask the Lord, are you displeased with me. But Paul sends a simple message to us, first he says he is in the will of God, and secondly he says even being in the will of God he has suffered much hardship.

We go Through it – so Comfort Other / Where are – I was

Paul shows us that God allows us to experience hardships, trials, and tribulations so we can comfort others. When we say "I can relate", we can mean it, and they know it is true, because we can say "where you are, I once was".

I don't want Trials – but never Regretted them / Remove them I am Half the Man

I have never prayed for a trial, but I have regretted one that I endured. Remove the trials I have endured, and I would be half the Christian I am today.

Special Fellowship w/Christ in Suffering / 13 Chapters – take away Self-Pity / From Looking Inward to Upward

God is telling us that trials will come, and He allows them, so that we may find that in them we can fellowship with Him in a special way, and we can thereafter fellowship with others going through their trial in a special way.

Christian, let me just tell you as we will study this book for these 13 chapter, and that is that God is going to take you away from yourself, God is going to take you away from self-pity, from an inward looking at yourself, and God is going to turn you from looking inward, to looking outward at others, and upward to Him.

2 Corinthians 1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

Comfort means to Come Alongside / Abound – Over and Above

The very word comfort means "to come alongside", and that is exactly what the Lord does, in His sweetness He comes alongside of us and ministers to us in a sweet and special way. In verse 5 it says our consolation "abounds", which means over-and-above, super abundantly, and it is all from God the Father and through Jesus Christ.

Delivered from Suffering 1:8-11

2 Corinthians 1:8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.

2 Corinthians 1:9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,

Not Sure what Happened

We are not sure what happened, but it was some seriously rough stuff.

Paul just like Us – Even he Despaired (renounce all hope)

Verse 8 - we do not want you to be ignorant - Paul was a mighty man of God, we look at him as super-saint, but we see that Paul was just like us (and he wants us to know that we are just like him because he said I don't want you

to be ignorant), and he said he had some troubles in his life that were beyond measure, above strength, so much so he even despaired life. To despair life means to “renounce all hope”. Paul was ready to give up, said there was no hope, all was lost, throw in the towel. If you ever have felt like that you are not alone, and you need not be ashamed either, for you are in some pretty good company.

Verb Tense is Continual / Paul still in the Trial

Verse 9 - sentence of death in ourselves – The verb tense here in verse 9 is a “active” meaning that whatever he was going through it still wasn’t over, it was still pressing against him, that it could still come and hit him (whatever it was – as we really aren’t sure). Paul isn’t on the other side of the trial, he isn’t talking from someone who is relieved it is over, but someone who is still in the middle of it, yet we see him talking and walking in victory even in the middle of it.

How Long? / How he Overcame

How long Paul was in this state we do not know, we know it was severe, but verse 9 tells us how he overcame it (even when in the middle of it).

2 Corinthians 1:9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,

2 Corinthians 1:10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,

2 Corinthians 1:11 you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.

3 Verbs

Notice the three verb tenses here in verse 10, (delivered – does deliver – will deliver). God has us covered past, present, and future.

Key – not to Trust in Ourselves / God raises the Dead – even those things that look like dead & dying

Paul says in verse 9 to trust in ourselves is the sentence of death. For we cannot raise ourselves from the dead, but the One that is for us has the power to overcome death, and thus everything that looks like it is dead and dying in our lives. Maybe your marriage seems dead. Maybe your joy or love or peace or ministry seems dead. Quit trying to figure it out and fight it in your own energy. Instead, seek the Lord. Trust the God who specializes in raising the dead.

Ephesians 1:19–21 (NKJV) ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Your Prayers Matter

Verse 11 - you also helping together in prayer for us – Would you read that again, would you read that again the second time, would you read that again for the third time. Do you hear that, now the question is do you believe that? Paul was in such a situation in that he thought it was over, he renounced all hope, but he came out of it victorious and triumphal, and he said it was not only God who delivered him, but the prayers of believers. Our prayers move mountains, they do, and when we believe it, we will pray like we believe it. When we doubt it, or trust in ourselves, we will move nothing.

Tribulation Definition

The word used here for tribulation has some interesting uses at the time of this writing. One was an actual tool called a “tribullon” that was dragged over wheat after the harvest, and what it did was separate the wheat from the husk (which was inedible, commonly called chaff in the bible). So in tribulation God is often separating the chaff (the fluff) out of our lives to get to the meat, the substance, to make us men and woman of God more like Him. Sometimes the trial reveals to us where we have been investing in fluff and wasted things, and brings us into focus on the things that really matter, sets our eyes on the eternal things rather than the temporal things. Another way this word was used was by the Roman army, who had invented a form of waterboarding way before today’s

use. What they did was put a body under tribulation, and they did that by placing a large stone on the chest of a person they were interrogating. The more a person resisted, the heavier the next stone was placed upon their chest. You see as you breathed out, the stone would sink the chest, and thus less air could be taken in because the chest could push the weight of the stones back up. It would become shorter and shorter breaths, until the person would starve of air.

We can Lift the Stones

Sometimes that is what my life feels like, you no doubt have experienced it also, you feel the weight of the world upon your chest, you feel like you are grasping for air, you feel hopeless, you think it is all over, to the point that you renounce hope. Yet God says (through Paul) the prayers of others can relieve and aid the brother/sister who are in such need. It is like our prayers come alongside the person, our prayers lift that stone off their chest, and they can get a deep breath of air, they can push the stones off their chest, they can endure the pressure. This short blimp we almost blow right through it, but God says *you also helping together in prayer for us* is a statement of power, that your prayers matter, and they make a difference. So, will this statement change your prayer life?

Chapter 1 – Study #2 (1:12-24)

Just Reading it Through

We are in 2 Corinthians, and our brother Paul has written a letter to the Church there in Corinth. It is a letter, and so that is what we are going to do for these 13 chapters, is just read it like it was a letter. We are just going to read through it, I will refrain from turning each chapter into a 5 point sermon, but simply read through and see what Paul is saying to them, and what it means for us today.

Recap 1:1-11

Greetings 1:1-2

- Paul is writing to the church that he founded on his second missionary journey. This is his second letter, as the first was a letter of correction for some, and a letter of instruction for others (who received and made life changes). But for some who didn't appreciate being corrected, they are stirring up trouble against Paul, laying charges to his ministry, and trying to divide the people against him. As we spoke last study, when a person is faced with repentance, you will find out what is truly in their heart.

Comfort in Suffering 1:3-7

- In verses 3-7 we read that Paul up to this point had suffered many trials and tribulations in his life (shipwreck 3 times, a day and a night in the deep of the ocean, beaten with rods 3 times, whipped with 39 lashes 5 times, coldness, nakedness, and hunger), and, we are not sure what the situation was specifically but Paul at the current time of this writing had a death sentence hanging over him. And Paul though it all tells us that he and we will find comfort from the God of all comfort. Even in the very middle of his trial (death sentence on him) he tells us in confidence that God does and will comfort us in our darkest hour.

Delivered from Suffering 1:8-11

- Paul told us in verses 8-11 that the key to overcoming is not trust in ourselves and our ways/plans on how to get out of the trials and troubles, but to fully trust in God, the God who has the power to raise the dead. Is there something in your life that seems dead, hopeless, something you think will never change? God says to us, come give that thing to Me, come entrust Me with it, and see what I won't do with it, if I can raise My Son from the dead, can anything else be too hard for Me?

Today Pick up in Verse 12

So today we pick it up in verse 12, Paul is still building off the first 11 verses, and those were words of comfort and deliverance when we suffer, the God of all comfort who loves us greatly. And, Paul will be addressing some of the challenges and attacks against him. Before we begin that, just know that Paul is not defending himself, but the ministry, because to destroy the ministry God gave him, was therefore to destroy the words of his ministry, which were the words of God, written under inspiration of God Himself. Still the same modus-operation of Satan today,

try to tear down the messenger (whether the person is speaking from a pulpit or at a kitchen table or at the break room at work), tear them, and you tear down their message.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Paul's Sincerity 1:12-14

2 Corinthians 1:12 For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

2 Corinthians 1:13 For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end

Paul not consumed by Trial – but how People Doing

Verse 12 – and more abundantly towards you - We are going through it, you are comforting us through it Paul says regarding their prayers for him, but then he goes on to make the point the trials and tribulations are not consuming his thoughts, it is them and how they are doing. In chapter 11 when Paul is talking about all the trials he suffered, he ranks the burden and concern that he has for all the people in the churches. He ranks his burden and concern for his fellow brethren right next to beatings, whippings, and shipwrecks. That is quite a heart Paul has for others; how about your heart? Do you have that type of love for people outside of your immediate family, do you have a burden for them? See this is the love that God is referring to when in Matthew 22 He says and..... love thy neighbor as thyself. If you will allow yourself to, God will change your heart to care for that person to your left or to your right, and when you do you will be living on a whole new spiritual plane. To have that heart to care for others outside just your immediate family.....it is the heart of God (for God so loved THE world!). Slow down today, look at that person at the counter, across the desk, across the street.....ask God to give you a heart for them, and see what He just may do. God loves them, God wants to show them His love, and God is looking for men and woman to be His ambassadors and representatives.

2 Corinthians 11:23–28 (NKJV) ²³ *Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of 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; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— ²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.*

Matthew 22:34–40 (NKJV) ³⁴ *But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

Proverbs 13:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ *A wicked messenger falls into trouble, But a faithful ambassador brings health.*

Isaiah 6:8 (NKJV) ⁸ *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."*

Two Ways

In verse 12, Paul describes two ways to change our heart to have a burden for others, and that is by simplicity and sincerity. I love this epistle as it does not only reveal the heart God has for us, shows us into the heart of the great apostle Paul, challenges us on how to leave the pit of despair, challenges us on godly living, but gives us practical applications and ways on how to do all those things. So Paul gives us some practical application for today's living, and that is "simplicity and sincerity".

Paul Lived Simply – Good Example for Us

Verse 12 – Simplicity - Paul says he lived a simple life, he wasn't all caught up and bound up with the things of the world, which freed him up to serve and minister to the brethren. The idea of this word as it was used didn't mean having little, but actually meant having sufficiency. What you may say, I thought it would mean having little or nothing. What it meant was to have something to spare for others. Paul lived his life in such a way that he had something left over to give others. Maybe for Paul that meant that he had a pair of shoes, he didn't need to have 5 in the closet. No doubt he made tents on the side because he didn't want to put a financial strain on the

churches that were struggling financially. I think more than materially (or maybe as much), it was that Paul lived a simple life for himself so he had the time to invest in others. I think one of the greatest reasons we don't have time to pray for others (to do the heavy lifting of the burdens upon others) is because we complicate our lives so much with things and mindless activities, there is no other time left. We can't invest in that other person's life because we have overcomplicated our lives. We have filled every minute of our day's schedule that there is no time left for anything else. We have to work more to have more, and the more that we get become things that we sit in front of, click on, watch and read, paint and polish, clean and collect.

Prayer – *Father God in heaven, have we made our lives too complicated that we no longer have time to invest in the lives of others? Lord would you show us any of those things that are keeping us from living a simple life, a life that has "something to spare for others". Lord, help us to live simple lives.*

Count the Time

Here is something I would challenge you with for this week; when I want to manage my finances I carry a piece of paper around and every penny I spend I write it down where it goes, and then I sum up all my spending and I can exactly how much I spend in each area, and get a good idea if I am spending my money wisely, because you would be surprised what it looks like when it is all summed up at the end of the month. When I diet, I write down everything I eat, and yea those 5 pieces of chocolate add up quick (those 5 little pieces of chocolate truffles I eat while I read the sports page equal 25% of my daily calories). Well, my challenge for you today (tomorrow too for it is a regular work day), but record all the time you spend, and what you spend it on, and don't forget your dedicated prayer time (versus your driving to work prayer), and just see where are your time goes.....you may be somewhat surprised as to where you are investing all your "spare" time.

Sincere

Verse 12 – godly sincerity – This word meant pure, regarding motives it meant "to have pure motives". Of course, you know the origin of that word sincere in English. It comes from Latin *sini cere*, and literally, it means without wax. Now, of course, in the time of Rome and the Roman kingdom, because people didn't have much to do there were a lot of men who just sat around and chiseled on marble and made statues, bust, and so forth of different persons. And if you look at the work of these artists, it's remarkable. It's really outstanding. But you know, even an artist can sometimes make a mistake. And you might be trying to get just the right curve on the nose and the hammer slip, and wham; the nose pops off of this bit of marble. Well, these fellas became very clever. They had learned how to take wax and mix it with marble to where it looked just like marble. And so, they would patch up this broken nose with wax. And you would buy this beautiful statue, not knowing that the nose was wax. And come summertime, on those hot days, you'd walk into your family room and look at your beautiful statue that you've paid so much for, and the nose had melted and run down the face. And so the word sincerity, without wax. When a person went to buy a statue they would ask the person, is this statue sincere (without wax)?

Tested by Light – Completely Pure

I like another meaning as it was used in other writings of that day, and it meant "to be tested by the light of the sun". Meaning, when the full light of the sun was upon it, that thing was found to be completely pure, spotless. I think it is a good thing for us to step back at times and examine ourselves and say why do I do the things I am doing? And, when I speak, am I truly sincere or just giving the Christian answer, even though my heart is far from really caring about this person or that situation. Hey beloved, if you are serving in a ministry that your heart just isn't there, you really don't want to do it, then you would do well to just leave it, because before too long your real heart will come out, and people will see it, the wax will be melting, and the ministry will be worse off than if you would just leave it now.

Prayer – *Father we want to be real and genuine believers, we want a heart that is just like Yours. Lord, has there, is there, times when I really am just enduring someone, acting like I care, but in my heart I really would rather be somewhere else. Lord change my heart, change my mind, test me with Your holy light, make my heart like Your heart. In Your precious Name.*

What see is what Get / Simple and Sincere

So Paul says he lived with simplicity and sincerity, aka, what you see is what you get. Oh for us, that you are the same, that you live a very sincere life. And thus, Paul expressed his life, his manner of living before them in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God. What a beautiful heart, what a glorious way to live among men and before God.

Don't Read Between Lines

Verse 13 - For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand - Paul is saying what I am speaking in plain talk, my heart is for you, there is no ulterior motive behind my words.....aka, don't read between the lines. We write because we care about you, and not any other reason, such as raising money or gaining sympathy.

2 Corinthians 1:14 (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Day of the Lord / Paul was Looking forward to It

Verse 14 – day of the Lord Jesus - The day of our Lord Jesus is not the Day of the Lord, the time of God's fierce and final judgment on the sinful world (cf. Isa. 13:6–22; Joel 1:15; 2:11; Acts 2:20; 1 Thess. 5:2–4; 2 Thess. 1:10, "that day"; 2 Peter 3:10). Instead, the day referred to here is the time when glorified believers will appear before the Lord Jesus, when their salvation will be completed and made perfect (1 Cor. 1:8; 3:10–15; 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 1:10; 2:16). Paul was able to look forward to the day of our Lord Jesus with great joy. Paul opened his first letter to this church with the same words, and how beautiful and sweet they are. And, God speaks the same words to you today, and He promises to complete what He began in you.

1 Corinthians 1:4–9 (NKJV) ⁴ I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, ⁵ that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, ⁶ even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷ so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Philippians 1:6–11 (NKJV) ⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; ⁷ just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. ⁸ For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. ⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul loved to boast of the Saints

You know what else is so beautiful in this passage, and Paul gives such a wonderful example to us, that he was always boasting about others. So often in the church today Christians love to point out everyone's faults and shortcomings, they call it prayer, but rather than lifting stones they are adding stones. Paul had a wonderful heart that he lifted people up. Even these Corinthians that still had a long way to go in growing in maturity, as we had read in the 1st letter had some serious sin issues to deal with. Paul makes the statement, and in the Day of the Lord Jesus when we stand before Him, we will finally all be perfect.

Speak Life

Oh the power in our words. I am not going down the path of speaking negative words, but let's go down the path of the pure power of our words. When we speak the words of life, we impart the blessings of the Lord unto that person, even ourselves. Imagine purposing that this week we will not say anything negative, and in all things find something gracious and kind to say. A few weeks back I had a week where I knew I was going to face many difficult people, and I felt the Lord challenge me to purpose that I would not say one negative word, even when the people were totally wrong, but instead just say kind words, uplifting words. Well I am not here to report so much on their response, but my reward, and I found myself totally lifted up, filled with love and kindness, I absolutely could sense the Spirit of God upon me, moving in, bringing me such peace, that I felt a total warmth in me and upon me. I know that the receiptants felt it to. So I challenge you, this week, not one negative or condescending word, but nothing but words of life, comfort, and kindness. I think you will find yourself having an amazing week. Hey by-the-way, try that in your marriage, speak only life and not death, and watch what will happen.

Proverbs 15:4 (NKJV) ⁴ A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, But perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV) ²¹ Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

2 Corinthians 1:15 And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit—

2 Corinthians 1:16 to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea.

2 Corinthians 1:17 Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No?

Paul wanted to Come but Got Delayed – Enemies held it Against him

Although it was Paul's heart and plan to return to Corinth to minister again, he was delayed in his journey—a delay to which his enemies pointed as proof that his word couldn't be trusted. But Paul had said, "if the Lord permits", he said what was in his heart (to come), but was willing to submit to however the Lord willed. I believe we should let our yes be yes, and we should do what we say we are going to do, but in those times where we can't fully know the future, we should say this is what I want to do, but I can't say for sure, so let's see what the Lord may do. If you say I am going to meet you tonight for dinner, but then cancel because someone gave you tickets to the game, I don't think that falls under the umbrella of "if the Lord permits", a new will of God, it falls under you took a better offer (which falls under the category "planning according to the flesh"). I have found that letting my yes be yes sure does make it easy to follow the Lord's will, and only rarely have I found that the Lord will change what I committed to in the first place. It is good to be known as dependable and true to your word. Good word for all you youth especially as you make plans all the time, and then a better offer comes up.....just stay faithful to your yes, and let the "better offer" pass, and if you give yourself wholly to what you committed to originally, you will find it will become better than what you thought was a better offer. God will always honor your "yes".

1 Corinthians 16:5-7 (NKJV) ⁵ Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). ⁶ And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷ For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits.

James 5:12 (NKJV) ¹² But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

2 Corinthians 1:18 But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No.

Not Double Talk

In other words, Paul is saying, "We did not speak to you out of both sides of our mouths." That by the way is a perfect example of sincerity.

2 Corinthians 1:19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes.

2 Corinthians 1:20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

Challenge Paul - Don't Challenge the Word

Paul is strong to make the point, even if you want to challenge my personal words, let me give you this word of power, and that is that the words of God are always yes and amen, regardless of the person who says them.

All Promises of God – Wrapped up in Jesus

Jesus is the assurance to us that God's promises are all true. And all of God's promises to you are wrapped up in Christ. Talk is cheap, but Jesus Christ went to the cross, and put actions behind His words. I am reminded of the guy I know witnessing on the boardwalk during Senior Week and he said to a youth, Jesus loves you, and the youth replied yea talk is cheap, in which the evangelist responded "He went to the cross and died for your sins; in which the youth just put his head down and said not another word. Talk is cheap, but all the talk was proven out on the brutal relentless cross at Calvary. So, let's just look at the promises he has given us just in these first twenty verses, all promises sealed at Calvary:

- **Saints (regardless of what we have done)** - 2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:
- **Grace (God's Riches at Christ's Expense)** - 2 Corinthians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Peace (we have peace with God based on finished work of the cross)** - 2 Corinthians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Mercy (no judgment to come – penalty has been paid)** - 2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
- **God of all Comfort (A loving Father who loves His kids)** - 2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
- **Comforts us in the Trials (walks with us – never leaves us or forsakes us)** - 2 Corinthians 1:4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
- **Abounding Consolation (catches all our tears, wraps us in His arms of love, whispers I am here and I love you)** - 2 Corinthians 1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.
- **God who Raises the Dead (Death has no sting, and sin has no power, the God who can breath life into every dead thing in our lives)** - 2 Corinthians 1:9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,
- **Delivered – Delivering – Will Deliver (God who never stops moving in our life and on our behalf, our protector and Great Shepherd)** - 2 Corinthians 1:10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,
- **Received Day of the Lord (He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete)** - 2 Corinthians 1:14 (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

How shall we Live

Based on all the above, what manner of living should we be living? What glorious promises of the Lord.

**2 Corinthians 1:21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,
2 Corinthians 1:22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.**

Paul talking inclusively

Paul is talking that these are the things every Christian are promised and provided; he is talking inclusively, not referring to himself only.

Established

God promises to establish us; establish means to make firm, to make good on a promise. So the Lord is writing to us that He is going to make good on all the promises He has made us (first 20 verses), and these next 3 (anointed, sealed, guarantee).

3 Things

Every Christian is "Established" (make good on a promise) in these 3 things:

- Anointed by God
- Sealed with Holy Spirit
- Guarantee with the Holy Spirit

Guarantee of Holy Spirit

Verse 22 – Guarantee - The word for guarantee (arrabon) was the word used for down payment. When someone is serious about taking ownership of something they put a down payment on it to prove that they are serious and mean it. When we started negotiation on this building we are in, we put a deposit, a down payment, to prove we

were serious about taking ownership. Out down payment prevented someone else from taking possession. Jesus is saying to the devil, this one is mine, you can't have them. God has full possession of you, you are totally His, but He can't take you home until you leave this world, thus why the down payment

Ephesians 1:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

Sealed with the Holy Spirit

Verse 22- Sealed - The Holy Spirit is a guarantee, down payment until he can take us home. But the Holy Spirit is also a seal. The seal was for authentication and identification. When a document was finalized the king or noble would take wax, drip it on to the paper, and then press his signet ring into the wax and leave the impress of the ring, which was unique and everyone know that was the king's imprint, and this letter was from the king, it was authentic. When cargo was put on ships, they had the owners seal put on them somewhere, and when the cargo got to its destination, the owner or representative would look for the seal and say that one is mine, put it on my cart as it goes to my house. So too does the Lord do with us as He imprints Himself onto us, so that it is clear, this one is mine, it is to be delivered unto me. The seal was for authentication and identification.

Anointed

Verse 21 - Anointed (to consecrate, set apart, to appoint, to furnish with necessary power for the position set apart to). We can trace back into the Old Testament those who God anointed, and we now who are the ones being anointed see what a beautiful and awesome position the Lord places upon us. In Exodus we see who and what God anointed, set apart, and that was His priests, and all the utensils and furnishings of the Temple. Everything and everyone who was part of God's Temple was anointed with oil, set apart for God's use and pleasure, as the Temple was the very place that God dealt. Today God's Temple is all you have asked Him into your hearts, for when you do, He comes and takes up residence within you (1 Cor 3:16). And, just for good measure of how precious you are to Him, He considers you His royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Exodus 30:22–32 (NKJV) ²² *Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²³ "Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane, ²⁴ five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. ²⁵ And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. ²⁶ With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; ²⁷ the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; ²⁸ the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. ²⁹ You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy. ³⁰ And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister to Me as priests. ³¹ "And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. ³² It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make any other like it, according to its composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you.*

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

1 Peter 2:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

Special Oil - Sweet

Now this oil wasn't just regular oil, it was a special blend of oil that was used to anoint all the instruments in the Temple and the High Priest. We get the mixture of this anointing oil in Exodus 30. When you read about the oils and spices that were mixed, they were all a sweet smelling oil and spice. They had a scent of cinnamon which is a sweet scent to it. Simply put, God's sweetness to us and for us is soaked and saturated upon us. God loves you, you are so sweet to Him, and He is so sweet to us. Literally 'sweetheart', He is so in love with you, you are His sweetheart, and you are so dear to His heart. Believe it my brother, believe it my sister.

Myrrh

The largest spice of this sweet mixture is myrrh. If it rings a bell to you it is because what was brought to Jesus as an infant by the wise men, and what was brought to Jesus at His burial. It was a spice that was used at death because of its sweet smell. So all the way back at Jesus birth is the picture of the only one who was born to die, as He would die for the sins of the world. The sweetness of His death for us. Myrrh is interesting as you look into it botanical properties and aspects. Myrrh is a reddish resin that comes from species of the genus Commiphora. The

red makes me think of His precious blood. It boasts spiny branches with sparse leaves that grow in groups of three. The three make me think of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And as interesting to me is that myrrh is harvested by piercing the trunk of the tree (reminds me of Jesus being pierced), and as the sap runs it is collected. Interestingly the sap as it runs creates and then dries into a “tear” shape. I think of the brokenhearted of the Father as He watched His only Begotten Son wounded for our sins. Myrrh would be burned when death was present, as the sweet smell of myrrh would absorb and overpower the smell of death. And, if you remember when Jesus was on the cross they offered Him myrrh to deaden His pain; the reason being was that myrrh was used for medicinal purposes also. Scientific research has indicated that these highly prized essential oils contain Monoterpenes, Sesquiterpenes, and Phenols; these chemical compounds have been found to help repair damage to the DNA that can lead to certain cancers. Other benefits include strong anti-bacterial components, anti-oxidants and the ability to cleanse the body of toxins, support liver function, balance hormones and bring an overall sense of well-being. Sesquiterpenes directly affect the glands that control our emotions, so using these oils as a personal sacrament could potentially alleviate depression, as well as raise consciousness. What a picture of the healing power of Jesus and the cross. As God anoints us, He is repairing our very DNA (if you would) as He changes us from the old man into the new man, taking us from depression into life and that more abundant, cleansing us from us sin, and brings us the joy of the Lord.

Matthew 2:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. ¹¹ And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

John 19:39–41 (NKJV) ³⁹ And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. ⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

Mark 15:23 (NKJV) ²³ Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it.

Communion - Let's take communion together right now and remember how great a salvation we have, as we are confirmed, established, promised we are guaranteed, we are sealed, and we are anointed with His sweetness.

2 Corinthians 1:23 Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.

2 Corinthians 1:24 Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

Paul gave them time to Process

Paul is saying I know the letter I sent you prior was heavy; nobody likes to have their sins and errors pointed out to them. I didn't immediately come to Corinth, God helped ordain that, so that you might have time to think upon the things I spoke to you about. I didn't want to come and say get it together or get out, rather I wanted you time to ponder and think them over, seek the Lord and His confirming that these were the right things to do. Paul didn't want to come down as I am the apostle, I have dominion, but Paul came as a brother. Paul says we are all fellow workers, we are all brothers and sister, and I am here to help you grow.

Travel with us next 13 weeks

We are blessed to see the heart of God for us here in chapter 1, and so too we will over the next 12.

Chapter 2

[Study #3 \(2:1-17\)](#)**Intro**

We are in chapter 2, as we continue our chapter by chapter study through this epistle. We call it an epistle, but it was simply a letter when it was delivered 2000 years ago to the group of believers in the city of Corinth. It was the second (maybe even 3rd – but we will speak of that another time). In the first letter (which we call 1st Corinthians) Paul wrote to this church that at that time had some serious immoral issues going on, they were getting drunk at the church potlucks, sexual immorality was common, rampant, and accepted, they were suing each other, but they were speaking in tongues and running the isles, all the while thinking they were super-spiritual. Paul who planted this church on his second missionary journey after staying there for about 18 months, now writes them a letter of correction and instruction about those things, and some received and made course adjustments, while others took offense to it, and now (at the time of this writing) are trying to knock Paul's authority down, divide the people against him, and draw the people to themselves. So Paul is writing to express his heart, make some things clear, and protect this church from being broken apart.

2 Corinthians 1:23 Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.

2 Corinthians 1:24 Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

2 Corinthians 2:1 But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.

2 Corinthians 2:2 For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?

Don't want to Come and have Bummer of Time / Just want to Enjoy a Blessing

Paul is saying I don't want to come to you and have a bummer of a time together because I have to keep bringing up the things you are doing wrong, and correcting you. I really just want to come and hang out and have a blessed time together. So Paul is saying I am glad I got delayed from coming to you, so that you would have time to consider the things I had said prior, pray over them, and deal with them. So when I do come we don't have to talk about that, but we can talk about good stuff, joyous stuff, heartwarming stuff, rather than heartburning stuff.

Uncomfortable Dinner

Paul doesn't want to be sitting at the dinner table, everyone looking at him, everyone knowing there is some words that need to be said and things dealt with, and they politely say, pass me the gravy please, umm this is good turkey, how long did you cook it for. Did you guys watch the game last night, how exciting. Paul wants to come and sit with them, look in their eyes, have nothing looking over them, except to fellowship and commune together, to share life and love together.

Go Reconcile

Is someone grieving you, go try to work it out, reach out to them, and initiate the healing. Romans 12 says if it is within your power, live peaceably with all men. Are you grieving someone, are you making them sorrowful, are they sad because of you? Go get it right with them so you can enjoy sweet times again with them. If you have to say you're sorry, then go do that, if you have to say accept your apology, please forgive me for holding a grudge. Go get it done so you can have sweet fellowship again.

Romans 12:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Make them an Opponent – That is what they will Be

Just for consideration, whoever you may have conflict with, if you treat them like an opponent that is exactly what they will be. Treat them like a friend, treat them like a partner, and that is what they will become also.

Don't Lay trips on Them

And just another little piece for consideration, when you get with your brethren, don't always be a bummer. What is that animal in winne the pooh, is it Eeyore, he is always pessimistic, gloomy, depressed, and the sky is falling, it is not much of a tail but I am sort of attached to it, oh nobody wants to be my friend what is a donkey to do. Wow is

me, pray for me, Eeyore, somebody hold me because wow is me. Some folks seem to always be in a bummed mood, always down, always heavy, always want to talk about something deep; now I am not saying be superficial, but you don't always have to be talking about woe is this, and woe is that, find positive things to talk about, and look to talk about the other person, and not only your personal issues. Some people can come to think after being around Eeyore's that being a Christian is miserable, God is joyless, and if Christianity is that miserable why would anyone want to be part of it. We are anointed, sealed, and guaranteed – we have a glorious today because we are His, and a marvelous tomorrow because all His promises are yes and amen (meaning – sure and true to pass).

2 Corinthians 2:3 And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all.

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

Paul opened his Heart – Some Pierced It / Disjointed Letter

Out of much affliction and anguish Paul wrote. Paul opened his heart up to these people, but for some they took the opportunity to pierce it. Paul isn't writing an epistle, he is writing a letter. I picture Paul sitting down and writing this and tears dripping unto the paper. I picture Paul getting up and going for a walk and then coming back to pour more of his heart out on to the paper as he thinks through more things he wants to share with them. Paul isn't writing a theological epistle; Paul is writing a letter to people he deeply loves. I think that is one of the reasons this letter is sometimes hard to follow, it seems at times disjointed, you try to determine are we on the same theme or onto a new topic, or are we back to one you started a few sentences ago. I see the reason being Paul is really opening his heart to these folks, and those as his emotions flow, the letter flows with his emotions. Paul loves these people and is really heartbroken over them that some of them are upset with the correction he gave them in the first letter he wrote, and some are saying he is not a loving person, that he has ulterior motives, that he is two-faced, and that is breaking his heart to hear such things.

Paul never hardens his Heart towards Them / V12 Open door in Troas – Could have said Forget you Pains

And here is a key for all of us, although these people caused Paul grief and sorrow, Paul never hardened his heart to them. Paul never turned his back on them. Verse 12 is going to tell us Paul had an open door in Troas, there was a real move of the Spirit, Paul was being well received, and they loved him in Troas. Paul could have said forget you Corinthians, you are nothing but pain sorrow to me, I got people here in Troas who love me, they respect me, they value my labors to them, I am staying with them, and forgetting you guys. But Paul's heart is for the Corinthians through thick and thin, good and bad.

Danger for Those who are Older in the Lord – Become Cynical

Getting older in the Lord has many great blessings, such as deeper knowledge of the Word, more faith, greater recognition of Satan and his ways; but one of the greatest challenges (believe it or not) is to become hardened and cynical. We can no longer weep or sorrow over anything, we put up a guard, or we put just don't allow anyone to get close to us, because we can say I am not going to allow myself to get hurt anymore, or taken advantage of again. Be careful, examine yourself, could that be you?

A Gracious way to Correct a Brother – Write a Letter

Great example for us, as there are times we have to speak to that brother or sister and say, not sure you realize what you are doing is sin before the Holy God, but here are the passages and here is what God would have you to do. Then walk away, and leave them to God to work on their heart. See an immediate response required, will often cause pride to come first, and we all have that "defend first" sin in us called pride, and then once the confrontation happens, it is hard to recover the unity because often other things get said that have nothing to do with the primary issue, but now all things are on the table. One of the things I do, because I don't want an immediate response, is to write a letter and give it to the person stating what I see. Then I say please do not respond to me by email or phone immediately, but let's talk in a few days. Then I put a date out there of when we will meet and discuss (or talk on the phone). Now they are not put in an immediate response position, they can think it through, I can be praying over that time period for them (because the help of our prayers does matter before God). Sometimes people repent, sometimes they don't even respond and the friendship is over, and

sometimes they respond and tell me what a horrible person I am and the friendship is over, but in the end I know I did what God called me to do.

Maybe you need to Write Letter saying you are Sorry

But maybe it is you that needs to write a letter that says you are sorry for how you have caused them sorrow.

Now verse 5 – Paul changes Gear / Addresses man in Sexual Sin

Paul is going to change gears a bit, and address the man who was in sexual sin with his step-mothers. Now, you remember when he wrote the first epistle, he wrote to them concerning that man that was living in an adulteress relationship with his father's mother, or with his father's wife. And Paul had told the church that they should put him out of the fellowship, that they weren't to keep company with a brother who was an adulterer, that they should turn him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. It was not good that they just accepted and received this man into the fellowship of the believers, because he was leaven, and a little leaven will leaven the whole lump. Now, they did follow Paul's injunction. They put the fellow out because of the adulteress life that he was living, but the desired effect came. The man did repent, and he wanted now to come back into fellowship, having cleaned up his act. But there were those that were still going to keep him from fellowship.

1 Corinthians 5:1–5 (NKJV) 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 a man has his father's wife! ² And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. ³ For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. ⁴ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵ deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

2 Corinthians 2:5 But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe.

2 Corinthians 2:6 This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man,

2 Corinthians 2:7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.

2 Corinthians 2:8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.

So they Confronted Him / Church on every Corner

So they did confront this man, and they did tell him to leave the fellowship, and they did tell him he can't return until he repents and turns from his sin. So now we see from this letter that it is exactly what happened, and the man did repent and now wants to be restored to the fellowship. Mind you, this isn't the day where there is a church on every corner, you are lucky if there is a church on each continent. Today with a church on every corner, people don't need to repent, they just change churches.

Punishment – to Remove Someone's Right

Verse 6 – This punishment – This word for punishment was a technical word, a legal term, in the Roman Empire and it meant to remove someone's right. The judge if someone was brought to court for breaking the law, would punish them – word literally means censor them, and they would no longer have the freedom and rights they had as a Roman citizen. So the Corinthian church took Paul's advice and had the man excommunicated from the church, told him he could not come in and be a part of the fellowship until he repented.

He Repented – Proof against being All-Accepting

The desired affect came and the man repented - proof that to not be all accepting, all inclusive, is good - but harmful. We call sin for what it is and stand against it, and we see God will honor it and we see this man repenting and being right with God again. The world, even the church, thinks they are being kind and doing the person a loving service, but they are not, they are stunting their growth, maybe even deceiving them they are saved. The church in Corinth enacted discipline, and the discipline was received and the man turned from his flesh unto God. It is necessary to do in the church not only for the individuals sake, but for the church's sake, else that person could influence and infect others into the same sin.

Reaffirm – Judicial Term – Formal Declaration

Verse 8 – to reaffirm – Paul is asking them to publically receive this man back into the church. Reaffirm was a judicial term also, and it meant to make a “formal declaration”. Paul says make a public declaration of your love for him.

Imagine what it took for this Man to Return

Imagine what it took for this man to return and stand before man and say I was wrong, I know what I did was an offense to God, I repent and I want to return to the church. He is open, he stands there vulnerable, shamed of his sin. It appears from Paul’s words here that the people didn’t restore them, they turned their back on him. The question I wonder is, where did he go? No doubt he is broken and crushed by his sin, the conviction of the Holy Spirit was upon him such that he repented, and now there he is, out on his own, no friends, no family, no comfort, no hope.....but God sees Him and God sees you, and we will see in a few verses God is moving on this man’s behalf (and God will move for you also).

Paul doesn’t Name him by Name / Meet in Heaven / So Too for Us – New Name

Notice Paul doesn’t name him by name. How gracious of Paul to leave his name out. We will meet this man in heaven and ask his name and he will give it, and we will say I never heard of you, and he will say that is exactly how I want to be. And we too will never be known in heaven for our sin either, only our clean and forgiven, our new name, our position in Christ – Sons and Daughters.

2 Corinthians 2:9 For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

2 Corinthians 2:10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ,

2 Corinthians 2:11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Paul expressing why Forgiveness so Important – So Satan doesn’t get Foothold

Paul is getting out why this is so important to forgive this man, and to forgive others who seek repentance, and that is so Satan doesn’t get a foothold.

Take Advantage – Cheat Someone out of Belonging

Take advantage – to cheat someone out of something that belongs to them. When we fall for Satan strategies, Satan steals what belongs to us. What are we promised, we studied it last week. He doesn’t want the fallen believer to claim and lay hold of any of the promises of God, that are fully theirs, as a child of God.

- **Saints (regardless of what we have done)** - 2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:
- **Grace (God’s Riches at Christ’s Expense)** - 2 Corinthians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Peace (we have peace with God based on finished work of the cross)** - 2 Corinthians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Mercy (no judgment to come – penalty has been paid)** - 2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
- **God of all Comfort (A loving Father who loves His kids)** - 2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
- **Comforts us in the Trials (walks with us – never leaves us or forsakes us)** - 2 Corinthians 1:4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
- **Abounding Consolation (catches all our tears, wraps us in His arms of love, whispers I am here and I love you)** - 2 Corinthians 1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

- **God who Raises the Dead (Death has no sting, and sin has no power, the God who can breath life into every dead thing in our lives)** - 2 Corinthians 1:9 *Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,*
- **Delivered – Delivering – Will Deliver (God who never stops moving in our life and on our behalf, our protector and Great Shepherd)** - 2 Corinthians 1:10 *who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,*
- **Received Day of the Lord (He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete)** - 2 Corinthians 1:14 *(as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

To Not Forgive – Satan’s Strategy / Satan as Happy with Liberalism as Legalism – Both Divide

Paul is saying to not forgive this man was to fall right into Satan’s strategy. Satan is happy if the church is extremely liberal winking at sin, and Satan is just as happy if the church wont forgive, wont restore, because the end result is the same, and that is division and not unity, love is absent, and the flesh is controlling.

Warren Wiersbe Quote

“Satan wants us to think that our ‘disobedience detours’ must become the permanent road for the rest of our lives, but this is a lie.”—from Be Obedient (Pastor Warren Wiersbe)

Galatians – Restore a Broken Bone / Takes Time

In Galatians we are told to restore a brother that has fallen, and the word to restore was the word used to repair and reset a broken bone. The point being made for us is that it may take some time, it may take weeks or months, but we are to invest and walk alongside the fallen brother until they can walk by themselves.

Galatians 6:1–5 (NKJV) ¹ Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. ² Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. ⁵ For each one shall bear his own load.

Remember this is Heart of God – God’s Heart for You / Have you Fallen

Also, remember Paul is teaching what God is imparting to him, and Paul is imparting the heart of God. This is how God feels about you, He loves you, He forgives you, He wants you to know that fully so you don’t live in sorrow and shame, but move on from your past. God is way beyond willing, He is wanting, deeply, to walk alongside of you as you heal, as you recover, as you return to full strength from the failing and sins that broke you. If you have sinned, get up, come to the great physician, let Him heal you, restore you, don’t let Satan get a foothold and rob you of what rightly belongs to you.

Remember – Spiritual Warfare / Enter Flesh and Satan will whip You

And as we speak of this “Satan take Advantage”, remember we are in a spiritual war. The moment I enter the spiritual realm I enter the victory arena - I can beat him there I cannot beat Satan in the flesh – ever

We are Ignorant / Recognize Spiritual Warfare in your Day

Verse 11 - for we are not ignorant of his devices - We are not ignorant of Satan's devices. Now, our problem is that we are ignorant many times of Satan's devices. I think that a lot of times we have real difficulty, because we don't recognize the real source of conflict, being ignorant of Satan's devices. I believe that Satan is able to attack us in the realm of the spirit, also in the realm of our emotions. I feel that some days when we just feel out of sorts and nasty, that really it is a spiritual attack of the enemy against us. I feel that a lot of times when there is this unrest within the home, the children are really on each other, that it is a spiritual battle that is going on. And if we are ignorant of Satan's devices, many times we can be drawn into these conflicts and we can lose our joy and the blessing of the Lord upon our lives as we get drawn into this physical kind of a contact. Satan is constantly trying to draw you into the physical realm to battle with you, because if he can get you into the physical arena, he can knock your block off. He can beat you to pieces. That's why I never like to meet him in the physical arena, in the area of the flesh. I don't want to meet him. I only want to meet him in the spiritual arena, because there I have the great advantage -- the name of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:10–13 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Recognize the Source – Then battle at the Source

And so, a lot of times we have problems when we are ignorant of Satan's devices, and we need to recognize the source of this problem that we are facing. And recognizing the source, it is Satan that is coming against us. It is Satan that is allowing this or doing this to us. Then I can deal with it, and I resist him in the name of Jesus, and then I rejoice for the glorious victory that I have in Christ.

3 R's of Spiritual War

So those are the three R's of the spiritual walk.

1. The recognition of the source of the problem.
2. The resisting of his work, for the Bible says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).
3. And then the rejoicing in the victory that we have through Jesus Christ over every work of the enemy.

So remember the three R's. Don't be ignorant of his devices, or you can find yourself really being defeated more often than you'd like to be.

James 4:7 (NKJV) ⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

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

2 Corinthians 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.

Opportunity in Troas – but was Looking for Titus

So, Paul went to Troas. Opportunity was given to him to preach, but his spirit was so heavy, because Titus wasn't there, who we can deduce was to meet him and bring him news of the church in Corinth. "We went on over to Macedonia." He just was restless, concerned, so concerned for the condition of the church in Corinth, for the believers there. Titus it appears was supposed to be in Troas (in the area of modern day Turkey), he wasn't there but it appears he was in Macedonia (modern day Yugoslavia – which is in southeast Europe), so Paul left Troas and went all the way up to Macedonia, to find Titus and say hey how are the people at the church in Corinth.

Paul left Open Door – Concern of 1 Man

An opportunity for great ministry was opened to Paul in Troas. Yet because Titus failed to meet him there with news of how the church at Corinth was doing, Paul left Troas to find Titus. Here, we see an interesting side of Paul not often seen in other places. That is, he left a wide-open door in Troas because he cared about one man, Titus, who was to inform him about an individual church—the church at Corinth.

Look at Distance from Troas to Macedonia

Look at the map, look at the distance from Troas to Macedonia, and you get a glimpse of how much Paul cared about the Corinthian church, and how much he cared about this one man.

Oh to have this heart for the One / 4hrs TV / Simplicity & Sincerity / Last Weeks Warfare

Wouldn't it be great to have this heart, to be restless, to not be able to sleep, because we are so concerned about the state of our fellow brother and sister in the Lord. Imagine a heart that couldn't watch 4hrs of television and internet each day (statistic of average American use) because we were so concerned about that new believer, that sister who was struggling with an illness, that brother who was unemployed, so much so that we are restless and concerned for them. Imagine having such a heart. I take you to last week's message, I take you back to simplicity and sincerity. So how did your time tally come out? Did God give you insight into some changes that may be needed so you can have "some leftovers" as that is what simplicity means, to have something left to spare so you can generously give to another. I want to share something with you, and that was for the 50 minutes that I taught last week, I was in one of the most serious spiritual battles I have felt in weeks. I don't know if it was just our turn

for a special visit from the henchmen, or Satan got the report that we were going to discuss making life simple so we could have time leftover to give it to others, but whatever the case it was serious battle all the way through.

2 Corinthians 1:12 For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

What a Heart of Paul

What a heart of Paul, oh that God would give such a heart to us; or.....that we would ask God to have such a heart.

2 Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

2 Corinthians 2:16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

Paul Paints Familiar Picture of Roman Victory March

Verse 14 – triumph in Christ – Paul paints a picture that all the readers would have been familiar as they lived within the Roman Empire. The Greek word translated “triumph” is linked to the Roman triumphal march. When a Roman general went into battle and killed five thousand or more of the enemy as he secured new territory for Rome, upon his return, he rode in a chariot, followed by his soldiers marching in all of their glory. Behind the soldiers were the men who had been taken captive. Alongside the procession, priests would walk, swinging their incense pots to create a sweet smell of victory

We are in King Jesus’ Victory Procession / He has Rescued Us from evil Dictator

We are in King Jesus’ victory process, He has defeated the enemy of sin and death, He has rescued us from an evil dictator, and He has captured our heart. We follow Him willingly, we are glad to be part of His victory procession, because His victory became our victory.

We have His Sweet Fragrance / I love Sunday’s enjoying the Fragrance after Week of World – Can’t Wait

Verse 15 – we are to God the fragrance of Christ - we have this sweet fragrance about us, as we looked at last week, we are anointed (saturated and soaked) in the sweetness of God. There is a sweetness about us, it is the sweetness of Christ permeating our very being. I love coming here on Sunday’s and Tuesday’s and being around you, I love the sweetness about you. Your smiles, your kindness, your friendship, your warmth. After a whole week of working in the world, listening to their course words, their self-promoting exaltation, their climb to the top, their unkind words.....I love to come here and just soak in the sweet fragrance of Christ that soaks and saturates you all.

2 Corinthians 1:21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,

Aroma of Death – World say’s Can’t Stand / You Stink

Verse 16 – the aroma of death – just as I look forward to being with you on Sunday and Tuesday, and you the same with each other. The can’t wait desire to be together we have, there are some who have the same degree but theirs is the can’t stand to be in your presence, because they can’t stand the way you smell, they hate the fragrance of Christ because they can’t stand what that smell represents. Give thanks that they can smell it, give thanks that they can’t stand it, it confirms “YOU STINK”.

Paul says I Love the Smell / Let me Spur you on to Greater Love

Paul is saying to the Corinthians, I love the way you smell, remember the way you smell, let that smell spur you on to greater love and greater things in Christ.

- Husbands how do you smell to your wife, wives how do you smell to your husbands. Is it sweet or sour
- What is our fragrance at work?
- How do we smell when we are suffering or going through a trial, are we complaining or blessing the Lord that though He slay me yet will I praise Him.

- How do you smell you singles? Do you smell like Christ or the latest party.

Ohh to live like the sweet fragrance that God has poured out upon us. When we do, it is a life that is like none other, and it is sweet, just as the Lord says that it is.

2 Corinthians 2:17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

Out of Love I Speak

Paul says I do this out of love for you, the words I speak are the words of God, and I don't say these things for personal profit, but for your godly profit, to conform you into the image of God, to release a sweet fragrance, the fragrance of God, unto you.

Chapter 3

[Study #4 \(3:1-18\)](#)**Flow into 3 from 2:17 / Not Peddlers of the Word**

We flow into chapter 3 from verse 17 in chapter 2, Paul stating that they are not peddlers of God word, they don't do this as a profession but out of the depth of their hearts, the sincerity of their heart.

2 Corinthians 2:17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:1 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?

2 Corinthians 3:2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

2 Corinthians 3:3 clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

Some men Trying to Discredit Paul / Where is your Letter of Recommendation

So there are some men who are trying to discredit Paul's ministry, tear it down, and of course elevate themselves into the place of leadership. One of their attacks was that Paul didn't have letters of commendations/recommendations to endorse his ministry.

Recap 1 Corinthians / Paul writing to Protect Church

We call it an epistle, but it was simply a letter when it was delivered 2000 years ago to the group of believers in the city of Corinth. It was the second (maybe even 3rd – but we will speak of that another time). In the first letter (which we call 1st Corinthians) Paul wrote to this church that at that time had some serious immoral issues going on, they were getting drunk at the church potlucks, sexual immorality was common, rampant, and accepted, they were suing each other, but they were speaking in tongues and running the isles, all the while thinking they were super-spiritual. Paul who planted this church on his second missionary journey after staying there for about 18 months, now writes them a letter of correction and instruction about those things, and some received and made course adjustments, while others took offense to it, and now (at the time of this writing) are trying to knock Paul's authority down, divide the people against him, and draw the people to themselves. So Paul is writing to express his heart, make some things clear, and protect this church from being broken apart from within.

Paul addresses what He Heard / Where is his Validation / Paul says the Church is my Validation

So here Paul is addressing one of the things he hears is being said about him, and that is where is his letter of recommendation? It was common then just as it is common today that when a person went to a church they would show a letter of recommendation of where they came from to "validate" their ministry. These men are saying where is Paul's, because they want to tear Paul down, discredit his ministry, and they elevate themselves into the position of leadership and authority. Paul makes the point clear, my letter of recommendation, my validation of my calling, is the church in Corinthians, there was no church when I came, I made tents in the day and preached and taught in the evenings, and out of that came the church that now exists.

Validation is the Fruit

Really the validation of the ministry, the calling, confirmed by the fruit, a church is established. When Paul came to Corinth there was no church to present a letter to, because there was no church, he planted the church by starting at zero. So, what Paul is saying, I got better than a letter, I got people who are living and praising the name of Jesus, people who got saved, became a group of believers together as they formed this church, and they are still standing and walking with the Lord.....you want proof, look at the fruit.

CCAAC Association / Men don't Validate a Ministry

By the way, one of the reasons it took so long for us to be affiliated is because I would not submit letters of recommendations to the Association Board. They wanted letters from Senior Pastors. My point, men do not validate a ministry, the ministry validates the man. I said if 10 years of ministering was not validation, then a letter

from some man who hardly knows me. I came to an area no one was, I asked God to send me to an area no one was teaching verse-by-verse, and He did, so there was no one to validate the ministry.

Doubt Paul would get Letter / Maybe you feel like Outsider

But you know what, as I read the life of Paul, I kinda get the sense that he was always an outsider, he was never part of the group. We read how the other Apostles were leery of him (Acts 15), we read how he had some contentions with Peter (Galatians 2:11), we read how Paul didn't rush to hang out with the other apostles but went into the wilderness for 14 years (Galatians 2:1) to be taught by the Lord the ministry of grace. All that leads me to feel that Paul was mostly an outsider to the other 11 apostles. I doubt Paul ever got invited to speak at the "Apostles Conferences", and I doubt people "dropped" his name, oh the other day while I was hanging out with Paul. Kinda of like people like to do today, as they say "I remember the time me and Billy, Graham that is, were talking". Hey, maybe you feel like an outsider, maybe you feel that you are not in "the in", people don't recognize all you do, don't give you the acknowledgment, maybe even steal your show, that is ok as you are in great company. You just keep doing what you are doing, God sees, God knows, and it will be God that says to you well done thy good and faithful servant. Don't quit or get frustrated because of the others.

Matthew 25:21 (NKJV) ²¹ His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

2 Corinthians 3:2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

2 Corinthians 3:3 clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

The Sweetness of your Fragrance

Paul loves to point out the beauty of the fruit, the sweetness of his brothers and sisters in Corinthians. Paul may be defending against the attacks of these men, but he also is boasting of his brothers and sisters. Paul back in chapter 2 says they have a sweet fragrance about them, and back in chapter 1 we studied about the sweetness of the fragrance that God "establishes" upon His children. Listen, maybe you think you a bad week in the Lord, wasn't faithful in the things you should have, but God wants you to know that you are a sweet fragrance to Him, you bring Him such pleasure, and that He loves you.

2 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

You Keep Walking – Whether Realize it or Not / Missionary in China Language School

You keep walking with Jesus, you keep close to Him, and whether you realize it or not, you have a sweet fragrance about you, it is supernaturally produced by God, and the world around you can smell it. You are different from the rest of the world. God is releasing the fragrance from us, even when we don't realize it, but Paul makes the point right here, hey just look at the Beloved in the church of Corinth, and see how their lives have been changes, and look at their lives how they are His and He is theirs. Maybe the people in church in Corinth were like are you really talking about me, Paul is I am, I proudly point you out. Keep living it out Christian, even if you don't get a chance to speak it out, even if people don't want to hear it, or tune you out, for they are reading your life, and God is releasing a sweet fragrance about you that no one can deny. I am reminded of the story told of a missionary to China who was in language school. The very first day of class the teacher entered the room and, without saying a word, walked down every row of students. Finally, still without saying a word, she walked around the room again. Then she came back and addressed the class.

"Did you notice anything special about me?" she asked. Nobody could think of anything in particular. One student finally raised her hand. "I noticed that you had on a very lovely perfume," she said. The class chuckled. But the teacher said, "That was exactly my point.

You see, it will be a long time before any of you will be able to speak Chinese well enough to share the gospel with anyone in China. But even before you are able to do that, you can minister the sweet fragrance of Christ to these people by the quality of your lives. It is your lifestyle, lived out among the Chinese people that will minister Christ to them long before you are able to say one word to them about personal faith in Jesus."

It is like that with us as well. Though we may not be eloquent speakers, unbelievers we encounter will be ministered to by the Christ-likeness of our daily lives, if indeed we are Christ-like.

Living Epistles

If we are a living epistle, the Bible,

- Then we would all have a Genesis chapter of our life, in the beginning God created. What a glorious and marvelous creation you are, you were created by the hand of God Himself. Psalm 139 says that God created you in your mother's womb, the hand of God. God says regarding His creation of you in your mother's womb that He skillfully wove you together. That word there was the word that was used by the needle worker as they made beautiful tapestries. Imagine upon conception, God going to His color palette and saying here is a little green for the eyes, yes and some brown for the hair, cheekbone high, chin narrow, ohh what a beautiful face, one I will enjoy looking at for all these years to come and into eternity. Let me weave in these abilities, this gift, and some humor while I am at it. Ahh perfect, beautiful, what a tapestry, what I piece of art, I look so forward to displaying my great work to the world.
- From Genesis our lives would have an Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy as God would display to us His Holy standards (10 Commandments) and free-will to obey them or choose our own way.
- Our lives would have a Book Psalms to it, as we experience the gametes of emotions from lows to highs, from mountain top experiences to times in the valley. At the end of our Old Testament lives, we would see that the government wasn't our deliver, we would see the priests and religion couldn't change us, we would know that there was more to this life than here and now, us and ourselves, and we would see before us those Laws (the 10 Commandments) like looking in a mirror, revealing we were guilty before the Holy God, we have broken His Law, we are separated from Him.
- But praise be to God because our lives have a Book of Matthew (Mark, Luke and John) to it as we read the works of Jesus we like Matthew heard His words, "Follow Me", and we got up and walked out of darkness, into a new life, we declare "It is Done", all by Him and nothing of ourselves, but my sin was forgiven and washed away by Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Let me ask you, do you have a Matthew chapter in your life? Is there a day that you can put your finger on and say this is the day that the Matthew chapter was written in my life, the day where I understood my sin separated me from the Holy God, that I was guilty by my own doing and no one else's, it was me that put Christ on the cross, that He took my place for sin, and that He died for me. And, on the 3rd day He rose again, and so too will I because I have given my life to Him, He traded places with me on the cross and took my sin, and I become a son/daughter of God, and I now follow God with my whole heart. Have you had a Book of Matthew chapter written in your life? If not, you need to write that chapter today, for today is the day, today is the day of salvation for you.
- After the Gospel account of our life, we move into Acts and the epistles, as we become students of the word, as we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, and we then go out on our missionary journeys, sometimes across the sea, other times across the street, but we become living epistles to all who we meet, and there is the fragrance of Christ about us.
- And, there is one more chapter for us all, and that is the chapter/book of Revelation, and we are going to see Him face-to-face, we will dine with Him in the marriage supper of the Lamb, as we cast our crowns at his feet, as we with the host of angels praise Him around the throne, giving Him thanks for all that He has done in our lives, from Genesis to Revelation. We will serve Him in His Millennial Kingdom and we will be with Him forever when He makes a new heaven and a new earth. Our lives have the exclamation point at the end that never ends.....The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!

Psalm 139:13–16 (NKJV) ¹³ For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.

Revelation 22:20–21 (NKJV) ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

You are Living Epistles

You are living bibles, walking about the world today, and people are reading you, and you may be the only bible they read, so live it out loud. Smell up the room 😊, give them Jesus in every chapter they read. God love you, He is so proud to call you His Bible, His Bride.

2 Corinthians 3:4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God.

2 Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

2 Corinthians 3:6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Paul points to Jesus as the Sufficiency / Not trusting in himself / Good Application for Us

But Paul in these verses makes it clear, that he is not trusting in himself, that all the glory of his ministry goes to the Lord, in fact Paul makes it clear that he trusts not in himself but the sufficiency (abundance) of Christ for all he does in the ministry. Good application for all of us, whether that ministry in the church, in the home, the ball field, school ground, or work place.

El Shaddai

God revealed Himself to Abraham as El Shaddai (God Almighty), which means the all-sufficient One. And it's always good to know the all-sufficient One and to be able to rely upon the all-sufficient One to fill up that which I am lacking when I come to the end of my own resources. How many times we are driven to draw from that sufficiency that God has provided for us through Jesus Christ, and rely on ourselves and our works and genius, when all we have to do is look to Him the all sufficient one.

Exodus 6:2-3 (NKJV) ² And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD. ³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD I was not known to them.

People afraid to get Involved

There are too many people who won't get involved in any kind of ministry because they look to themselves and see there is no way they can do something for the Lord because they know there is nothing within themselves that could accomplish the work.....if that is how you feel, then perfect, you qualify. The person that is going to be used by God is the one who knows they can't do it, and thus they look to the Lord, see that it is all Him, He is the sufficient One, the Almighty One, and thus no might needed from ourselves, just tapping into His.

Verses 6-13 / Old Covenant versus New Covenant

Paul now is going to compare the Old Covenant versus the New Covenant. When he refers to the "letter" he is referring to the Law of the Old Covenant (Old Testament) which is the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20). When he speaks about the "Spirit" he is referring to the New Covenant (New Testament), which is the finished works of Jesus on the cross, which wiped away our guilt that the 10 Commandments convicted and condemned us of.

2 Corinthians 3:6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Corinthians 3:7 But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away,

2 Corinthians 3:8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

2 Corinthians 3:9 For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

2 Corinthians 3:10 For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels.

2 Corinthians 3:11 For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

2 Corinthians 3:12 Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—

2 Corinthians 3:13 unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.

High Level / Defending a Caged Lion

Verse 12 - since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech - Paul just said he doesn't rely on his sufficiency but the Lord's, and now he is going on to say that the ministry (this gospel) they preach is pure power, and because of its power they can preach it boldly. Spurgeon said a caged lion need not be defended; it only needs to be let out of the cage. We need not worry about the gospel and how it will be received, we need only to let it out and it will do all that it was designed to do. This Gospel, Our God, is sufficient, almighty, abundant, and therefore we need not defend it when we speak it, and equally as important is that we can boldly claim it for our lives that God is able to do all that He says He can and will, and that we can live the victorious Christian life each and every day of our lives.

Law Glorious / NT more Glorious – Because Christ in Us

So Paul is saying that the Law, the 10 Commandments were glorious, and as glorious as they were, there is greater glory and that is of course the glorious work of Jesus on the cross and the Spirit (God Himself) taking up residence within a person. Christ in you, the hope of glory, the glory doesn't rest on a mountain top, or in a building made of stones, but in your heart and my heart, the God of the universe is living not only amongst us, but in us. That is glory.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Colossians 1:26–29 (NKJV) ²⁶ the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Law Protects and Provides

So often people say the law is harsh, the law is unloving, but they miss is that God is God and He knows what helps us and what hurts us, and take any of the 10 Commandments and find just one that if you violate and break it would bless you and society. God gives us His law to protect us and provide for us.

Law Allows us to Measure Sin

Verse 7 – the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious.... Verse 9 - For if the ministry of condemnation had glory - The Law allows us to measure sin, but it did not, and still today does not, provide a way for us to change from our sin. The Law simply and clearly just reveals that we are sinners before the Holy God, guilty before Him and need a Savior.

Galatians 3:24 (NKJV) ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Romans 3:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Exodus 20:1–17 (NKJV) ¹ And God spoke all these words, saying: ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

- ³ "You shall have no other gods before Me.
- ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
- ⁷ "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.
- ⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.
- ¹² "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.
- ¹³ "You shall not murder.
- ¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery.
- ¹⁵ "You shall not steal.

- ⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- ¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Covenant is to Bring Man into Relationship with God / Excels based on God’s Faithfulness

Verse 10 - For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels – The New Covenant “excels”, is You see, the old covenant was predicated upon man's faithfulness and man's obedience. The purpose of the covenant is always to bring man into a relationship with God. That's the primary purpose. The old covenant failed. Not because it wasn't good, but because man was weak and man failed. It was predicated upon man's obedience, man's faithfulness. Now, this new covenant cannot fail, because it's predicated upon God's faithfulness to His word. A covenant predicated upon my faithfulness to the word of God failed; I couldn't be faithful. But we know that God is faithful to His word, and thus, this new covenant whereby we stand tonight is certain, is sure. That's why we can say with such assurance, "I know in Whom I have believed, and I'm persuaded that He is able to keep that which I committed" (II Timothy 1:12). And I've committed my life and my future to Him, and I'm confident that He shall bring me into the fullness of His glory, because He is faithful to His word. His word cannot fail. He will not fail. So, the new covenant excels in glory, because it's based upon God and His faithfulness

Exodus 34 – the Veil / After 40 Days

Verse 13 - who put a veil over his face - We read of the account of Moses’ face having to be covered by a veil at the end of Exodus 34 after God had given him the 10 Commandments written on the tablets of stone.

Exodus 34:29–35 (NKJV) ²⁹ Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses’ hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. ³⁰ So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. ³² Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³ And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. ³⁴ But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. ³⁵ And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

Veil so People wouldn’t see Glow Fading / We can Keep Law Day or Two – But Eventually Fail

The reason the veil was on Moses face we read was not because the blinding of the eyes because of its brightness, but so that people would not see that the glow was fading. Moses covered his face so when the glow was diminishing or diminished, the people wouldn’t see the glow fade because sin makes the glow fade, and they would see it fading on Moses and think that there was something wrong with the Law, all the while not realizing that there was nothing wrong with the Law, but Moses, he was a sinner (that is why Paul said he can preach with boldness the NT – because his sins are covered and this New Covenant is an everlasting covenant that fadeth not away). So, too, we might keep our rules and regulations for a day or two. Yes, we can shine for a while—but the glow fades quickly because we’re sinners.

1 Peter 1:3–5 (NKJV) ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Washed Clean / Faithful needs a Bath

Our sins are washed away, cleansed by the finished work of Christ upon the cross. Maybe you are heart today and you say why do I need that, why can’t I just go to heaven as I am? The reason is God is holy (holy means not-common, pure, set apart). God is not like man’s standards, God is perfect and pure, and nothing impure can come into His pure presence (Habakkuk 1:13), and sin defiles us and dirty’s us, and we cannot come into His presence with dirt upon us. On Friday Camden wanted to make mud-pies outside, and his dog Faithful loved making them with him, both of them were covered with dirt from head to toe. I sent Camden up to the tub, and Faithful wanted to come into the house and walk around just like any other day. But first I had to put Faithful in the wash bucket, and he did not like it one bit, he was giving me those puppy dog eyes of “why are you doing this to me”. See Faithful didn’t put two-and-two together, that the bath was the requirement to enter into the house and to be allowed to join the family again. So too many people don’t see the connection with the cleansing of the Cross, and the coming into the presence of God. But God is Holy, not like us, His standard are not set by popular opinion or majority rule, His standards are beyond ours, His standards meet His perfection and purity. The only to bring us up

to His standard, was by Him coming down, showing us the way, and then becoming the way upon the cross. Only by Jesus, His cleansing, can we enter into God's presence, be accepted and allowed to enter into the house of God. *Habakkuk 1:13 (NKJV)* ¹³ *You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?*

John 14:6 (NKJV) ⁶ *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

This is 2nd Set of Tablets

Now the story of Exodus 34 (where he came down from mountain aglow) is actually the second set of tablets Moses received from the Lord. The first set if you remember Charleston Heston threw at the golden calf that Aaron had made and blew the thing up. That story is told starting back in Exodus 24. We read of Moses going up on Mount Sinai alone while the rest of Israel waited at the bottom of the mount to hear what the Lord spoke to Moses. We read that Moses spent 40 days on the mountain with the Lord. Over those 40 days the Lord gave Moses detailed instructions on how to build the Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant (also called Testimony), all the utensils and furniture that went into the Tabernacle, and God established the priesthood and the wardrobe that the priests were to wear, and the sacrifices that were to be made at the altar. God also established the Law of the Sabbath (six days you shall work and on the seventh day you shall rest, the day is holy unto the Lord). Pretty amazing stuff going on for those 40 days.

Exodus 24:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷ The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. ¹⁸ So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.*

Exodus 31:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ *And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.*

First Tablets Destroyed – 2nd Moses Glows

So the first tablets were destroyed (Moses actually broke the two tablets at the foot of the mountain Exodus 32:19 tells us – not as Hollywood portrayed). Then Moses goes back up to the mountain for another 40 days, he repents on behalf of the people, and God gives him the second set of tablets. In all Moses spends 80 days on the mountain before the Lord.

My Question – What Happened between 1st and 2nd

Here is my question, what happened between Moses and God, between the first set of tablets and the second set? There is no mention that Moses face shown when he descended with the first set of tablets, but it did shine when he came with the second? Why did he not shine after the first since they were the same Law, so details that we read of the second? I believe the answer is given to us in Exodus 33. In Exodus 33 Moses says to the Lord show me your glory, which he did not ask in his first trip. Imagine this with me, gather all that Moses has seen and experienced, and I think we glean hidden manna here for ourselves and our walk with the Lord, a deeper walk with the Lord. Moses has seen amazing works of God. He has seen the 10 plagues, he has seen the Red Sea part, he has seen manna come down from heaven every day (Ex 16:31), he has seen the rock spring water every day for the people to drink (Ex 17:60), he has spent 40 days on the mountain with God, he is now on round two of spending 40 days in the presence of God, although he doesn't see God face-to-face (Ex 33:20); but after all that Moses comes to a place (Ex 33:18) where he says Lord, show me you glory. It is to me that Moses is saying, Lord I am not close enough to You, even after I have seen, I know there is more of You to know. Lord I am not content on what I know of You, for I know there is more of You to see, Lord show it to me I beg of Thee. Moses has seen all the world has to offer as he was raised in the finest Egypt had to offer (Hebrews 11:24) but said it is not enough, seen all the mighty works of God and said that is still not enough, Moses was not content and wanted more of God.

Exodus 33:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ *And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."*

God Honored That / Enveloped Moses / 4 Dimensions

God honored that with Moses; I would say God worked that in Moses to show Him there was so much more of God to know and experience. So God says ok Moses I will show you My glory. And what an amazing picture we read of in Exodus 33 as the Lord places Moses on a rock (Jesus is our Rock), and Moses was pressed into a rock formation around him (face first), and that wasn't just any type of rock as the scriptures tell us it was a "cleft" rock

which means “pierced” as Jesus was pierced for us. And then God put His hand over Moses as He passed by, and that word for hand as it is used meant wrist and hand, the very way they would crucify a person, through the wrist of the hand. So Moses is totally covered by all the symbols of Christ, Moses is totally enveloped by the picture of Christ, all 4 dimension (height, depth, breadth, width – Ephesians 3:18) of the love of God.

Exodus 33:18–23 (NKJV) ¹⁸ And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.” ¹⁹ Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” ²⁰ But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” ²¹ And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. ²² So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. ²³ Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

Ephesians 3:14–19 (NKJV) ¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Lord Spoke These Words

And then when the Lord passed Moses, He spoke words of His heart towards Moses and all man, words that man can live by knowing the love of God:

Exodus 34:5–7 (NKJV) ⁵ Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. ⁶ And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷ keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”

Are You Content / Not 1 time Event

Moses was glowing, because this is what happened in between one and two. Can I ask you today, are you content? I pray God would bring us all to the place where we go I have seen the best the world has to offer, Lord I have even seen your mighty works, but I am not content there, I know there is more of You to experience and know, so Lord I ask You, “Show Me Your Glory”. I tell you what I love about the story is that God says, “I will”, and He will to you also. And, that God says meet Me in the morning, and we will have that time that you desire. I wonder if Moses slept in that day. God’s mercies are new every morning, awake to not only find them, but seek them, and God will reveal Himself to us in a new way every day, and it will leave us glowing, shining, and I see that fragrance we have must be “heat activated”.

Exodus 34:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ And the LORD said to Moses, “Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. ² So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain.

Lamentations 3:22–25 (NKJV) ²² Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ²⁴ “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I hope in Him!” ²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him.

2 Corinthians 3:14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

Jews Still Don’t See It

Still today, for the majority of Jews, but not all by any means, they have a veil over their heart. They are trying to cover that they are sinners, they try to say it is their keeping of the Law, their Orthodox religion, being the chosen ones of God, that they can’t, they won’t, come to the place of admitting that they are a sinner in need of a Savior.

Same True for Us – Sin Veils and Dulls

But the same is true for every person, sin blocks, sin veils people from seeing God and His glory. People who think they can keep some type of rules and “be good” by doing nice things (aka – works) they are equally blinded because their heart is veiled by their sin.

Do You feel Cold as Stone

Can I ask you a question, does your Christianity feel as cold as stone? Do you have a resent meant towards Christianity and Christians? I will tell you it is most likely one of two things,

- one is you just love the world and that is what and where you would rather be, and those tablets of stone follow you everywhere you go and you can't shake them from your mind. You have too much of Christ in your life to enjoy the world, but too much of the world in you to enjoy Christ. What a miserable place to live 24 hours a day.
- The other may be that your Christianity is cold as stone because that is how you relate your Christian walk to, keeping rules, trying to do good, and you spend so much time facing those tablets, that you don't even see Jesus, you have no intimacy and personal moments with Him, and thus your relationship is cold as stone, and as alive as a rock.

Legalism focus on Self – Misses God

Legalism focuses on self, whereas grace focuses on God. The Mormons, the Jews, the Muslims, and most of the Catholics their whole religion focuses on self and how they are doing. Grace admits that I am nothing, grace knows there is no benchmark to perform to, simply saying I am nothing, but there is a God who loves me, and that is all I need.

2 Corinthians 3:16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

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

Paul says – Don't get Robbed

Paul is saying to you to not let anyone rob you out of what God has done for you, and is doing for you, and will do for you.

Don't Lay Trip On Yourself

But I am not so much worried about the legalist laying a guilt trip on me, a works trip on me, no one can lay a guilt trip on me like me.

Shackles Broken – We can Move Freely

Once you are free of the shackles of sin you are free to "move around the country", you are free to live, to experience life as God intended it to be for you. The weight and burden of sin has been lifted, and it no longer makes us weary and tired. I am talking to the believer! When we are trying to keep all the rules and regulations, we are shackled, and those chains make us tire and exhausted. You see when we are focused on the keeping of the rules, we have lost our focus on Him. We can deceive ourselves into thinking we are being super-spiritual by striving to keep the commandments, and we continually fear and worry about failing Him, that we don't even realize that he is no longer our focus, but the us doing good is. We are not focused on Him, but ourselves.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Become Like who We Behold

As we behold Him we are being changed, transformed, into His image. We are becoming like Him. You become what you behold.

Guard It

You must guard what you behold. Stay focused on Jesus, our Hero.

Chapter 4

[Study #5 \(4:1-18\)](#)**Notice Repeated Phrase**

Notice the repeated phrase in this chapter, “we do not lose heart”. Ever feel like you are losing heart, that the world is crashing in, crushing in, ready to totally fall apart? Well Paul will tell us how to “not lose heart”, which therefore means how to “keep heart”. Lose heart means, “to be weary, utterly spiritless, exhausted”. All referring to the spiritual things, our relationship with God, and our relationship with others, and our relationship to this world that we live in.

2 Corinthians 4:1 (NKJV) ¹ Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.

2 Corinthians 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

Paul gets my Attention

When I read verse 1 and verse 16, Paul gets my attention. It is so easy to lose heart in this world that we live, as we watch loved ones and friends walking away from the Lord, or going into apathy, or absolutely rejecting the Lord. It is easy to lose heart after investing so much time and energy into people, for their good and profit, and then be turned on by them (Paul can relate to that, he makes a heart breaking statement in chapter twelve of how the more he loved them, the less they loved him back). We live in a Country now that is so anti-Christian, it is easy for us to lose heart, become disheartened, as we walk the walk out, and people disrespect that walk, challenge that walk, even attack that walk. So Paul has my attention, I am sure he has your attention too.

2 Corinthians 12:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

Paul List Several Things how to Not Lose Heart in Chapter 4

Paul in these 18 verses will list several ways that we may not lose heart, but keep a heart that is burning, a heart that has life and that more abundant.

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Context Chapter 3 / Paul lived in Glory of Law Wiped Away / Beholding a God who Loved him / More I Stare

To first understand how Paul did not lose heart in the midst of all the things coming against him, from the world, from Satan, and the people he loved and served, it was all in the big picture of chapter 3, of who he was beholding, and how he could behold Him (The Lord). Paul lived in the glory that the Law that was written against him, was gloriously fulfilled in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. He was clean, he was forgiven, he saw and beheld a God who loved him all the way to the cross, and now is seated on the throne living in him, and loving on him. And thus Paul is saying he just keeps staring at Jesus, saying You are amazing, the more I stare, the more I see how awesome You are, and how great and mightily You are working in me, changing me into Your glory daily. You blow me away God, Mighty God, Awesome God, Great God,You consume me, I am enveloped in You, Your love, Your essence, all that You are, and amazingly that all that You are, I am becoming. You are an amazing God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.

Reason #1 – Why Paul did not Lose Heart (He was Mercied)**Mercied / In the End we Win**

Your English Bible before you says “as we have received mercy”, then goes on to say we do not lose heart. In the original Greek language there is only one word there in the phrase “as we have received mercy”, it is “mercy” past tense. You could read it as, we have been “mercied”. It is done, we are the recipient of forgiveness and compassion, we always will be, and nothing past, nothing today, and nothing in the future could change that. We have been mercied, and therefore we can live in the light of that continually, regardless of how the world presses in upon us, in the end, we win! End the end, we go to heaven, in the end we will see Him face-to-face, and He will be glad to see us I might add.

Never Underestimate the Mercy of God

Christian never underestimate the mercy of God. His mercy is enough past-present-future. Mercy means to have compassion to show pity, to help the afflicted, and God will always do that and have that for you. God will never leave you abandoned and on your own, He is always on His way with His mercy for you. Look who wrote this, the Apostle Paul, the widow maker, the orphan maker, a man who persecuted the church. Paul knows where God pulled him from, and he never lost sight of God's great mercy, he daily was in awe that God would save a wretch like him. How about you today? Remember where God pulled you from? Or, has it been so long you have forgotten, and you no longer stand in the awe that you have been mercied?

2 Corinthians 4:2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, 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.

Reason #2 – Why Paul did not Lose Heart (Paul was not a Professional)

Shadow Preaching / Comparing to his Critics

Paul is shadow preaching here. There were a group of men who had laid charges against him of not being a true apostle (chapter 1), where was his letter of recommendation (chapter 3), who gave him the right to speak on behalf of God. So Paul here in verse 2 is making a reference about himself that he was not being crafty or handling the word of God deceitfully, but simply taught the word in its simple truth. While doing that, he is making a point about the men who are coming against him, Paul makes the comparison of them to him in that those men were deceitful and crafty. Paul is saying my methods and motives are simple and pure, but those guys sure are crafty and deceitful.

Paul simply Taught the Truth – Gave him Good Conscience / Dilute – False Wisdom

Paul simply taught the word of God, and he said he had a good conscience about it, he knew he gave the people what they needed, not what they wanted. Like then, so it is today, many pastors/churches do not want to give people what they need, but what they want, and these type of men do it so they can say look at my success, and so they can hear the praises of man, all the while leaving the people weak and anemic, many times even deceived into believing they have a personal relationship with the Lord. The word deceit was a word used that meant to dilute, as was a common practice to "water down the wine" to make it go further. They wouldn't give the full strength stuff. Crafty means a false wisdom. Lots of false wisdom today as people equate "feelings" to spirituality, but not "actions". People feel good about their experiences but all the while they are not obeying the word not serving the Lord.

Nothing new Under the Sun / Churches Entertaining Today

There is nothing new under the sun as it was then, so it is today, and what we see today, you can know was the same thing going on back then. So much of the church today is trying to entertain the flesh, and to do that you have to dilute the Word of God because the Word of God and the flesh are in a battle against each other, that is the continual battle going on inside of you, the flesh versus the spirit. Lots of churches want to be "culturally relevant", in what they consider building a bridge to the people, but the problem is that bridge is not built on a solid foundation (the things of God), but on things that appeal to the flesh. So churches are like going into a rock concert, and the service is exciting and high energy, people feel good, but the pastor never gave them the Word of God that could change their life, but just an experience that met their flesh.

People critique Church & You – for Not Supplying / Not Professionals – Not a Job but Love

People can want that, and they will come against other Christians and churches if they don't supply that, and for you who are sold-out to God and His Word, it can be disheartening as they challenge, as they critique you (maybe your church too), and it can be disheartening to you. But Paul was not disheartened because he did not consider himself a professional, but simply a messenger, and since he simply gave the word simply and truthfully, he knew he had done what was the most profitable and loving thing for them. Paul did not consider this a job, he wasn't under the pressures of success (neither for praises or income), but simple a newsboy. You can take the same heart, give them the truth and let it be what they want it to be.

Paul knew he Right with God / Outlive your Critics / Reading about Paul – not these Men

Paul knew he was right with God, therefore Paul knew he was right, regardless of what people were saying or believing about him. You just remember that if/when the same comes against you. Knowing since you are right with God, God will get you through lots of things, actually everything. Notice that today we are reading about Paul, not these men, for these men failed and faded away. I always say, outlive your critics, just keep living for Jesus and they will all fail and fade away, and in the end you will be left standing.

Psalm 37:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵ Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. ⁶ He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday.

2 Corinthians 4:3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

2 Corinthians 4:4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Reason #3 – Why Paul did not Lose Heart (He Recognized the Spiritual Warfare)

Paul Recognized Satan was Blinded their Eyes / Rejection is not a Reflection on Gospel or Presenter

Paul recognized that the reason people didn't respond, and/or were caught up in the carnal/fleshly things was because Satan blinded their eyes. The rejection of the gospel is not a reflection on the gospel or the person presenting the gospel, but a reflection of that person who rejected it.

Man has Free-Will / Pray Accordingly

A very interesting passage of scripture, and one that we'd like to spend just a little time with you today. Because I think it's a key that's going to help in your praying for your loved ones who are not saved. As we mentioned in previous studies, we have been created in the image of God, and one of God's characteristics is that He is self-determinate. That is, He has a will and the capacity to exercise His will. The power of choice. And God created you in His image and gave to you the power of self-determination so that you can determine your own destiny. And you do determine your own destiny. Having given us the power of choice, it was necessary that God then respect the choices that we make. The moment God would no longer respect my choice but force me to do something against my will, then I am not really a self-determinate creature. So, for this self-determination to be valid, it was necessary that God respect the choices that I make and that there be an opportunity to make a choice.

So, God gave the opportunity for Adam to make a choice, and then God did respect the choice that He made. So with you. You can choose to love God, or you can choose not to love God. You have that choice. You make the choice and God must respect that choice, or else it is a fallacy that God has given you choice.

Therefore, if God respects the choices that a man makes, I really cannot pray, "Oh God, please save John." Unless John himself asks the Lord for salvation, he can't be saved. And for God to save John against his choice would be violating his choice, which again destroys the whole purpose in giving us choice. That sort of creates a dilemma in praying for the lost, except this verse gives us the answer. "Those who are lost, who believe not." We are told here that, "the god of this world, being Satan, has blinded their eyes or the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is in the image of God, should shine to them."

Now why is it that John doesn't believe in Jesus Christ? Because his mind has been blinded by Satan to the truth. He doesn't really see the truth of this glorious salvation that God is offering. Satan has prejudiced and poisoned his mind against God. Satan is holding him in a spell. Now, though God respects our choices, Satan doesn't. He could care less that you have the power of choice. If he has the opportunity, he's going to hold you, and he will blind your mind to the truth. And he will fill your mind with poison and prejudice against God and the things of God so that it is impossible for you to think rationally about your relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Have you ever noticed how some people are so gracious and gentle and they can talk to you rationally on any subject in the world, except that of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Talk to them about the Raven's chances this year. Oh, they can go on for hours. Talk to them about fishing in Alaska. Talk to them about the Hawaiian Islands. Talk to them about the space shuttle. Name your subject, oh, they're so gracious. They'll talk so graciously to you. They

can go on and on. Bring up the subject of Jesus Christ, and they become totally irrational. "I don't like to talk about that subject. I don't think people ought to discuss things like that." Totally irrational. Why? Because Satan has put such a hold upon their lives.

Paul, writing to Timothy said, "That we might take them from the captivity of the enemy, who is holding them captive against their will" (II Timothy 2:26). He doesn't respect choice. The god of this world has blinded their minds.

2 Timothy 2:25–26 (NKJV) ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

So Jesus said, "Whatsoever things you bind on earth will be bound in heaven: and whatsoever things you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). So, the way to pray for your loved ones who are not saved is to pray that God will bind that work of Satan that has blinded their mind and is holding them captive. That God will bind Satan's work in their life that have prejudiced and poisoned their minds against the Gospel, in order that they may be able to consider the truth of God without this ungodly pressure from Satan.

Matthew 16:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

We pray for God to loose the power Satan has over their minds, so that person can clearly see the freedom God is offering them. The person will then be in a place where they can decide, do I love my sin, more than I love this offer of freedom and personal relationship with God, that God is offering me. We pray Satan is bound, so the work of the Holy Spirit in their life has free course to open their heart and mind:

John 16:8 (NKJV) ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

So, make that the direction of your prayer. The binding of the power of Satan that has blinded their minds and that is holding them captive. And "whatsoever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven." God will bind that power of Satan. God will take away the blinders that he has put over their mind, and they'll be able to see rationally and clearly the offer that God has made to us through Jesus Christ. And then loose that work of the Holy Spirit and the conviction of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts and that drawing of the Holy Spirit of their hearts to Jesus Christ.

You can't just say, "O Lord, save him." God will not save them against their will. There has to come the change of will and that desire in their heart and that asking of God for salvation. And "whosoever comes unto me," Jesus said, "I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). So, our prayers are to set them free so that they can see.

John 6:37 (NKJV) ³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

But don't expect to stroll into the strongman's hold and just casually throw out some Bible words and expect to break the stronghold, you need to prepare for war, and approach it as it is war, you can't do it casually, your prayers have to be focused and directed.

Matthew 12:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

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

2 Corinthians 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Reason #4 – Why Paul did not Lose Heart (He never lost the Awe of God)

We Must Never Lose that Awe

Paul is inspired by the message of the cross and forgiveness, the gift of being called out of darkness in God's marvelous light, and that the Holy God would reveal Himself to sinful man. He is moved, his life is fueled, by the message that we are forgiven, that we have new life through Christ Jesus, and that when this last breath is taken on earth we will enter into eternal glory, not hell (yes folks there is a hell regardless how political/socially incorrect it is declared today). Paul is in awe that that is our lives, his life, and all who would receive it. Paul is in awe that there are people still waiting to hear it, and he is moved by that fact that he can declare it, and lives can be

changed, that people who have not yet received the Lord, can receive Him today and have new life. Christian, don't lose that awe, that we have new life, and that we can be the vessels that can tell others about new life. Once we lose that awe, we can easily lose heart when we see the world around us walking away, stiffening-armed the Lord, saying it is foolishness. Paul was in awe, and he didn't let resistance keep him from declaring the Good News, for he would do it all for the one. That awe, keep him from becoming disheartened and depressed.

1 Peter 2:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;* ¹⁰ *who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

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

Reason #5 – Why Paul did not Lose Heart (He recognized his Highest Capacity – to be a vessel of God)

The Glorious Treasure – Eternal Life through Christ

The light of the knowledge and the understanding of Jesus Christ is the most glorious treasure any of you could ever have. Because that's eternal life. That's the treasure of eternal life. The most valuable thing that any man can possess, that eternal life through Jesus Christ.

John 14:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ *At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*

"For what will it profit a man, if he would gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? What can a man give in exchange for a soul?" (Mark 8:36-37) You see, what you possess in your knowledge of Jesus Christ, the light and the understanding of Jesus Christ that God has wrought to you is the most valuable thing you could ever have. The valuable treasure of God. What does He put it in? "We have this glorious treasure in earthen vessels," or in clay pots, our bodies, this old earthen vessel. This old clay pot becomes the dwelling place of the eternal God. That Christ might dwell in your hearts. "In that day you shall know that I am in the Father, and ye are in me, and I am in you" (John 14:20). This glorious treasure, the light of the gospel, dwelling in these clay pots. God takes the most valuable thing and puts it in the cheapest thing, a clay pot. What's more common than a clay pot, in those days especially? Today we fire them up a little more and paint them a little more and they become, sometimes, treasures in our cupboard. But in those days, these just reddish clay pots all over the place. God's taken this glorious treasure and put it in this earthen vessel. Why? "That the excellency of the glory may be of God, and not of us."

Mark 8:36–37 (NKJV) ³⁶ *For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?* ³⁷ *Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Man's Highest Capacity – A vessel Containing God

Man's highest capacity is that of being a vessel containing God. We will be a people who won't lose heart when we come to the continual reminder, we are not just some cheap decaying vessel, we are a vessel of honor, as the eternal God lives and dwells in us. Not only that, the eternal God will flow out of us, unto a lost and dying world around us.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

Not Vocation / You have Achieved It

Our highest capacity is not the corporate ranks, the political arena, the pulpit or the missionary. Our highest capacity is to be vessels that carry God. If you have given your life to Jesus Christ, then you have reached your highest capacity, you need not strive on to achieve something else, you can now just live it out for Him.

2 Corinthians 4:8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

2 Corinthians 4:9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—

2 Corinthians 4:10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2 Corinthians 4:11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

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

2 Corinthians 4:13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak,

2 Corinthians 4:14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

2 Corinthians 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Reason #6 – Why Paul did not Lose Heart (he compared the Present to the Eternal)

Compaision

Look at the point counter points that Paul makes:

- V8 – pressed but not crushed
- V8 – perplexed but not in despair
- V9 – persecuted but not forsaken
- V9 – struck down but not destroyed
- V10-14 – death to life

Present vs Eternal / So Temporal

Paul took the present sufferings and compared them to the eternal glory. It was and is in the light of the eternal that the present things can be seen in their context, their “presentness”, their “temporal”, their magnitude (lack-there-of).

Christian do You point-counterpoint?

Christian, do you counter your current life situations with the eternal picture? Or do you focus on the immediate here and now? Paul is saying these things are hard and they stink quite frankly, but they are temporal and passing, and there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, and the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in me.

2 Timothy 4:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Romans 8:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Psalm 116:10

Paul is quoting Psalm 116:10; He says we believe it, therefore we speak it. Read the whole Psalm if you are troubled and perplexed, and you will read sweet words of comfort. The psalmist starts with that his life is hard, but when he saw all his troubles in light of the Lord he was uplifted, and by the end of the psalm he is giving thanks unto the Lord for sees and recognizes the Lord is good, and the Lord is with him, and the Lord loves him.

Psalm 116 (NKJV)

¹ I love the LORD, because He has heard My voice and my supplications. ² Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live. ³ The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. ⁴ Then I called upon the name of the LORD: “O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!” ⁵ Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful. ⁶ The LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. ⁷ Return to your rest, O my soul, For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you. ⁸ For You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, And my feet from falling. ⁹ I will walk before the LORD In the land of the living. ¹⁰ I believed, therefore I spoke, “I am greatly afflicted.” ¹¹ I said in my haste, “All men are liars.” ¹² What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me? ¹³ I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the LORD. ¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the LORD Now in the presence of all His people. ¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints. ¹⁶ O LORD, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds. ¹⁷ I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And will call upon the name of the LORD. ¹⁸ I will pay my vows to the LORD Now in the presence of all His people, ¹⁹ In the courts of the LORD’s house, In the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

Highlight Reel

You know so often we only look at the things of our lives in the snippet version, but we categorize it like it is the whole story. I love football, but I don’t have time to watch 1 football game let alone several. But what I do do is watch the highlight reels of all the games which are about 2 minutes long. Funny thing, I find the next day when I talk to people about that game I talk like I watched the whole game. I will make statements about the bad call, the bad decision, the amazing play, etc....sometime even make comments of how I wouldn’t have called that play, but this play. I talk like I watched the whole play. You know I see that same thing in our Christian walk, as we only

view the snippets of life, the main things that are going on, and we talk like we got the whole story, like we watched the whole game (life). These things are only a few plays of the whole game, a few snippets of a long life, yet we can sum them up like they are the whole life. This life is long from over, there is a lot of living left to do and God is going to see us through to the end.

God is Always Greater

Remember, in all circumstances, God is always greater.

- V8 – pressed - but not crushed
- V8 – perplexed - but not in despair
- V9 – persecuted - but not forsaken
- V9 – struck down - but not destroyed
- V10-14 – death - to life

God's glory released through Paul / Fragrance Released when Squeezed / Ultimate Eternal vs Temporal

Verse 10 -15: In all these things Paul has been saying, the hardships that he faced, all released the glory of God from him, unto others, who therefore they could see the glory of God for themselves. Sometimes, it takes the squeezing of God to release the sweet fragrance that we have talked about in the past chapters. And that fragrance fills a room when we enter, as people see (smell) that person has been with Christ. Paul thought it worth the hard times, if that would give opportunity for the perishing or the weak to see and smell Christ and come to Jesus for eternal life. It is the ultimate comparison of temporal versus eternal. Many Christians today have no vision for the eternal state of others, because they are so wrapped up in the eternal/present things of this world. **2 Corinthians 2:14–16 (NKJV)** ¹⁴ *Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ¹⁵ For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?*

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

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

2 Corinthians 4:18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Reason #7 – Why Paul did not Lose Heart (Because his Inward Man was being Renewed)

Paul sees more of Jesus

The inward man was being renewed “daily”, while the outward man was perishing (decaying). Paul said this world isn't it, and all that I am going through only makes me see God clearer, and want to see Him face-to-face.

Light Afflictions / Soon we will See Him

Chapter 11, Paul called these things light afflictions, because in comparison that he will see God, they are. So too it is for us, as some day so too shall we. Hence, we do not lose heart, even in the midst of hard and trying times.

2 Corinthians 11:23–31 (NKJV) ²³ *Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of 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; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? ³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. ³¹ The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.*

Lobster Shells

From time to time, lobsters have to leave their shells in order to grow. They need the shell to protect them from being torn apart, yet when they grow, the old shell must be abandoned. If they did not abandon it, the old shell would soon become their prison--and finally their casket. The tricky part for the lobster is the brief period of time between when the old shell is discarded and the new one is formed. During that terribly vulnerable period, the transition must be scary to the lobster. Currents gleefully cartwheel them from coral to kelp. Hungry schools of fish

are ready to make them a part of their food chain. For a while at least, that old shell must look pretty good. We are not so different from lobsters. To change and grow, we must sometimes shed our shells--a structure, a framework--we've depended on. Discipleship means being so committed to Christ that when he bids us to follow, we will change, risk, grow, and leave our "shells" behind. We are just passing through this life folks, eternity is before us, let us not get all wrapped up in every detail of the present that can keep us from living out our highest capacity – vessels of God.

Paul sees more of Jesus

The inward man was being renewed “daily”, while the outward man was perishing (decaying). Paul said this world isn't it, and all that I am going through only makes me see God clearer, and want to see Him face-to-face.

Why Paul did not Lose Heart Because:

1. He was Mercied
2. He was not a Professional
3. He Recognized Spiritual Warfare
4. He never lost the Awe of God
5. He recognized his Highest Capacity
6. He compared the Present to the Eternal
7. His Inward Man was being Renewed

Chapter 5

[Study #6 \(5:1-5\)](#)**Context Flow from Chp 4 – Not Disheartened / Negative attacks on Christianity / Chp 5 – Paul Pinnacle**

We pick up here in chapter 5, flowing in from chapter 4 where Paul gave us several reasons why he was not disheartened by the world around him and the ministry he was given to serve in by the Lord. Boy, seems like the attack on Bible-believing Christians just getting ratcheted up a notch or two every week, let alone every month. Wow, everyone gets to voice their beliefs except the Christians. Inclusion is a one way street and Christians are getting the “Do Not Enter Sign”. Diversity means divert your way of thinking into ours or you are a hate monger. Tolerance, means they will tolerate the bible believer if they remain quiet. It definitely gets more magnified during the Christmas season as we watch nativity scenes removed, banners changed into Happy Holidays and no longer Merry Christmas, and the list goes on. Paul gave a list of how he did not lose heart and we can apply the same things to our lives to keep from losing heart in the day we live. So chapter 4 is a good chapter to go back and review from time to time. Well chapter 5 flows right in from 4, and Paul is reaching the pinnacle, number one reason he doesn't lose heart, and that is because we are just sojourners here on this earth, and soon and very soon, we are going to see our King face-to-face, and at that time we will move out of these fallen bodies into a new and glorious heavenly body.

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

To Know Reflectively / We know we Going to Heaven / God Wins

Verse 1 - For we know - means to know (reflectively) v. — to know or have knowledge about (someone or something); normally as acquired through reflection or thinking. Paul is saying we know this, we know we are going to heaven, we know that in the end God wins (it all), regardless of the state of the circumstances around us.

Ronnie & Anita Smith / She knows Reflectively

Did anyone see the CNN interview this week with the wife (Anita) of Ronnie Smith, a father of a 2 year old, who was attacked and killed by extremist in Libya while he was there teaching English, on December 5, 2013? She gave a moving and powerful interview where she said she forgives her husband's attackers and loves them. She said her husband did not live his life in vain, he wanted the whole world to know the love of Jesus and that is what he lived his life for. It was a powerful and amazing interview. And what you see in her, is that she knows (reflectively) that her husband lives, and that he is as live today as he was on earth, and that he is now before the throne of God, and that one day she will see him again. It was powerful and moving.

God Loves – God has Power to Cleanse / Quote

We know we are going to heaven because we have a God who loves us, and the God who loves us also has the power to cleanse us from our sin and raise us from the dead. The wisdom of God devised a way for the love of God to deliver sinners from the wrath of God while not compromising the righteousness of God.

Tent vs Building / Destroyed – Lifting up Stakes / No Hands - Eternal

God compares for us a tent versus a building. Something that is temporary versus something that is permanent. The word here for destroyed was used for “breaking down the tent by lifting out the stakes”. The permanent building is made not with hands and thus God is conveying it is eternal, it is forever, and when we leave this old rundown tent, we are moving into a glorious body that will be free from all the aches and pains of this world, and that covers from arthritis to sin.

I Love Camping – for about a Week / Temporary Life – Temp Opportunities / Look FWD new Body

If body we are presently in is just a tent, then we are just passing through. I love camping, I love it up to about one week and then after that I am ready to be back in my house with my refrigerator, my hot shower, my stove, my bed, my desk, my living room, my HVAC, and washing machine. But for that one week I love the tent and the temporary living. There comes a point in my camping, that I start longing for my home again, as the limitations of camping in the tent start to magnify themselves. But, while I am camping, while I am living the temporary life, I do

have a tremendous opportunity to do things and see things that I would never had the opportunity from my home in Pasadena. I have camped out on Lookout Mountain in Tennessee, I have carved out a seven foot notch in the snow of Yellowstone Park, I have camped at the water's edge in Montana and seen the magnificence of God's creation without another soul within 10 miles of me. I could touch the stars as I camped out in the Grand Canyon, and I slept to the therapeutic sounds of Yosemite falls (which I awoke to find bear tracks all around my tent – but God protected me). I loved and still today love the freedom camping provides for me as I get to go places and do things that I would not get to do from my house in the Deena. So too there are great advantages of living in this temporary tent today in this world I am passing through, but I look forward to my new eternal body, even more so today than I did 20+ years ago when I first received Christ as my Lord and Savior; I have aches that just show up when I awake now, not after 2 hours of playing rugby like when I was in my twenties. Hey don't you love my son's Camden's hair? Right now when people comment about it I say you should see my baby pictures I use to have hair just like that, but it won't be long I will be saying, I use to have hair. As Greg Laurie said, now when I bed down to tie my shoe I say is there anything else I can do while I'm down here, because it is a lot of work getting back up.

Good News – we get New Body / Let's Wear this One out for Jesus / What makes you Tired?

Here is the good news, we are going to get a new body.....so Christian, lets wear this one out for Jesus. We only have a short and limited time on this camping trip we are living today. Exercise is great, but let's not spend more time in the gym than serving Jesus. Let's not give these old tents so much rest that we can't wake up with enough time to meet and fellowship with Him. Here is a good evaluation for all our lives, what is it that makes us tired? Are any of those things regarding God? We are going to get new bodies, let's wear these ones out for Jesus.

We just Sojourners – Passing Through / Join the greats Like Abraham – Hall of Faith (Hebrews 11)

We are just sojourners, we are just passing through, we have a future greater than this world, and we need to be reminded of that so we don't invest everything we have in a world and tent that is passing away. We join the company of such greats as Abraham (Hebrews 11:8-10), and if you want to be known for something, if you want to leave a legacy, you can join the greats in the Hall of Faith (as that is what Hebrews 11 is known as), and here is how all those listed in that chapter are summed up (read Hebrews 11:13-16), and take special note of what God responds to their heart for being sojourners and not all wrapped up in this world, as He says "He is not ashamed to be called their God".

Hebrews 11:8–10 (NKJV) ⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Hebrews 11:13–16 (NKJV) ¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Body as a House Analogy / God meets us Uniquely & Relationally

And I love how God makes this analogy of our bodies being a house. For in every home we have different rooms that have different purposes, and God wants to meet us uniquely and relationally in each of those ways:

- Living Room – I love just sitting in our living room and talking, whether that is with Renee or guests. We don't have a television in our living room so it doesn't become the center of the home. We just talk, we share, we communicate, we laugh, we discuss, but mostly we just sit in each other's company. So the Lord just wants times with us as we sit and communicate, discuss and share, but mostly just sit in each other's company with no place to go, no agenda to be filled, just fellowship together with Him.
- Kitchen/Dinning Room – Love my kitchen and dining room, a place where meals are prepared and partaken of. So the Lord loves to prepare meals for us through This Word (His Word), that feeds us and sustains us, refreshes us and strengthens us.
- Game Room – I love heading there with the family, watch a little football (very little this year being a Steelers fan), but love when we all gather to watch a game. Shoot some pool, play some ping pong, wrestle with Camden on the floor, play a video game with him, watch Polar Express for the 7th time in 7 days this week. And so too the Lord loves to do that with you, He loves doing things with you that you

love to do. Nothing wrong with having fun, enjoying pleasures, and the Lord loves to go on the hikes with you, enjoy your hobby with you, and just relax with you. But the game room, isn't the throne room, it is just one of the rooms.

- **Bedroom** – Love my bed, love to get my rest, read a book in the comfort and silence of the room. So the Lord loves to bring you into a place of rest, a place of silence, where you and He just relax after a long hard day.

So God relates our bodies to a tent and a house because it is a place that He relates to us and fellowships with us, as He loves to be with you, to enjoy you, to have sweet family time with you.

2 Corinthians 5:2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,

Paul is Groaning / Changes from House to Clothing / What makes you Groan

Paul is groaning to get out of the tent and into the eternal body. He changes metaphors (symbols/allegories) from a building to clothing. Paul says he so much wants to get out of the tent that he groans. The word groans means that words can't express what he is saying. Christian, what is it that makes you groan? Pause for one minute, and ask yourself, what makes me groan? Verses 3-4 Paul tells us why he groans, and we should take note of why that is.

2 Corinthians 5:3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.

2 Corinthians 5:4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

Contrasted in Light of Holy God / Covering Nakedness / Genesis 3

Paul is putting this contrast in the light of the Holy God. Paul is relating the clothing to covering nakedness. It was the cool of the day, the time when God and Adam would walk together, but on this day Adam is not waiting for their usual walk, and the Lord called (means to call aloud) Adam, the Lord says "Adam where are you?". And Adam responds, "I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself". It was "that day", the day Adam had eaten the forbidden fruit, and his eyes were open and now because of sin he saw himself in the light of the Holy God and Pure God.....he saw himself naked. Paul here no doubt is talking about a decaying body, but more so he is talking about being a sinner before the Holy God.

Genesis 3:8–11 (NKJV) ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." ¹¹ And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

Sinful Nature made Paul Groan / More Spend Time – More see Holiness / Little Boy Snapping Fingers

This is what makes Paul groan, as he sees his sinful nature in light of the holy God; what makes you groan?. Paul walking with the Lord (in my estimation) for about 30 years now. You see the more you spend time with the Holy God, the more you will see He is a Holy God. A person can get saved and stop doing drugs, stop sleeping around, stop cursing at the car that just cut them off and feel they have conquered sin. Reminds me of the little boy who was practicing whistling and snapping his fingers, his dad says what are you doing son, and the son replied well dad I learned how to tie my shoes, so if I can get this whistling and finger snapping down I think I got all the big stuff out of the way. We can be like regarding sins, the biggies! But the more we spend time in the presence of the Holy God, the more Holy we realize He is, and thus even the "so-called little sins" will grieve us, and make us groan! For myself, close to 25 years since getting saved, my conscience is as pricked today over a harsh word towards someone at work as it was when I first got saved and was struggling to leave the old party life behind and waking up the next morning filled with guilt of how I had grieved my Lord gave His life for me.

Further from World – Closer to God / See how Short we Fall / We become More Impacting – Because More Him

The further you get away from this world in all its trappings, the closer you get to God, and then like Paul we will see how fleeting and vain this world is, but more so, we will see how Holy and Pure God is, and how far we fall short of His holiness, and that will produce the longing to be out of these bodies and clothed in His righteousness. The beauty of that longing, that groaning, will not ruin us for this world but make us even more powerful and

impacting we will be because we are more like Him, we are more in-tune with Him because we so closely tapped into Him, as He is the Vine and we are the branches. His Spirit is flowing freely to us with no weeds of sins and distractions of the world choking out our relationship with Him.

John 15:5 (NKJV) ⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Saved 30 Years – Ever so Aware of his Sinfulness / But not Defeated – He Knows – God Loves Him

Paul who has been saved some 30 years was ever so aware of sin before the Holy God, but make no mistake, Paul isn't defeated or wallowing in being a sinner, for he knows (reflectively – it is a certain thing), he is clean and forgiven, and he is going to heaven, and God is going to present him faultless, and God is deeply in love with him right now just as he is. And, God feels the same way about you. Let's look at what Paul says in verse 5.

2 Corinthians 5:5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

God has Prepared - We getting New Bodies / Bathed & Robed

Verse 5 – He who has prepared us for this very thing is God – God is preparing all these things, and will bring all these things to pass, and that is we are getting new bodies, eternal bodies, free of sin bodies, bathed in His forgiveness, clothed in His righteousness and beauty.

We are Not Naked Now – Will be Further Clothed / 2,000 Years the Babe was Born / Born to Die

We will not be found naked, because we are clothed (right now), and when we are in our new bodies we will be further clothed because we will be out of this sinful fallen nature body. Our sins are covered right now, today, for all who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is Done! We are clothed today because 2,000 years ago the Babe of Bethlehem was born. Jesus the Christ, the only person ever born with the purpose and destiny to die. We are born to live, to have future and a hope, Jesus was born to die, that was His future. We are born to live and in the end we die, Jesus was born to die so that in the end we live.

Babe born so we can be Clothed / Back to the Heart of it All – God sent His Son / Death Swallowed Up

And how amazing as we take communion today as we consider the Babe was born into this world naked, so that we might be clothed. Your God loves you, so much so to send His Only Son. It is with great joy that I break this bread and drink this juice with you today, on the weekend before Christmas, that we all come back to the heart of what we are celebrating this week – that we have been washed of our sins, clothed in His righteousness (the simplest definition of righteousness – "to be made right with God"). Verse 4 says so that mortality may be swallowed up by life. I love the word picture God gives us in that when I swallow something, it is consumed. Jesus swallowed death there upon the cross, and thus we are now swallowed up in life, we have new life and eternal life. *John 3:16 (NKJV) 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

Communion reminds us of Guarantee / Deposit – Coming Back for It / Great Deal! / 3rd Person Trinity / 5million

Verse 5 – who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee - This communion we celebrate is "a guarantee". Communion is God's way to remind us, it is done! It is a reminder of the guarantee that it is done. The word for guarantee is the word we use today for "deposit" as we make a deposit for something we are coming back for to take full possession of. Now just ask my wife, I am pretty tight with my money, as it doesn't come by that easy. So, when I put a deposit down on something, you know it is a big deal for me, it means a lot to me.....what it means to me is that "I will not find a better deal, anything of greater value, it is a one-of-a-kind, I don't want to lose this thing. Do you realize that, have you considered that, God saying I am not going to lose out on this, there is no better thing, this is a one-of-a-kind, the value and the worth is unmatched – I am not going to lose out on this possession, I am placing a down payment on it until I can take full possession (which is after your last breath). But this down payment isn't just a cheap greenback, it is "the Spirit". The Spirit, the 3rd person of the Trinity, God Himself; God Himself in you. You can be sure that you are sure, by the deposit. And here is another point for your consideration, God must gather all of Himself, else He would be diminished. God is going to gather you, because He is gathering all of Himself. I remember when the Ravens drafted Todd Heap, they gave him a 5 million guarantee money. About a month into camp he asked Coach Billick if he thought he was going to make the team,

and Coach Billick said, considering that we gave you a 5 million guarantee, I think you will be ok. We are going to be ok folks, God is coming to take what is His own, God is coming to gather Himself. As we celebrate Christmas this week, as we take communion today, may we come back to what we are celebrating, a Holy God who is in love with us.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

World comes Against Him – Because don't Know Him like we Do / Pray for Him

See, the only reason the world comes against Him as they do, is because they don't know Him like we do. It is sad for them, pray for them, have compassion on them, and pray the veil will be lifted from their eyes.

Communion

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV) ²¹ *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

House Prepared by God / My House Leaks / Our God Mastercraftsman – working for 2000 Years

Well, a closing word, as verse 5 said He who has prepared us for this very thing is God. You know my house, I look up and see wet spots in the ceiling, I go to open the window and the handle comes off in my hand, I go to the window to watch it rain one day and my socks got soaked as I look down and there I am standing in a puddle of water that seeped in from the window seal. Who built your house matters doesn't it. What a difference between a master craftsman, and Billy the builder pulling up in his 1972 pickup truck (obviously a reason why he can't afford a new truck). God the Father is a Mastercraftsman, I think Jesus was a carpenter not just because Joseph was, but because it is the family business. God fashioned the universe in 6 days, and wow what a job He did; and now for 2,000 years He has been preparing a place for us, can you imagine what that place is going to be like.

John 14:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ *Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know."*

We Know – We Have

Paul says (we know and we have), how glorious! It is done folks, that is a GUARENTEE. Jesus was born to say.....It is Done!

2 Corinthians 5:1 (NKJV) ¹ *For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

[Study #7 \(5:5-8\) - Creation versus Evolution](#)

Walking by Faith – not by Sight

2 Corinthians 5:5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

2 Corinthians 5:6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

We are Confident – We are Absent / We can be Equally Confident – we will be Present

We are always confident – We are confident, that just as we are sure that at this current moment as we are in these earthen tents (bodies) we are not in the presence of the Lord (verse 6), that in the nanosecond we take our last breath here on earth we are just as confident that we will take our fist breath in heaven. It is certain, we are sure, we have no doubt.

Because Guarantee / God considers you of such Worth

We are certain because God has given us a down payment, His guarantee, that we are His and He is ours. God places His Spirit inside of us, God Himself is living within you (1 Corinthians 3:16). God, the Creator of the Universe, of all that is seen and unseen, the Perfect and Holy God, considers you of such great worth that He

would take up residence within you. Not just walk beside you, not just send messages from heaven, not just save you and see you in heaven.....but takes up residence within you. Can we grasp that today, that God wants to be with us, loves us, so close He wants to be with us that He would come inside of us. He is not a distant nor far away God, but an intimate, a here right now God.

2 Corinthians 5:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

We have Confidence – That He walks with us Today / Confident He is Changing you into His Glory

We have confidence that we will leave this old body and put on a new one, live with God in heaven for eternity. And, you can translate that confidence to here and now, that He is here right now, walking with you and living in you, and you are never alone, you never go it alone, you need not walk in your own strength, but His strength that lives with you. He loves you, settle that today. He is working in you to change you into His glory, settle that today (believe it and have confidence), and know there is nothing that can overcome you, because nothing can overcome Him who lives in you. The Lord is good, and good to us!

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

1 John 4:4 (NKJV) ⁴ You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Now this Faith is not Blind Faith

Now we walk by faith, but not by sight. I think there is a great misconception that this is blind faith. The verse does not say we walk by blind faith, and not by sight. God does not, and never has asked us to walk by blind faith. In fact we read that we are supposed to search the scriptures (Acts 17:11). We read that God says, come let us reason together (Isaiah 1:18); and that word there for reason means “to draw conclusion by joint discussion”. The word for reason was also used to mean “to argue”. God says, come reason with me, argue with Me if you want, because I want you to understand the things that I am saying to you, and how they are all meant for the good of you, the best for you.

Acts 17:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

Isaiah 1:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ “Come now, and let us reason together,”

Says the LORD,

“Though your sins are like scarlet,

They shall be as white as snow;

Though they are red like crimson,

They shall be as wool.

Creation versus Evolution

One of those places that the world will challenge that we walk by blind faith is in the area of science, specifically Evolution. Evolution is now taught in our public schools as fact. It is the theory of evolution. A theory is just that, someone’s assumption/guess; it is not a law (the Law of Evolution), for to be a Law it has to be observable and repeatable. That means that every time we run an experiment, we get the same result. The Law of Gravity is that every time an object is released that is heavier than air, it falls downward to the ground. Run that test 1 million times, and 1 million times it falls to the ground. Evolution is just a theory, because its entire basis actually defies Laws that we know are fact (such as Law of Thermodynamics, Law of Biogenesis). Yet, in a recent survey in America by the Pew Research group, 66% of Americans believe in some form of the evolution theory.

Richard Dawkins

Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence. – Richard Dawkins

Let’s Turn to 1 Timothy chapter 6.

(1 Timothy 6:20 KJV) O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

(1 Timothy 6:21 KJV) Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

Intimidated by the Intellectuals – there is no personal God

Paul is writing this young Pastor Timothy to instruct and guide him in the ministry. Timothy being young, would have been easily intimidated by guys that would come on the scene with all this spiritual or academic knowledge. They would say Timothy you don't get it, you haven't been educated by in the finest Universities by the brightest teachers in the world. These so-called intellectuals, the educated, those with the Masters and PHD's, would say Timothy, science disproves conclusively that there is a personal creative God.

Paul says,

(1 Timothy 6:20 KJV) O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

Science Based on Facts

There was a time when science was based on factual evidence, something you could prove, but today it is based many times on nothingness. It can seem so intimidating when they pour all their so-called Scientific Facts on us.

College Education

I'm reminded of the story of the young man who came home from his first semester in college at a big city university, his dad, a blue-collar worker, says how was it son, oh it was great dad we are learning so many things. As the son goes on the dad could detect a tone and attitude that his son was talking down to him because his father never went to college. As the son went on he said dad, science fascinates me, we created an acid in the lab that can eat through anything, and dad we created that right in our very lab he says proudly. Thinking he just proved he is now the smart one of the family and that his father is just a hunk from the steel mills he sits down in front of his father with the "what do you think of that look". The dad shakes his head, that's good son, so what do you keep it in?

Cross-Examined by the Obvious

Evolution, it looks so solid, so sure of itself, until it cross-examined by the obvious. This study will look at some of the obvious errors of science, the major contradictions this evolution theory has against the facts of science. In the end, we will see that both evolution and creation, all start with and come back to.....faith.

Evolution – Replacement to Creation

Evolution comes in with all its facts, now and then they may confess it is just a theory, but go into the high schools and universities and you don't hear them teaching it as an alternative to Creation, but in replacement of Creation.

World Based Energy – Building Block of the Universe

This whole world is energy; therefore everything boils down to 1 law, the First Law of Thermodynamics. If you violate this law, then your theory has to be thrown out. Because without energy, there is no power to perform anything. Energy is the building block of the Universe. Your body, and your car, go nowhere and can do nothing without energy; birth cannot even occur without energy.

The First Law of Thermodynamics

The First Law of Thermodynamics is known as the "Law of Energy Conservation". It states that energy cannot be created nor destroyed; it can only change from one form to another. Simply meaning there is no new energy being created.

Energy for Big Bang

For the Evolution Theory the question has to be asked if energy cannot be created nor destroyed, then where did the energy come for the "Big Bang."

Genesis Account ----Bara/Asah

Interesting, in Genesis God uses two different words for create. One word is to create out of nothing; the other is to create out of existing substance.

(Genesis 1:1 KJV) In the beginning God created (bara) the heaven and the earth.

Bara – means to create out of nothing

(Genesis 1:7 KJV) And God made (asah) the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

Asah – create from existing

Bring Your Own Dirt

The scientist approached God and said, "Listen, we've decided we no longer need you. Nowadays, we can extract stem cells, clone people, transplant hearts, and all kinds of things that were once considered miraculous."

God patiently heard him out, and then said, "All right. To see whether or not you still need me, why don't we have a little man-making contest!"

"Okay, great!" the scientist said.

"Now, we're going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam," God said.

"That's fine," replied the scientist and he bent down to scoop up a handful of dirt.

"Whoa!" God said, shaking his head in disapproval. "Not so fast, pal. You get your own dirt."

4,000 Years ago Bible knew 1st Law

How did the writer of Genesis almost 4,000 years ago know the First Law of Thermodynamics.

Richard Dawkins

Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence. – Richard Dawkins

The Law of Biogenesis / Inorganic to Organic

The Law of Biogenesis says that life can only arise from life which is similar to itself. Evolution defies this law, because they say life evolved from inorganic (no life present) substance into an organic (life present) substance. So you start with nothing, then electrons form, then protons, then atoms, then amino acids, then nucleotides, then proteins, then DNA, then protozoa, then fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and then man.

Evolution – Matter Explodes then Forms Solar System / Then Life Evolves

So in the beginning all this matter was floating around space, then it formed together into a mass and exploded. Over time it formed into the solar systems we know today, and then building blocks of life appeared out of this organic matter, and then life began to evolve.

Glass of Water

Now, If I took a glass of water and said tomorrow a man will pop out of it, you would say I'm crazy. If I said in 1 Billion years a man would pop out, people would say that's possible. Given enough time anything can happen. That is what the backbone of Evolution is, Time, for they need time to cover all the Scientific Laws they defy.

Billions of Years for Evolution

They say evolution is a process that would take billions of years to happen. Given enough time anything is possible, for the Evolution Theory, they estimate the age of the universe between 17 billion years old. Funny thing, when I was in high school they said the age of the universe was 4.5 billion years old. I haven't been out of school that long, hahaha. See the more they learn about science, the more they realize that they have to keep adding billions of years to try to make their theory plausible.

Richard Dawkins

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These 2 Laws Defy Evolution Theory – have to start @ Faith to believe It

Those are the top two, as far as I am concerned the argument is over, you have to accept evolution by faith (because these two laws are defied by the theory).

Couple other things to Consider

Let's Look at a few other things that defy scientific laws, and just play backwards their theory by applying laws we know are true.

The 3rd Law of Motion / No Magic Tornadoes

Here is another interesting one, the 3rd Law of Motion states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, and no effect can be greater than the cause, aka, an explosion won't produce a BMW. This means that a tornado could not come through a junk yard and a fully functional Boeing 747 be the outcome. This law leads us to the question of how can we explain such a highly complex ordered system the universe is in if it all began with a big explosion.

The Universe had to 1st be Set in Place / Theistic Evolution

So if an explosion couldn't form a complex universe, then you are at that someone or something set the universe in place because an explosion forming a complex universe defies this law. There are those who believe in theistic evolution, and that is that God said bang, and then He formed the earth via evolution, but that then defies the six days of creation in the Genesis account.

Genesis 1:1–5 (NKJV) ¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

(Isaiah 48:13 KJV) Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.

(Psalms 147:4 NKJV) He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name.

(Psalms 147:5 NKJV) Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.

(Isaiah 40:22 NKJV) It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

Colossians 1:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Revelation 4:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created."

Why is Literal Creation Important?

Why is literal creation important? Because the Bible has to be taken literal, else man gets to decide what else is acceptable and unacceptable, it is no the Bible judging man, but man judging the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

God is Holding it Together - Our Galaxy

So, just to talk for a moment about how much faith it takes to believe an explosion caused this universe, lets look at how detailed this universe is, and how delicate the balance is. Our Universe is made up of countless Galaxies,

within each galaxy are many solar systems (with each solar system consisting of a burning star and its family of sub planets).

Milky Way / 93 Million Miles / 700 Quadrillion

Our Galaxy is called the Milky Way. It is estimated that there are about 100 billion stars in our galaxy alone. And, are you ready for this, within telescope range there are about 100 million other such galaxies like ours, and who knows how many beyond that. The earth is 93 million miles from the sun, and Pluto which is the last planet in our solar system, on the average stays 3.6 billion miles from the sun, that means this solar system is 7 billion miles in diameter. Consider this is just one solar system that comprises our whole Galaxy. Just take my conservation calculation, if there are 100 million galaxies, each 7 billion miles in diameter, then the universe is 700,000,000,000,000,000, miles in diameter. (Numbers go – Hundreds, Thousands, Million, Billion, Trillion, Quadrillion).

66.600mph / 24hr spin

Here is what is most interesting: The earth orbits the sun one time a year at the speed of 66,600mph. That speed is just enough to offset the gravitation pull of the sun, for if the speed was any greater it would pull away from the sun and freeze, if it was any slower it would pull closer to the sun and be scorched. The earth rotates on its axis every 24 hours, giving equal amounts of light and darkness, if it didn't the earth would either be a desert or a sub-zero wasteland.

9 subplanets / 100million Galaxies in Motion

Even more amazing is the fact that the other 8 planets in our solar system have to stay on their exact paths, if they did not they would collide into each other destroying themselves. If we look at the big picture, every solar system within every 100 million plus galaxies throughout the universe must stay in perfect order or else galaxies would start colliding into galaxy destroying themselves.

Shrinking Sun

Now back to the First Law of Thermodynamics, which states that Energy cannot be created nor destroyed, it can only change properties. The Sun is shrinking at the rate of 0.1 percent per century, or the equivalent of 5 feet per hour. It changes properties as it is absorbed into the other planets (Hence the global warming we are seeing today). At this rate 100,000 years ago the sun would have been twice as large as it is today. The size and radiation of the sun 1,000,000 years ago would have made life on the earth impossible. 20 million years ago the sun would have been large enough to touch the earth. The size of the sun millions of years ago nullifies the Evolution Theory, for they say they needed billions of years for the first life form to develop.

The Earth's Magnetic Field

Analysis and data collected over the last 130 years shows that the earth's magnetic field is getting weaker and weaker every year. If we were to reverse the decay recorded, and add it up backwards, to just 30,000 years ago then the magnetic strength of the earth would have been sufficient enough to generate temperatures in excess of 5000 degree Celsius (9000 Fahrenheit). This temperature is sufficient to melt or vaporize the elements of the earth.

The Moon Dust

When we went to the Moon, all the smart people there at NASA were basing the age of the Universe on millions of years old. Go to the Smithsonian in DC and you will see in the museum of natural history everything is based on an Old earth, billions and billions of years old, all this came from the theory of Evolution. Well with the use of satellite technology the scientist are capable of determining how much cosmic dust filters into the earth atmosphere every year. They calculated that the moon would gather at the same rate as the earth, and based on 4.5 billion years, there would be over 50 feet of cosmic dust. They calculated that in when they designed the Lunar Module, and that is why there are those big pads on the base, so they wouldn't sink into the dust. When they landed they found only a few inches of dust, what would be equivalent to less than 10,000 years of accumulation. Obvious fact, there wasn't billion and billion of years for evolution to happen; the Laws of Thermodynamics prove it.

Evolution is Faith System

Here are a few other areas that prove out evolution is a belief/faith system.

Fossil Record

Darwin said the key to validating the Evolution theory would be the Fossil Record, that there will be transitional fossils. 1859 Darwin wrote, "the Origin of the Species." Still to this day, almost 150 years later, still no transitional form found.

"Lastly, looking not to any one time, but to all time, if my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking closely together all the species of the same group, must assuredly have existed. But, as by this theory, innumerable transitional forms must have existed, why do we not find them embedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth?"

The Missing Link

The missing link in the fossil record - The search continues.

The Monkey Business

Here are some of the attempts to say a transition fossil was found, but in the end it was all monkey business, all proven to be lies and frauds:

Heidleberg Man

Built from a jawbone

Nebraska Man, 1922 (Henry Osborn)

Built from just one tooth

Later discover to be an extinct pig

Pitldown Man, 1912 (Charles Dawson)

Built from a jaw bone of a modern ape. A deliberate fraud. Filed and treated with iron salts

Peking Man, 1921

Evidence disappeared, an outright fraud

Neanderthal man

Found in a cave in the Neander Valley near Dusseldorf. Int'l Congress of Zoology, 1958, determined was an old man suffering from arthritis

Java Man, 1922

Concealed evidence, teeth were of an orangutan.

Geological Column slide

Uses circular reasoning. It is based on the evolutionary theory, that lower simple organisms evolved into more complex organisms. For example protozoa into fish, into amphibian, into reptiles, into mammal, into man. Then they estimate how many billions years it would take to evolve from each stage. Then, when they find a fossil, say a fish, they go to their table and say this fossil is so many billion years old. Our country has bought into it because if you go to the museum of natural History, you will see the Geological Column when you enter the display, and then see every display is dated millions of years old.

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Mutations

Scientific test prove that 99% of mutations are harmful, yet evolution say it is that 1% over billion of years that have created these amazing bodies we live in.

The Human Body / DNA

Just the human eye, amazing, the human eye has 100 million rods and cones, and the neurons perform 10 billion calculations per second. Charles Darwin himself said the chance of the human eye evolving is ludicrous.

(Psalms 139:13 NKJV) For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.

(Psalms 139:14 NKJV) I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

Richard Dawkins

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We Walk By Faith

For us who believe, for most of us we didn't need to know all these things, we saw beyond the universe, we looked at the depth of our sin and what it cost, God's only Son.

(2 Corinthians 5:7 KJV) (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

Bible not a Science Book

The bible isn't a book of science, but when it speaks of science it is always right on:

The Second Law of Thermodynamics

The Second Law of Thermodynamics is known as the "Law of Energy Decay." Every system left to itself will move from order to disorder because the useable/working energy is depleting as it changes from one form/property to another.

Examples

A few practical examples is that new car you paid 20,000\$ for five years doesn't look so new now does it. You that are 40, go look at your High School Class photo. Go look at your kids' room a day after you cleaned it.

Scriptures

The Scriptures confirm and are in agreement that the earth is decaying. The earth and universe is not evolving into higher forms but decaying, and the bible said that is what would happen, long before science ever concluded this law.

(Isaiah 51:6 KJV) Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment,

(Matthew 24:35 KJV) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

(Psalms 102:25 NKJV) Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.

(Psalms 102:26 NKJV) They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed.

(Psalms 102:27 NKJV) But You are the same, And Your years will have no end.

The Earth Hangs on Nothing

(Job 26:7 NKJV) He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing.

This was written 4,000 years ago when the common belief that the earth was held up by four elephants standing on a turtle.

The Round Earth

(Isaiah 40:22 NKJV) It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

Written approximately 2,700 years ago. Yet it was just 1492 Columbus sailed the Ocean Blue, and everyone said he was going to fall off the face of the earth because the earth was flat.

The Earth's Water Cycle

(Ecclesiastes 1:7 NKJV) All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come, There they return again.

Written 3,000 years ago

The Expanding Universe

(Isaiah 51:13 KJV) And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth;

Science has proven that the universe is expanding and this was written 2,700 years ago. The word “stretched forth” means to keep expanding.

Light Divides

(Job 38:24 KJV) By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

The Light spectrum, was only discovered a few hundred years ago.

Paths in the Sea

(Psalms 8:8 KJV) The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

Paths in the sea wasn't known in the shipping industry until only a hundred or so years ago.

The Jet Stream

(Ecclesiastes 1:6 NKJV) The wind goes toward the south, And turns around to the north; The wind whirls about continually, And comes again on its circuit.

Thermodynamic Principles

(2 Peter 3:10 KJV) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Spoken of in the Bible 2000 years ago.

Why do people buy into this

Why do people buy into this, It's a moral question, people will say I have a problem with this, if there is a God the why doesn't He show Himself, then why is their pain and suffering in the world, then why, then why. But the issue is clearly shown in the Bible

Romans 1:20–25 (NKJV) ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. ²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

This Man will not rule over Us

To acknowledge that He does exist, that we are not a happening of random chances, would mean every man is answerable to Him. But for many, they do not want any King in their life, for they want to be on the throne of their lives, doing as they see is reasonable and allowable.

(Luke 19:14 KJV) But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

(John 19:12 KJV) And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

People are so deceived, if only they knew that the greatest freedom comes when you surrender your life to him. They have the God who created the heaven and earth, who died for their sins, ready to live with them.

John 3:16-21

It all comes down to, people love their sin. John 3:19.

John 3:16–21 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

Evolution is a Faith/Belief System

Evolution is a faith and belief system.

This Body isn't Fit for Heaven

He created us, the body we live in is for this planet, we need a new one before we go to heaven. Time to trade it in, for this earth and that is in it is going to fade away like an old garment.

[Study #8 \(5:9-21\)](#)[To Be Well Pleasing to Him](#)**2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.****Not just Pleasing – But Well Pleasing**

So in our context of the last several verses Paul has been talking about the day will come we will put off this earthly body and walk right into heaven and be in the presence of the Lord. Until that day, Paul says his aim (goal, the mark he desires to hit, the bull's-eye of his life) is to be well pleasing to God. Paul says he wants to be “well pleasing”, not just pleasing. Paul isn't content on just meeting minimal requirements, but he wants to go beyond, he doesn't just want American Christianity that we see today where a person is content that he/she at one time prayed a prayer asking Jesus to forgive his sins, but then goes out and lives according to themselves and not the Lord. But, Paul wants to live his life fully and wholly, set-apart for God. He uses the pronoun “we”, as he is saying it is all our desire, it is our aim, it is the bull's-eye we target. And it is, it is why we come here, it why we study this word, because we want to know Him more and we want to become more like Him.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Problem – Danger, No Aim

I think one of the greatest dangers, even then becomes a problem, is that for many there is no aim, no target we aim for. As it has been said, aim at nothing and you will probably hit it. Daily we need to first and foremost determine what is it that we are aiming for today, what are the things that are important, and how will I fulfill them, hit it. Too often there is no aim, so the day becomes aimless, and an aimless day will leave us lacking, sometimes even hurt and depressed, because the emptiness fills us. What a strange concept, to be “filled” with emptiness. Let's take aim today, let's establish our tomorrow, to take aim and hit it, and that is to be well pleasing to our Lord. That is why you are here, I know it, so let's load up.

Let's Pray

Lord we want to be pleasing to You, well pleasing, we want to be more like You, we want to know You more, we want to be conformed into Your image, and we want to be changed from glory to greater glory, just as you have promised, so have Your way with us today we pray in Jesus name, Amen.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**Bema Seat / Olympic Stand**

The Greek word here for judgment is “bema”. So when you hear someone talking about the Bema Seat, this is what they are referring to. Now, this is not to be confused with the great white throne judgment of God in Revelation, chapter twenty, where the sinners will all appear before the judgment bar of God. That's something entirely different than the believer's coming before the bema seat of Christ. This bema seat of Christ is much like the Olympics judges' seat, where the participants in the various contests would come before the bema seat, and the judges would lay on their heads the wreaths, laurel or olive, to indicate their success in their particular event. Instead of the gold, silver, and bronze medals, they received something far more corruptible in those days of the Olympics. They received these wreaths made out of laurel or out of olive branches and all, and they were placed on their head.

Revelation 20:11–15 (NKJV) ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

They train so hard for that Wreath

And that's what Paul was talking about: how that they train, they exercise, they discipline their bodies for a corruptible crown, but we are working for an incorruptible crown. But how they can put us to shame in the discipline that they exercise for that corruptible crown, and how carelessly so often we run the race for the incorruptible crown. These Olympic athletes train for years, most their whole life up to that point, many starting at age as young as five and six. They arise early, they measure their food, they refrain from certain foods and drinks, they retire early in the evening and arise early in the morning, and then they spend hours a day honing and mastering their skill for that day, that one race, to receive that one reward. And, how many relate the pride and joy, it all worthwhile, to represent their country. They have a target, they have taken aim at it, and that is to receive the reward. Paul is making that same relationship to us, walk and live in the same way an Olympic athlete does, running to win! Let us run so that at the end of the race we may hear Him say, well done thy good and faithful servant.

Matthew 25:23 (NKJV) ²³ His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (NKJV) ²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

What is Important

Want to change your life? Each morning before you head out into your day, ask yourself what is important to God today. Evaluate what you think is important to you. lay out a list of all the things you plan on doing for the day, and then ask the Lord how important are these things. Often I will find that my important is not His, and when I look at His important I often see how unimportant many of mine really are, and then I ask the Lord to help me re-write the list according to His will. Then as I go out on my day living for His important, I see how valuable they are to me, how they so much benefit me (even if I am doing something for someone else), and had I stayed on my important I would have never seen them or gained from them. So each day ask the Lord what is important to You Lord, and then Lord help me to make them important to me.

Not to be Confused with Salvation

Now also, do not confuse this with salvation. Salvation is God's gift to you through your faith in Jesus Christ. "By grace are you saved through faith; that not of yourself: it is a gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9). So don't confuse this with your salvation, which many people do. There is nothing I can do of works to enhance my salvation. That's complete. My righteousness is complete in Jesus Christ. And yet, my works are to be judged before the bema seat or the judgment seat of Christ, that I might receive the reward, or in some cases, the loss of reward because of the improper motivations behind the works (so be careful of doing anything in the Name of the Lord for the praises of man – Matthew 6:1-2).

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV) ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

What are the Rewards / Him – 1,000yr Reign

What are the rewards we receive.....He is the reward; just to see His face, to hear those words well done, (back where we began this study) to please Him, that is our reward. To please our Lord, the one who died for us so that we may be free from this curse of sin, who gave His all for us, that is the One we desire to please. To please the one who stormed the gates of hell to set us free, who took the bullet, absorbed the blow, because of His great love for us. To please Him, that is our reward. The pleasing of Him is not the ministry, the things we did for others, but being faithful to Him in setting our lives apart for Him, to not walk the way of the world, to not engage in the things that displease Him, that are sin, but to separate a life unto Him (at whatever the discomforted, sacrifice, cost). There is also the reward of co-reigning with Him in the Millennial Kingdom, when He establishes His kingdom on earth for 1,000 years. We will serve in the capacity we were faithful to here on earth, when we had a chance to be faithful or to do our own thing, and we chose the things of God over the things of the earth, that is what will determine what we do in the 1,000 year period.

Revelation 20:4–6 (NKJV) ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

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

Terror – Fear of Displeasing the Lord / Watch out wrong Concept of God / Failings Judged upon Cross

The “terror” of the Lord is an old English word, and it means the fear of displeasing the Lord. We love Him so much we don’t want to displease Him in any of the things we do. Why is this point so important to you? Because we can have the wrong concept of God that He is going to bring hardship upon us, hurt us, judge us, when we don’t live according to His will. Our failings were judged upon the cross. Our judgment is over, now it is only rewards.

Now our Free-will How “in” we Are / All God you want – Not 1 Drop More

And our free-will gets to choose how much “in” we are, how much of God we want. You can have all of God you want, but not bit more.

As for Judgment – It is Done! / With that Freedom – How could we Live any other Way

But as for judgment, that is past, when He said “it is done”, He meant it, and those words are truth you can stand on today, tomorrow, and..... All your past. With that type of freedom, how could we desire to live any other way, except all in. Are you “all in” for the Lord today? What is important to you today?

John 19:30 (NKJV) ³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:12 For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart.

2 Corinthians 5:13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you.

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

2 Corinthians 5:15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Paul writing 2nd Letter Response to 1st / Men rose Against him – Started a Campaign / Out of Mind - Overboard

When we started our study if you recall, we said that Paul is writing this second letter in a response to the reaction of his first letter. In that first letter Paul had to address some serious issues going on in the Church at Corinth. They were involved in sexual immorality (even things Paul said the unsaved were shocked by), there was strife and division in the church, people were suing each other, people were getting drunk at the church pot-lucks, and then at times when they came together for church it turned into a circus as people were speaking in so-called tongues and saying “thus says the Lord” all the while it was all just them being in the flesh. So Paul wrote them to address

these errors, many people repented and turned from their error; but there was a group of people who did not like Paul's words at all, and they didn't like Paul being an authority and telling them what they should be doing, so these men started a campaign against Paul before the people to tear him down, and lift them up. I believe Paul is referring to them here in this passage, and he is making the point that they are saying this Paul is crazy, he is out of his mind, and he is so over-board on this Jesus stuff. These guys I believe were like your watered down preachers today, who say Jesus loves you, sins are forgiven, you are going to heaven, now do whatever you like, I am not going to put a heavy trip on you because then you will leave the church, stop giving, not like me, and I can't say I have a big following, and if the offerings are down I may actually have to go get a real job.

Paul saying to Faithful – Tell them you Agree

Paul is saying to these faithful followers, when you get the opportunity, when the conversation comes up about living your all for Jesus, turning from the world and turning unto Jesus, turning from sin, living to please the Lord, then Paul is saying..... tell them you agree. Maybe for you it might come up when they mock Christians and/or Christianity at work; tell them you are living the same, that it is not Paul you agree with, but the Lord. If they are mocking a Christian, just say (in a non-confrontational way) well I am a Christian, is that what you see in me. See now Christianity is real to them, for most of them don't know a true Christian living for Jesus, they just know the extreme and obnoxious ones that they see from a distant, but don't know personally. Now, Paul isn't preaching new words, for all he has said you can find called out in the Old Testament scriptures. One of the reasons I believe the name of Jesus, the ways of Jesus, are so shocking to the world (and do you notice that outside of the church walls – say His name in a manner of praise and not cursing, to give God's word any glory, and the room because strangely quiet); I believe because the name of Jesus spoken in a respectable and glorifying way, is so foreign to the Country we live in today. I say speak about Jesus like it isn't out of the ordinary, speak about Him like He is your personal friend, and lets start making Jesus common again, known again, real again.

For you Today – Lift up your Brother/Sister

And, when you get the opportunity, lift up your brother and sisters in the Lord. Any chance you get say how awesome you think they are, and they you are validating that you believe what they believe, and that the two of you are on the same page and belief. I was always dumbfounded by how many Christians I heard slamming Tim Tebow when he was in the NFL, always giving glory to Jesus, upsetting that status-quo of the world thinking we should keep our Jesus in our church and not out in public (but they get to talk about as Bible thumpers), and I heard other Christians make negative comments about him on how he should just shut up and play football. That always dumbfounding me, because the opportunity was lost by that person to validate and confirm, that is what I believe too, Jesus is awesome and He is the way, the truth, and the life..... He is your only way to heaven after life and abundant life while here on this earth.

Love of Christ Compels – Makes me get up in Morning / Never Lost that Awe / God's Wonderful Grace

Verse 14 – the love of Christ compels us (maybe your translation says restrains us): Paul is saying this love of Christ is so awesome I can't but declare it to the world, to my family, to myself. It is what makes me get up in the morning, and it is what makes me tick, for He is awesome. Christ died for all, because all were dead, but since He died, all who will receive Him will live.....and Paul never lost that awe, that the Holy God came and died for Him, so that he would never be separated from Him, and that offer is to all who will take it. The word grace is used 155 times in the NT, Paul uses it 104 of them. Peter uses it like 12 times, and John the apostle of love uses is like 7 times; Paul was in awe by the grace of God, that He would be willing to step out of heaven and take on the sins of Paul, and make him a new creation.

No Longer Live for Self

Verse 15 - and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again – The key word here is live. Want to have life, do you want the abundant life that all the world is looking for and desiring, it is found in one place Jesus Christ, and setting your life apart for Him.

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

2 Corinthians 5:16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Not Just a Promise – but Statement / Passover / Put Away – Made New

The glorious statement of God, this isn't just a promise but a statement from God that He says you are a new creation, all things have passed away (pass-over is literal – which is great word play of the Passover). All the old things have been passed-over, buried, put away as far as east from the west. And not only are they buried, but all things are made new.

The Person to your Left-Right / No Longer Look at them in Flesh – but New Creation / Hold not their Past

And here is a beautiful word the Lord gives us through Paul and that is that we are to look at that person to your left and to your right as if they are a new creation. We are no longer to consider them in the flesh, their faults and their failings, but them as new creations, new beginnings. How brutal it is upon a person when they give their life to Christ but constantly reminded of their past. Equally so, when a brother or sister fails in their Christian walk through sin, and then they are constantly reminded or measured according to that act in the flesh. The Lord says treat them like new creations, treat them like they are made new, don't hold their flesh against them but love and encourage them in their growth.

Don't hold Your Past over You

And you here today, don't hold your past over yourself. You are free of that past, go and live your promise out today, go become that new creation!

Who does he Look Like

A true story from way back. A man grew up as the son of the town prostitute. The town joke was him; they would say, "who does he look like? They would not allow him in the stores or on the walkway. He started to go to church, and he met the Pastor. The Pastor said, "you know who you look like? And the man thought to himself, the last person I expected it from was the Pastor. Pastor said, "you look like the son of God, go claim your inheritance." He was two times elected governor of his state.

No Longer Jesus of Nazareth – but God of Universe

Verse 16 – yet now we know Him thus no longer – We no longer know Jesus as the Babe of Bethlehem, the carpenter of Nazareth, the fisherman of Galilee, but as the God of the universe. He is isn't the dead man on the cross, but the God who could overcome sin and death and is now seated on the throne. Too many people have this fleshly concept of Jesus as great teacher and great man.....and miss out that He is no longer in the flesh, but on the throne, ready to move and work in our lives today.

2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

Not Some Things – but All Things / What is Important

Verse 18 – Now all things are of God - Not some of the things in my life. Some say, "I believe that God should have the place in every man's life and every man should have a place for God". No, God says He wants more than a place in your life. He wants the totality of your life. "All things are of God. So that should bring us back to the place, what really is important, what am I doing with my life and how am I living it, in light of all things are God's.

2 Corinthians 5:19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

God never Left Us – We walked Away

Now, some people talk about God being reconciled to us. Never. God didn't leave us. God didn't turn His back and go away from us. We are the ones that need to be reconciled to God. We are the ones that turned our back on Him and walked away from Him. We are the ones that need the reconciliation. And so Paul's plea, and he said, "I'm doing it in Jesus' place, in His stead. As for God I'm doing it. I'm an ambassador, a representative of God. I'm speaking on His behalf, in His stead. Be ye reconciled unto God."

Ambassador

An ambassador (at time of this writing) was one who was sent to a city and gave the people a message from the king. Their message was the message of the king, not theirs.

Imputed

Verse 19 – imputed – is an accounting term which meant to put a count into a ledger for record. The Lord is saying that there is a way to have our debt of sin wiped from the ledger, the offenses that separate us from the Holy God, and that is through Jesus Christ.

We have a Glorious Ministry of Reconciliation

So this glorious work of reconciliation. God, in His love, created man; created man in His image, in His government of light and life. That man might live in fellowship with God and know the glory, the joy, the beauty of living in fellowship with God. But man turned from that. Turned his back on God. Walked away from God. And he began to experience the miseries of life without God. The emptiness, the hopelessness, the despair of life without God. And God so loved the world that He send His only begotten Son to die for man's sins in order that through the death of Christ, man might be brought back to God or reconciled to God. And so Paul said, "I'm God's ambassador, and I'm here representing Jesus Christ, and I'm saying for Him, 'Be ye reconciled to God.'" Come back into fellowship with God. Come back into the government of light and life. Know again the joy, the glory, the blessing of walking in the Spirit. The life of the Spirit. The life after the Spirit.

Paul Begs

Paul begs, like there is no tomorrow, and that is a fact because we never know our tomorrow, so Paul takes the opportunity he has today, in this letter that he writes to tell all who are reading it that if you are not right with Christ, then get right with Him right now. So too do I implore you, beg you, plead with you..... do it today and don't wait until tomorrow, for we know not what tomorrow will bring.

2 Corinthians 6:2 (NKJV) ² For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Francis Chan

Francis Chan tells the following story:

"As a pastor, I'm often called upon when life "vanishes like a mist." One of the most powerful examples I've seen of this was Stan Gerlach, a successful businessman who was well known in the community. Stan was giving a eulogy at a memorial service when he decided to share the gospel. At the end of his message, Stan told the mourners, "You never know when God is going to take your life. At that moment, there's nothing you can do about it. Are you ready?" Then Stan sat down, fell over, and died. His wife and sons tried to resuscitate him, but there was nothing they could do - just as Stan had said a few minutes earlier."

Matthew 10:32–33 (NKJV) ³² "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

"[During Stan's memorial service] I asked everyone to imagine what it must have felt like for Stan. One moment, he was at a memorial service saying to the crowd, "This is who Jesus is!" The next, he was before God hearing Jesus say, "This is who Stan Gerlach is!" One second he was confessing Jesus; a second later, Jesus was confessing him! It happens that quickly. And it could happen to any of us. In the words of Stan Gerlach, "Are you ready?"

(pg. 46-47 of Crazy Love by Francis Chan)

Stan' glorious Death / Fragility of Life / You might not Finish this Chapter

It moved me deeply to think of Stan's glorious death. To have the last words on your lips be a witness for Jesus and of Jesus. And then I began to ponder the flimsiness of life. We are truly fragile. Though we're built sturdily, there

are a million ways to die and death could come at any time. The title of Chan's chapter is even "You might not finish this chapter." As Greg Laurie has said many a times, on each tombstone is a birth date and a death date, and a dash in between. We have no say over the first date or the last date, but we have all the choice of what we will do with that dash in-between. Beloved, what will you do with your dash?

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Becoming Right

Righteousness simply means "being right with God". Sin keeps a person from being right with God, because the Lord is too pure to look upon sin (Hab 1:13 and Is 59:1-2). A visual illustration would be a man/woman clothed in a perfect and spotless shiny white t-shirt, and then when faced with the choice of sin (whatever that may be – just look at 10 Commandments), they chose sin. At that point they are now clothed with a black shirt. Try as they may to get back to that white shirt again, to get clean so they can come into presence of God, they in and of themselves cannot get that black shirt off. But God, who is rich in His mercy and love, He takes off His royal robe and then steps into man's world. God comes to man and says let me take that black shirt off of you, I have the power to take it off of you, will you let me take it, to which every man has their choice if they want it off or they want to keep it. But that black shirt has to go somewhere, and what Jesus did was put it on Himself, absorbed the wrath that is due for breaking the Law of God. Upon death into the grave He went, down into hell He would go, for the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). But on the 3rd day by the power of God, the power no man has, Jesus rose from the dead....and He rose in that perfect white glorious t-shirt, leaving behind in the pit of hell that black shirt. Then Jesus put His royal robe back on, ascended into heaven and is seated on His throne again. And before him, there is a sea of people worshipping and praising Him, and in that sea is only white, pure and spotless, white shirts. No darkness to be found. If you have not traded places (shirts if you will) with Jesus, then I plead with you that today you will. And then, if He has died for us, then we ought to live (fully) for Him (2 Cor 5:14-15).

***Habakkuk 1:13 (NKJV)** ¹³ You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?*

***Isaiah 59:1–2 (NKJV)** ¹ Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.*

***2 Corinthians 5:14–15 (NKJV)** ¹⁴ For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*

Chapter 6

[Study #9 \(6:1-18\)](#)**Living All In**

As I began the study of this chapter on Monday I thought the title could be called “Living All In”, as Paul lays out how we as believers are to apply all this grace and love that we have received and live personal lives sold out for Him, and as opportunity arises make an impact on those God brings into our life.

The Week

But as the week developed this chapter seem to come into a whole new meaning and urgency to be living and sold out for Jesus. Here was another horrific week in this Country, as yesterday close to home 2 people killed and 1 takes own life at the mall just 15 minutes from here at the Columbia mall. On Monday a student was shot and critically wounded at a university outside Philadelphia (Widener). Tuesday a gunman killed a student at Purdue University. On Friday a student was shot dead at South Carolina State University. America is reeling, the places that are pictures of America have become places of tragedy. The universities, a place of hope of a future, a place of stepping into adulthood, now a place of tragedy. The American Mall a place to kick back, treat oneself, meet up with friends and enjoy some time after a week of work or school. We see more than ever the brevity of life, the madness of the world, and the extremes of the world. What is the answer to these things, who has the answers? Always, the answer is Jesus. And it is time for all of us, to be all in, to live set wholly apart for Jesus, the answer and fulfillment to all of life.

Let's Pray

2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

With all these Declaration – Don't Receive it In Vain

All that Paul has said up to this point (these 5 chapters), all these wonderful promises, statements, declarations about you:

- [Verse 5:1](#) – when this earthly tent is destroyed we will have a new building from God, not made with hands but eternal in the heavens
- [Verse 5:7](#) – for us to be absent from this body we will be present with the Lord
- [Verse 5:17](#) – That anyone who is in Christ is a new creation, and the old things have passed away, all things have been made new.
- [Verse 5:21](#) – because He who knew no sin, became sin for us, so we may become the righteousness of God.

That with all this grace we have received, don't waste it, don't make it common, the word vain means “to make common”. The Holy and Awesome God lives inside of all you who have asked Him to become Lord and Savior. God is YOU! Do you realize your worth, your value? You are a treasure because you contain and carry the greatest treasure. There is nothing common about you, and we therefore cannot live as if we are just like everyone else because we are not, the Living God lives in us.

2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.”

As Workers Together with Him / Ambassadors

Verse 6:1 - We then, as workers together with Him – back in chapter 5 we see we are ambassadors for Christ, and what a glorious calling and honor that is, to get to serve in His name, to be His hands and feet to the world around us. But notice here that it says we are workers “together with Him”.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Results are not on Me – I am Just a Helper

We are workers together with Him, and this blesses me greatly, and encourages me tremendously, because I know that there is no pressure on me for results in ministry, as I am just a helper, that all the ministry really falls on God for He is God, I just get to go along for the ride and enjoy being a part of what He is desiring to do.

Secondly – the Promise of Intimacy

But secondly, I see a spiritual apple here, a golden one at that, and that is that there is a promise of intimacy with the Lord by serving and working with Him in the ministry (whether that be washing feet, building an orphanage, loving on some little ones, teaching a Bible study, or handing a tract and sharing at the garage as my tire gets repaired). If I am working together with Him, then that means I am with Him. Anytime I am with Him, I will be blessed.

I see a Pattern of those that Drift Away / Drift into Mediocrity

See there is definitely a pattern that I have seen as I watch Christians, and that is the ones that drift away, walk away, lose interest in the Lord, find the world more appealing, whether young or old, are the ones who are not working together “with” the Lord. On the other hand, I am amazed at how blessed and filled people are who are working “with” the Lord. Now are they filled with the spirit and thus they serve, or do they serve and thus get filled? Don’t know, don’t need to know, does one feed the other, maybe. Or is it that they are filled so they serve, and they serve and are filled some more, and there is a continual and constant flowing and unity and intimacy with the Lord..... yea I think so. The people working with the Lord, stay with the Lord, and are less prone to be drawn into the vanity and emptiness of the world, and they are working and walking with Jesus, and don’t have time for the things of the world. But be careful you who are not involved in anything, for I have seen too many times that person slowly, but eventually, drift away from the Lord, or into some type of mediocre relationship with the Lord.

Parents get your Kids Involved

Parents, get your kids involved in serving early and often. We live in a day when everything is always about them, from video games to television. They can become so self-absorbed, and then that is the beginning and basis of their whole life. Take them to the soup kitchen, take them to the thrift store to help sort clothing, take them to the outreaches, bring them to help clean the church (they can empty garbage cans – doesn’t have to be major). And then when you are done, take them to Burger King and buy them a milkshake, sit and talk about what you just did, and turn it into a family time. Family time doesn’t always have to be the movies and the beach. Get them serving, so they develop a servant’s heart. There is nothing that compares (all our family vacations) than when we do things for the Lord together as a family.

When Share – We give a Person not a Philosophy / The Promise of Draw Near – He will Draw Near

And listen to this awesome information, when you share Jesus Christ, you know it will work, because we are not giving people a philosophy, but a person. When we share Him with someone, He is there. We don’t give them just words, but the Word that became flesh, willing became flesh all the way to the brutal cross. We can declare to people, and know it is true, draw near to God and He will draw near to you. What better thing could you give someone, whether the broken hearted widow, the wife whose husband is deployed, the person who says life is so empty..... We get to give them Jesus, knowing if that person will reach out to Him, they don’t have to reach far, because He is right there before them, and we got to be the one who brought Him to them.

James 4:8 (NKJV) ³ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Revelation 5 – The Elder Comforts

I am reminded of the story in Revelation 5 where John is weeping because no one is worthy to take the scroll, the title deed to the earth and redeem the earth, but then one of the elders steps forth, maybe even putting his arm around John’s shoulder, and says don’t weep John, here comes Jesus, He can solve the problem, He will overcome, take hope John, look at Jesus. See we can do that, it is that simple, we can put our arm around a person, we can say take hope, look at Jesus, and the moment that we do, Jesus appears in their life, and is there before them. Ask people, can I pray for you, let me share a word of hope. What a privilege we have to work with Him.

Revelation 5:4–7 (NKJV) ⁴ So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

2 Corinthians 6:2 For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Isaiah 49:8

Quoting Isaiah 49:8.

There comes Day when Grace no More

But, that grace, that free offer for salvation, will not always be there. There comes a day we know not when, there comes a place we know not where, but there comes a time where God’s Spirit will no longer call out to a man. I don’t believe that God has a set number of times He calls unto a person, but that a person’s heart becomes so hardened by the continual rejection of the witness and calling from God, that they have reached that place of not being open to the Lord. That is called the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which is not cursing or doing some horrible deed, but the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is to reject the witness of the need for a Savior.

***Genesis 6:3 (NKJV) 3** And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”*

***Matthew 12:31–32 (NKJV) ³¹** “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. ³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*

Words are not a Relationship / It is a Marriage

May I take a moment to make this clear, “words are not a relationship”. Saying some prayer, raising ones hand, is not salvation. Salvation is entering into a personal relationship with God. God is real, He laughs, He rejoices, He hurts, He can be grieved. He is real, He will draw near. He is not some cosmic God, not some distant God, but a God that draws near and wants a personal and intimate relationship with His creation. Salvation is a marriage covenant, hence why we are called the Bride of Christ. I have a marriage not only because Renee accepted my offer of marriage, but because we share life together, we are faithful to one another, we spend our life together. It would be no marriage if I never came home, if I went out with other woman, and I never talked with her. A person who thinks they are saved because one day they said “I do” to God’s offer for salvation, but then comes home, never has time for Him, and are living in continually adultery before Him by not being faithful to His word, they deceive themselves if they think they are saved.

***Revelation 19:6–8 (NKJV) ⁶** And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

***Revelation 22:14–17 (NKJV) ¹⁴** Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. ¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*

So Paul reminds us of the Urgency – Today is the Day / Football Player

As we work with Him,” Paul says, “I remind you of the immediacy, the urgency of receiving what the Lord wants to do for you.” Truly, now is the time for each of us to be saved—not just born again eternally, but to be saved from that which would hold us back presently. We use this verse to tell people they need to make a decision today, but the verse also applies to us that we don’t always have tomorrow to share this good news, because whether age, accident, or circumstances, today can be the last breath. That doesn’t just apply for them, but us who have the message for them. I saw an interview this week about one of the players in the Super Bowl, and they had a video of him with tears streaming down his face during the National Anthem of the AFC Championship game; they asked him why he was crying, and he said, “because you never know when this may be your last National Anthem”. He went on to say one play, one weird twist, and your career could be over, so play that game like it is your last game,

the last time you will stand on the field and listen to the National Anthem. Good illustration for us Christians. Let's be all in, let's live today like it is our last National Anthem, let's be set apart for Him in all that we do, whether personal purity, witnessing, serving, whatever it may be.

This week Reminder

And this week, 15 minutes from home, a mall many of us go to regularly, reminds us how today is the day. Youth you always think you have more time, but if you look at these horrific events over the past couple years, the youth are the majority of the casualties. Today is the day!

Just One More

How do we reconcile all this violence and evil in the world, and a God of love? Right here, because there will come a time where God will say "enough", and the grace and opportunity to receive Christ will be gone (as My Spirit will not always strive with man). In my mind (this isn't doctrinal), but the Lord is ready to say "enough", but then He is always saying, "just one more".

2 Corinthians 6:3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.

Justin Bieber

Justin Bieber was in the news, drunken drag racing in Miami. The "Heartbreaker" singer spoke about scandals with US Weekly in an interview last March. Justin is a professing born-again believer, who was raised in a Christian home.

- "I'm young and I make mistakes. That's part of growing up," he said. "I mess up sometimes, but I learn from my mistakes."
- "I'm a good person and I have a big heart," he added. "I love God, and I'm grateful for the blessings he has given me. I don't plan on wasting the opportunity. At the same time, I'm young and I want to have fun. I don't think there is anything wrong with that."

Terrible witness, absolutely. What a mixed message he sends to the youth that idolize him and follow his every move. But, is our hypocrisy any less stumbling? How about our kids watching us, how about the coworkers, how about the neighbors. I remember one neighbors we had who had a home bible study on Wednesday and keg parties on Fridays.

May our Lives not Diminish Witness

We all have a ministry that we work together with Christ, and if not, find one and do it with all you have. And we are to live in such a way that we may not cause offense, which means "to cause to stumble". Because of the importance and urgency of our calling, we cannot allow anything into our lives or ministry that would give people a reason not to respond.

Live all In – in All Things

This is living for God "All In", these are the things and how a believer in Christ are to live.....daily, continually, ten out of ten times.

Now Verse 4-7 / List what to be Blameless In / Notice the Word "in" and "by"

In verses 4-7, Paul gives us a listing of things we are to be blameless in, that we are not to cause others to stumble because we did not handle and protect these things as the precious treasure they are. Notice as we read the proposition of "in" and "by". The "in" was what he endured in the service to the Lord, and the "by" is how he served others in his service to the Lord.

2 Corinthians 6:4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,

2 Corinthians 6:5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

2 Corinthians 6:6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

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

We all Ministers / No Seminary Needed – Here are some On-line Courses

Verse 4 – but in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God – Ministers of God Paul is saying all of us are, and here what we need to master. Paul did not go to a seminary, and you don't have to either to be used by the Lord, but here are some on-line classes you can take to fulfill your ministry.

Daily Conditions

Here he lays out daily conditions we may encounter and thus have to endure, and not fail in so not to cause someone to stumble:

- Verse 4 - in much patience – We must be patient. We have to be gentle and longsuffering with the people we are reaching out to as we can't expect things to happen immediately. That includes ourselves, as to how many times I have seen people trying to force their way into a ministry place/position that God has not ordained for them at that time, and it causes a tremendous mess, and people get turned off by the person and say that is why I won't ever be a Christian. Moses spent 40 years being prepared by God, for when he tried to do things ahead of God he made a mess. Moses buried one Egyptian in his attempt and made such a mess. But when it was God's timing, 40 years later, he would bury the whole Egyptian army in the Red Sea.
- Verse 4 - in tribulations – it won't be easy, be prepared for that, and when hard times come you won't be surprised, you will just know it comes with the territory. Satan is not happy with you reaching and ministering to people, and will come against you. God allows it because that is what makes us relatable, we don't have the perfect life wither and we can know pain and heartache, and therefore our heart can connect to the people we minister to.
- Verse 4 - in needs, - God allows leanness so we learn to trust and seek Him, and not our own resources and ingenuity. Paul didn't beg for money and thus cause people to say it is all about money, no thanks. Paul trusted and looked to the Lord and didn't lay trips on the people for money.
- Verse 4 in distresses, - no promises it will be easy.
- Verse 5 - in stripes, - no promises it will be easy.
- Verse 5 - in imprisonments, - no promises it will be easy.
- Verse 5 - in tumults, - no promises it will be easy.
- Verse 5 - in labors, - no promises it will be easy.
- Verse 5 - in sleeplessness, - Paul lost sleep because of such a burden, concern, and worry for the people.
- Verse 5 - in fastings; - not spiritual fast Paul is talking about, but not having anything to eat.

See in all these things you can know all the Bible verses to quote to people, but Paul didn't just know them, He lived them. No one could ever truly challenge Paul's heart. And as for you, you may not face stripes and imprisonment, but you will face rejections and mocking, sneering and even hostility, but when you keep on going, when you keep on loving, no one can lay a charge against you, if they are truly honest they will say, you do it because you believe and it and truly do care.

Invest In / Promises of Resources

What we see below are many of the fruits of the Spirit, and things we need to examine ourselves on, pray the Lord fill us and supply us with, so that we may minister and serve wholly and fully. I might add, that since we minister with the Lord, these things are not just things we aim for and work to grow in, but they are also then resources that are promised to us as we serve alongside the Lord.

- Verse 6 - by purity, - we must be pure, we can't even have a hint of impurity else people will know us as hypocrites.
- Verse 6 - by knowledge, - study to show thyself approved (2 Timothy 2;15)
- Verse 6 - by longsuffering, - there is patience again, it must be a key characteristic of serving.
- Verse 6 - by kindness, - just being sweet and gentle with people, there is no place for harshness in the ministry.

- Verse 6 - by the Holy Spirit, - God's Spirit moving through us, not our flesh.
- Verse 6 - by sincere love, - not just love, but sincere love, genuine and real.
- Verse 7 - by the word of truth, - the willingness to speak it, even when it is unpopular
- Verse 7 - by the power of God, - when a person can not only see it is all the power of the Lord, but really believe it is all the power of the Lord, then there is no fear of stepping out and doing anything for the Lord because we don't put ourselves into the equation, but just know it is all the Lord.
- Verse 7 - by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, - right hand and left hand, everywhere you turn, anyway they look at us, they see a person who is living and in a state of being sold out to the Lord

Verse 8-10 / God Knows

And now in verses 8-10, Paul lays out the contrast of so often how the world views us, but then contrasts with how God views us, and they are so dynamically different so the Lord wants to remind us of exactly how He sees us and how pleased and blessed He is with us for our desire to serve alongside of Him.

2 Corinthians 6:8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;

2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed;

2 Corinthians 6:10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

The Contrasts

Starting in verse 8 Paul starts giving contrasts of what he was, yet how he was viewed and treated, but still kept by God even in spite of the view many people had of him.

- Verse 8 - by honor and dishonor, - Paul didn't care about titles and positions, just serving His Lord. The men of the world want titles and the best seats in the house, whereas Paul just wanted to see people saved and grow in the knowledge of the Lord. Paul wasn't honored by man, and God recognized they were dishonoring him.
- Verse 8 - by evil report and good report; - People made accusations against him, but Paul knew what the Lord thought of him.
- Verse 8 - as deceivers, and yet true; - People laid their charges, but Paul had a clear conscience
- Verse 9 - as unknown, and yet well known; - Did Paul finish his education with a Master of Theology or a Doctor of Divinity degree? No, he finished being thought a deceiver, as unknown—not received by the intellectuals in Jerusalem. Although Paul may have been unknown in Jerusalem, he was well known in hell.... (Going about casting out demons, the sons of Sceva said, "We adjure you in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches, Come out." "Jesus we know," the demons answered, "and Paul we know. But who are you?" (see Acts 19:15). The demons understood Paul was a real threat, that he was one who would impact their kingdom of darkness and death and beat it back in the name of Jesus Christ. It is a great thing to be known in heaven, and how awesome it is to be known in hell because you are considered a threat to Satan's kingdom.
- Verse 9 - as dying, and behold we live; - Paul knew he had no greater reason to live, even if and when people said you are throwing your life away for a wasted cause.
- Verse 9 - as chastened, and yet not killed; - Paul saying it is hard, but God is in ultimate control, and no one can touch me unless He allows it.
- Verse 10 - as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; - Paul's heart was heavy as he saw people walk away and reject, yet he like the Lord rejoices over the one. Can you continue on believer for that one? The question has been asked, if you had 2 bottles to catch your tears, one for the tears you shed regarding yourself, and one for the tears you shed for others, how would they compare?
- Verse 10 - as poor, yet making many rich; - poor on earth, turning down being top dog at the temple, but Paul knew he was the richest man on earth.
- Verse 10 - as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. – The world has nothing, it is all fleeting, only the things of Christ will last.

We've Only One Life ~ It Soon Will Be Past ~ Only What's Done For Christ Will Last

2 Corinthians 6:11 O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.

2 Corinthians 6:12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.

2 Corinthians 6:13 Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.

We must be Open and Transparent

If we are going to live for Jesus, we need to be transparent. Paul was fully open, Paul totally laid out his heart to these people. He left nothing hidden, he was totally real with them. Be open to them, let them know your life is not perfect, you have your everyday trials and struggles just like they do. Transparency opens the doors for "real" relationships.

But not TMI

This doesn't mean that we give them every detail, especially TMI (Too Much Information). Be relatable, but that doesn't mean everyone needs to know every detail of your personal life.

Corinthians needed to be Open

And, Paul is saying to these people, you needed to be open, you need to be honest with yourself. Apparently there are some folks in the church who are using Paul as an excuse for their own personal disobedience. They must have been saying things like, I can't go to church anymore since I had such a bad experience with Paul, that really turned me off. Paul is so legalistic it is stifling, I feel this continual judgment, all the people are judging me. These people only used it as an excuse because they didn't want to let go of their worldly living, and we see that is the reason because Paul immediately goes into the next verses to separate themselves from the world.

Now Verse 14

Now in verses 6:14 – 7:1, the Lord speaks of possibly the greatest reason of all why we don't and can't live all in for Him, and that is being yoked to this world. We can see from the context that the church in Corinth was still struggling with separating themselves from the world and being all-in for Jesus. So too it is today as people get saved, excited about being saved, but then struggle to separate from the world. Paul gives strong warning that they must, it isn't optional, for to not separate will ultimately end bad for them.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

2 Corinthians 6:15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

Special Situation / The Dice are Loaded

There are many people who believe that theirs is a special case not really covered by the scripture, and thus, they can do what they please because it really doesn't apply to their situation. God doesn't, God wasn't really thinking of their situation when He gave the rule. And thus, there are many people who enter into unequal yokes with unbelievers, believing and hoping that things are going to equal out, that God will take care of it. There is an old Greek saying: "The dice of the gods are loaded." That is, you cannot go against God and win. You cannot go against the word of God and win. Over the years of pastoring, I've had so many young people come in. Oh, they are so in love. Oh, he's the man of their dreams. There's only one thing wrong: he isn't a Christian. "But I know that as I live the life of Christ before him and I walk in love and in meekness and all, I know he'll come to Jesus." And I said, "Yes, but the scripture says, 'Be not unequally yoked with an unbeliever.'" "Oh, but you know, we love each other. And I know he's going to change." And they are determined to marry in spite of the counsel of the word of God otherwise. And in scores of case after case after case after case after case, a year, two years down the road, I sit with the same young lady who is completely torn up. "Oh, I wish I had listened to you. I'm living in a hell. I don't think I ever really loved him. Oh, this is horrible. Do I have to stay in this state?" The answer is yes by the way, they are to stay with the vow they made. And their lives messed up because they thought that they could go against God's command and win and come out ahead. "Be not unequally yoked together with an unbeliever."

1 Corinthians 7:12–14 (NKJV) ¹² But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. ¹³ And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. ¹⁴

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

Business

Now, this does not and is not limited to just marriage. This goes to many different types of yokes where you are brought together with an unbeliever, and you are always in an unequal situation. Watch it. You're always in an unequal situation if you're yoked with an unbeliever. You see, they don't follow the same rules that you follow. They don't live by the same ethic that you live by. And to lie won't bother them. To cheat won't bother them. To fudge won't bother them; but it will you. So many businessmen who have come to bemoaning the fact that their partner wants to do that which is illegal. "They don't want to report all of the profits. They want to keep a double set of books. What shall I do?" They've entered into an unequal yoke. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness?"

Deuteronomy 22

The idea of do not be unequally yoked together is based on Deuteronomy 22:9, which prohibited yoking together two different animals. It speaks of joining two things that should not be joined.

Deuteronomy 22:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ "You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled. ¹⁰ "You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. ¹¹ "You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together.

Who Influences Who

But Paul means much more here than only marrying an unbeliever. It really 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 are joining together with unbelievers in an ungodly way. This speaks especially to the issue of influence. Paul is not suggesting that Christians never associate with unbelievers (he makes this clear in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13). The principle is that we are to be in the world, but not of the world, like a ship should be in the water, but water shouldn't be in the ship! But if the world is influencing us, it is clear we are unequally yoked together with unbelievers. And this 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. v. We all like to believe that we can be around ungodly things as much as we want, and that we are strong enough to ward off the influence. But we must take seriously the words of Scripture: Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits" (1 Corinthians 15:33). It needs to come back to the simple question from Romans 12:2: are we being conformed to this world or are we being transformed by the renewing of your mind

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NKJV) ³³ Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

1 Corinthians 5:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰ Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

Let me Kick it up a Notch

And let me kick this up a notch to give you young people some good advice, you even have to be careful about being unequally yoked when you date a believer. They may just be lukewarm mediocre Christians, and they are totally going to make you lukewarm too. They would rather go to the game than to church, they would rather watch the movie than read the word, they would rather go do all their own recreational things than serve.....leaving you living just like you had married an unbeliever. I have put together a counseling guide for pre-marriage that is called 25 things that make a difference, and I would recommend you go point by point if you are serious about marrying that person.

2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

2 Corinthians 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

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

Verses Speak for themselves

The verses are enough commentary on themselves:

- We are the temple that the Living God dwells in
- He promises to walk amongst us
- To our God
- And He says come out from the world

God Will not Promise Blessings

God cannot and will not promise blessings to anyone who is in open and willful disobedience to His word.

We are to Live Different than the World

So, God's call for His people to separation. You are to be different from the world. You cannot have real communion with the world. You have no common ground of meeting. You're trying to bring two diverse situations together. You're trying to join together the life of the flesh with the life of the Spirit. They cannot co-mingle. It's an unequal yoke. So, God's call for you is to come apart. "Be separate, saith the Lord. Don't touch the unclean thing. And God said, I will be a Father, and ye will be my sons and daughters." As a child of God, you do live different than a person who is not a child of God. You're expected to live differently. Living by different standards, living for different purposes

Chapter 7

[Study #10 \(7:1-16\)](#)

Overview why Letter Written

So the context of this epistle, and this chapter we come to in it, is that Paul had written a letter to the church in Corinth (we know the letter as 1 Corinthians). In that letter Paul had to address some tough issues, as the church was involved in sexual immorality, drunkenness, suing one another, and all the while the church thought themselves to be wise, full of grace, hey we aren't one of those legalistic churches. Paul writes to correct them on their error, to bring them back to the holiness of God, and to not take the grace of God in vain, to think that God's grace is a free pass to do anything their flesh desired.

Some Repented – Some Rebelled

Some of the people repented (as we will see in this chapter), but some totally were outraged by the letter, and started a campaign against Paul, and started to say things about Paul to diminish his authority as an apostle. It is, I hate the message, so if I can tear down and discredit the messenger, then I can be relieved of his/her message. And, many of times a person won't actually disagree with the message, but use the attack on the messenger as a way to divert attention away from the messenger, and put the topic elsewhere.

Paul is Pouring his Heart Out

In verse 2 he will say "open your hearts to us". Paul is pouring his heart out to the people of Corinth. Paul will in this chapter tell the people I wrote those things because I love you, because I want the best for you, because to continue in those things would not bring you closer to Christ but actually draw and drive you away.

We can Learn Heart God wants for Us in this Chapter / Desire to have this Heart

We can learn so much in this chapter about the heart of God, and the heart that God wants us to have. Paul, as we read in this chapter, his heart is a reflection of the heart of God. I don't really think that we can learn this heart, that if we study these verses today we say to ourselves "ok this is how my heart is going to be, and these are the things I am going to start to do". I don't think we can be taught such a heart, but that it is given to us by the Lord. My prayer for us today is that God would stir a desire within us, to desire to have such a heart as we see in Paul, a heart that has unconditional love and acceptance, a heart that loves enough to speak the truth, but speak it in such gentleness and kindness, the words are just a reflection of what is in our heart.

Let's Pray

Verse 1 (context Chap 6)

Well verse one is really still part of the context of chapter 6, and in that chapter was a calling of God to separate ourselves from the world, to be "all-in", to live a life that is fully and totally separated unto Him. Although it may seem that Paul is moving on to a totally new thought starting in verse 2 of this chapter, when we study through the chapter and wrap the whole chapter together, we will see how much it ties together.

2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

2 Corinthians 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

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

Father / Sons & Daughters

Just camp on that statement, that promise, God says I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughter. He is so near to you today, He desires to be so intimate with you, He is not a distant and far away God, but a God that is near, a God that is here (literally right now), drawing near to you. Drawing near to you like a father. I don't know what type of relationship you had with your father growing up, today as you are now an adult, but if that relationship was distant or strained, please don't associate or confuse your heavenly father from

your earthly father. Your Father in heaven loves you, is passionate about you, and wants intimacy with you right now today, tomorrow, and every day thereafter.

Standard is Perfection

Verse 1 - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God – He says separate yourself from the world, come into perfecting holiness in the fear of God. The standard is not separate a little, or mostly, everything but one or two things (those things that are so near to you, your special circumstance, that thing you feel you can't stop even if you wanted to), but to separate from "everything". Because God wants to "perfect" you, which means to "complete" you, and those things will always keep you from being all and everything God wants and desires for you to be and become.

The Vineyard

I am reminded of the parable the Lord tells in Luke 13, although the parable is directly referring to Israel, it is applicable to each person individually.

Luke 13:6–9 (NKJV) ⁶ He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' ⁸ But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'" "

God is always Digging – wanting to make Beautiful Vineyard

God is always digging around in our lives. He is picking out what we call a flower, and the Lord says it is a weed. You know there are actually some pretty weeds, they have a blossom on them and everything, I sometimes have a hard time distinguishing the difference between them and a flower, there are times I say to myself just let it grow it has a nice color to it. But I have to root it out early, even if it has a bloom on it, because the thing about weeds are that have an aggressive root system, they have a tremendous resistance to insects and droughts; flowers die with a tiny bug and 2 days without rain it seems, but the weeds don't even flinch. It is because their root system are so aggressive and they have to be weeded out early because eventually their roots will choke out the roots of the flower and the fruit. So too it is with sin. So God not only digs up the ground around us, but He also fertilizes around us so that we may grow. And He is so patient, even when fruit is barren or slow in coming, the Lord is always just saying just a little longer, I know fruit will come.

When God is Done – it is Amazing Garden / One that He loves to walk in

And when He is done, He produces an amazing garden, tremendous fruit, and a garden that He loves to walk in just like with Adam, back in the garden, where the Lord walked with Adam in the cool of the day. How Adam must have looked forward to those walks, but let us not forget Adam (man) was the crown of God's creation, all creation was for Adam (man), so that the Lord may walk and fellowship with man. Prepare ye a garden for the Lord to walk in my brothers and sisters.

Genesis 3:8–9 (NKJV) ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

Verses 2 and On

Now in verse 2 and on Paul just pours out his heart to the people.

2 Corinthians 7:2 Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one.

The Challenges

As we develop over the next few chapters we see some of the attacks that were made against Paul. The people who didn't like his direct and correcting letter are trying to destroy the messenger. They were saying things such as he is harsh, unloving, on a power trip, in it for the money. Paul says I didn't do this for my sake, I didn't speak those words to build myself up or to gain profit at your expense, but as he will go in verse 3, because I love you, I love you to the point I would die for you.

2 Corinthians 7:3 I do not say this to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together.

Can't be Taught – but Given

Again a heart like this can't be taught, it has to be given to us from the Lord, ohh Lord give us the desire to have such a heart that we would cry out to You to give us such a heart.

2 Corinthians 7:4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.

2 Corinthians 7:5 For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.

2 Corinthians 7:6 Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

Opportunity in Troas – but was Looking for Titus

To recap, Paul was in Troas, and an opportunity was given to him to preach, but his spirit was so heavy, because Titus wasn't there, who we can deduce was to meet him and bring him news of the church in Corinth. Paul was restless, concerned, so concerned for the condition of the church in Corinth, for the believers there, that he left the wide open door provided for him, and went looking for Titus in Macedonia. Titus it appears was supposed to be in Troas (in the area of modern day Turkey), he wasn't there but it appears he was in Macedonia (modern day Yugoslavia – which is in southeast Europe), so Paul left Troas and went all the way up to Macedonia, to find Titus and say hey how are the people at the church in Corinth.

2 Corinthians 2:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, ¹³ I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.

Heart that is Given

You can't develop or teach yourself this kind of heart, no seminars or seminaries can produce such a heart, it has to be given by the Lord. Will you ask the Lord for such a heart today? It comes with a price, because as you see, it can cause you heaviness, a burden of thinking of others beyond yourself and your family. At times you will feel crushed and downcast, burdened by the people that are on your heart. Your heart..... what type of heart.....a heart that is just like the Jesus'.

God who Comforts the Downcast

Notice verse 6 says "God who comforts the downcast". He does, and He will to you.

2 Corinthians 7:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

Before Moving On – Look at Paul's Fears

Now before we move on I want to make a point about something. Look at where Paul is, he says we were troubled, we had no rest, outside were conflicts, inside were fears. Ever have times like that in your life? Did you hear other Christians say just shake it off, Christians are not to have fears and anxiety. Christians who are depressed are in sin they say. Or, maybe it is you yourself that you tell yourself those things. Back in chapter one Paul said he was at the point of despair (which means to give up) and we do not know what was going on in his life, but he said he felt there was no hope. Paul is opening his heart up to them, to us, so we can see that depression, discouragement, sadness and sorrow are not excluded from the Christian, that we are not immune from these things.

2 Corinthians 1:8 (NKJV) ⁸ For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.

Spurgeon

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), known as the Prince of Preachers in the 1800's, said the following:

I find myself frequently depressed - perhaps more so than any other person here. And I find no better cure for that depression than to trust in the Lord with all my heart, and seek to realize afresh the power of the peace-speaking blood of Jesus, and His infinite love in dying upon the cross to put away all my transgressions.

Fits of depression come over the most of us. Usually cheerful as we may be, we must at intervals be cast down. The strong are not always vigorous, the wise not always ready, the brave not always courageous, and the joyous not always happy.

You are not Alone

So there is Paul, there is Spurgeon, you are not alone.

Elijah

The great prophet Elijah asked the Lord to take his life. James said we have like natures. Well, Elijah had reached a place where he actually prayed and asked God to take his life, for he couldn't go on another day, thought all was lost and hopeless. And if you remember the story, it was after his great victory on Mt. Carmel against the priest of Baal and King Ahab. After Ahab's wife heard the report, she said to Elijah, you are a dead man. So Elijah heads to the wilderness, and then prays Lord take my life.

James 5:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

1 Kings 19:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." ³ And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. ⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

The Lord asks 2 Questions

Here is something I want for you to think over if or when you are in that place of despair, and it is the question the Lord asked him, twice, "what are you doing here Elijah". Elijah answers the same way both times, and that is that he is zealous for the Lord and hence why he is in this mess, and he is the last of God's prophets. You can read between the lines, oh Lord why are you allowing this to happen to me, I am yours, but you aren't protecting me.

1 Kings 19:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰ So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

God's answer wasn't what Elijah must have been expecting for there comes a mighty wind, then the earth quaked, and then after that fire, but Elijah says the Lord wasn't in any of them, for only after all of them (wind, quake, and fire) did the Lord speak, and it was in a still small voice the Word tells us. I see God saying to Elijah, this is how you view your situation, the world is coming to an end, storms around me, earthquakes and trembling, and then fire as it is all going to burn. But the Lord lets it all pass, and then in the quietness, in a whisper, the Lord speaks, as to make the point – none of those things move me, and I am not fighting through them to get to you, I silence them all, and make a place of peace where we speak.

1 Kings 19:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

And then, in that stillness, the calmness, He asks Elijah again what are you doing here? Elijah answers the same way, but in verse 15-18 the Lord dispels Elijah's misunderstanding as He says I have 7,000 prophets that haven't bowed their knees to Baal, Ahab, and Jezebel. The Lord is bringing Elijah to a place in his trial to see that how he perceives things are, are nowhere near that. The storm, the earth quaking, your world on fire, isn't the end all. And, Elijah's perception that he was the last prophet on earth was wrong too. See, in the midst of the trails and hardships we can't see outside the immediate circumstances, our thoughts of what God is doing can be a million miles off. So the Lord comes and He dialogues with us, not a one way speech, but two ways, drawing out of us what we think is happening, and then revealing to us what is really happening.

1 Kings 19:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴ And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

1 Kings 19:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. ¹⁶ Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. ¹⁷ It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of

Jehu, Elisha will kill. ¹⁸ Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Lord not Looking Down / We Consumed by Outside & the Moment

The Lord is not looking down on you, the Lord is not saying so weak, you disappoint me. But we can be so consumed with the hardship that we can't see outside the moment of the hardship. Really, for Elijah if you really are the last one, then why would you want to die, if anything you should be saying that I must continue on for I am the only one with the words of life, the words of God, for a lost and dying world. God wants to take us away in our trials and get alone with us, so He can show and reveal all that is truly going on, so we can go on.

I Know they are hard – but Crowded to Christ / World becomes Clear

I know these things are hard, but I also want you to consider the beauty of them, and that is what I call "crowded to Christ", as the push and pressure of these hardships crowd us, draw us, press us, to Christ. The things of the world, the world itself, become clearly defined as we see they are fleeting, fading, empty and void, because this world will at some point fail us, and we see there is only one place, and One person, that never fails. Jesus never fails, never!

Perseverance is Hanging on To

We must be a people that persevere. Perseverance is not getting on through, but hanging on to, and we hang on to Jesus, the God who comforts the downcast.

2 Corinthians 7:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

I am Free

Today we sang "I am Free", written by Jon Egan, made popular by the News Boys. Here is the story behind the song:

For years, Jon Egan struggled with anxiety and depression. After a particularly difficult struggle with anxiety over his ability to lead worship, he found himself once again asking God for freedom from fear. But this time, he distinctly heard God tell him, "You are free... look to the cross and open your eyes." Jon recalls hearing God tell him to quit focusing on his fears and instead focus on who He said Jon was, not who Jon thought he was. As this truth settled into Jon's spirit, he picked up his guitar and decided that rather than singing about how he wanted to be free, he would instead declare the truth that he IS free!

Now back to our Story

Now back to our story here in chapter 7, Paul is going to go on to say I was so burdened on how you were doing, how you received my letter, but when Titus came with the news,

2 Corinthians 7:7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

Many People Received the Letter Well

Paul says I rejoiced and was so comforted when Titus told me that many of you received the letter with love and you made change. You even were saying you were thankful for me in your life.

2 Corinthians 7:8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while.

2 Corinthians 7:9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.

Paul Willing to be Misunderstood Today – for Change in Tomorrow

Paul was willing to be misunderstood "today" so that they may understand "tomorrow", even though tomorrow could be so far away in their lives. The misunderstanding troubled Paul greatly, but he spoke the words to them in truth and in love, and then prayed it through from there.

It is Tough

It is a tough place to be, as you speak truth today it can cause people to divide from you, you parents with wayward children I know the pain you suffer. Like Paul a person says I really don't want to say this, but if I don't, there is no chance of change. If I do say something they may turn against me, if I don't say something it will be worse as they can be drawn away from God, and then totally lost. But to do so, we must have that heart like Paul. So many people do it out of knowledge, and not love. Do it with love and knowledge, and they will know you did because you truly love and care for them.

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

2 Corinthians 7:11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Real Change / Worldly Repentance of Judas / Godly Repentance of Peter

And so, Paul draws a distinction here between sorrow and repentance. There is a sorrow; there is a godly sorrow that works repentance. There is a sorrow of the world that brings death. Repentance brings a change. True repentance is to change. We find in the Scriptures that Judas brought the money back that he had received from the high priest when he betrayed Jesus. "And he said, 'Take this back; I betrayed innocent blood.' And they said, 'What's that to us? It's your problem.' And so he threw it down at their feet and he went out and he said, 'Now it's your problem.' And he repented and went out and hung himself" (Matthew 27:3-5).

Judas was sorry for what he did, as many people are sorry for what they have done. But if you're sorry and you keep doing it, that just brings death. If you're sorry and you don't do it anymore, that's repentance. Godly sorrow that leads to repentance.

Peter denied his Lord three times. When the rooster crowed, Jesus looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the words of Jesus that said, "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times. And he repented and went out and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:75). Never again did Peter deny his Lord. He repented. There was a real change. And repentance always does signify a change, and the godly sorrow works repentance.

Repentance are Bolt Cutters / Freeing and Cleansing / Producing Zeal and Desire

Repentance is not a dirty word, it is the most freeing thing a person can do. Repentance is the bolt cutters of the chains that bind us and hold us. Notice that repentance produces "diligence". Diligence means "eagerness. They had an eagerness to be well pleasing to the Lord. It is clearing (meaning the charges have been dropped), repentance produces a desire to draw near to God, and to be full of zeal. Repentance is beautiful, it is freeing, it will bring us into living an abundant life. If there is something in your life today that God is putting His finger on, because He is always digging around in our lives, then free yourself today, repent (turn from it), and you will find yourself turned back to the Lord in a beautiful, clean, refreshing way. Repentance is supernatural, something supernatural happens when we repent, God is happening when we repent.

Acts 3:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

2 Corinthians 7:12 Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

Restore the Man in Sin - Before Satan / But Paul wrote for Whole Churches sake

Paul is probably making a broad application, but we know at least one specific he is referring to, and that is that Paul here is referring to the man (1 Cor 5) that was having relations with his father's wife. The man repented, and Paul in chapter 2 of this letter says now make sure you restore him and receive him back into the fellowship lest Satan gets hold of him and destroy him as he would be all alone out there on his own with no church body to help him grow and mature in the Lord. But in the broad sweep, Paul is saying (in word play) that I don't just write that

letter of rebuke and correction for that man's sake, nor the father who was hurt tremendously, but for the whole churches sake so that the church may be made healthy. Paul wanted to see, and thus why he stepped out at the risk of being rejected, to say hey you need to deal with this else the whole body will be harmed. Paul saying I hope you see my willing to risk offending you displays my great love for you.

1 Corinthians 5:1–5 (NKJV) 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 a man has his father's wife!* ² *And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.* ³ *For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.* ⁴ *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,* ⁵ *deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

2 Corinthians 2:7–11 (NKJV) ⁷ *so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.* ⁸ *Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.* ⁹ *For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.* ¹⁰ *Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ,* ¹¹ *lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

Just a Note / Be Paramedics

But just a note on that before moving on, back in chapter 2, Paul is saying to them become the paramedic now, come and minister to the one that has just been in the head-on collision. So often the church is so focused on being a policeman, determining fault, writing up the ticket, making sure that justice is served, that the church misses that at every accident scene there is a paramedic too. The paramedics don't care whose fault it was (like – ohh you ran the red light, well we are not going to help you). The paramedics don't care who is at fault, all they care about is mending broken bones, stopping the bleeding, getting the injured to the hospital to ensure long-term recovery. So too Paul is reiterating what he said in chapter two, to become the medic to this brother, receive him back, for his sake, and their sake. Why for their sake, because forgiveness and restoration is the very nature and heart of God, and when we forgive and restore (after repentance – 2 Cor 7:10), we take on the nature of Jesus. You will never be more like Jesus than when you forgive (Father forgive them as they know not what they do).

Have Vision of who they Might become / Who Are – Saved by Same Grace that Saved You

We need to have a vision of what that person may become. They may become the next bold witness on their campus, youth pastor, pastor, missionary, loving father, faithful husband, servant of God. Look at that they can become, not what they once were, or currently are. And, remember who they are, saved by the same grace that saved you.

2 Corinthians 7:13 *Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.*

2 Corinthians 7:14 *For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true.*

Paul Loves to Boast about Them / Christian – Boast about your Brethren / Be careful – Become what Say

This interests me because the church at Corinth was far from perfect. Yet Paul finds himself boasting about them. Such was the bigness of his heart, the sureness of his faith. Hey Christian, boast about you brother and sister in the Lord. Boast, never even a hint of negativism, but nothing but positive lighting them up. You know when you talk highly about your brother/sister, other people will believe it too. But when you talk negatively about them, guess what, other people will believe. There is power in the tongue.

James 1:26 (NKJV) ²⁶ *If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.*

James 3:5 (NKJV) ⁵ *Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!*

2 Corinthians 7:15 *And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.*

2 Corinthians 7:16 *Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.*

Paul is filled with Joy

Paul is filled with joy, he is so excited about how they responded, he was blessed out of his sandals by the report that Titus gave to him.

Paul's Heart – has to be Given

What a heart Paul had for them, a heart that can't be taught, but can only be given by God. I pray after this study today God has put a desire in us to have a heart just like Paul's, and if so, then pray today and ask God to give you such a heart.

Continue on In Perseverance

And let me just wrap a few points together for you who are going through a hardship right now, a word of encouragement to continue on, to persevere, to continue hanging on to (Him Jesus Christ). Just 3 points to remember when you are in your trial.

First – Live a Clean Life

(Verse 1) First – Living a clean life for and before God – we must be a people that separate ourselves wholly before the Lord.

2 Corinthians 6:17–7:1 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” ¹⁸ “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.” ¹ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV) ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Second Hold on to Promises of God

Secondly, hold on to the promises of the Lord. He comforts the downcast, He will be there for you, maybe not with the whirlwind and an earthquake, but be still and you will hear His still small voice talk to you.

2 Corinthians 7:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

2 Corinthians 6:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” ¹⁷ Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” ¹⁸ “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”

Third – Remember the Purposes of God

Thirdly, remember the purposes of God. When you go through hard times, when you are misunderstood by people, when you pour yourself out, you are becoming like Him, your faith, what you believe, is no longer in word only, but seen and read by all men. And when they realize you do what you and say what you say because of love, they will be drawn to you. When people see you go through hard times in this world (financially, relationally, medically, etc) they will be drawn to you because they know, you know, and you have words that have experience behind them, not just a book you have read.

2 Corinthians 3:2–3 (NKJV) ² You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ³ clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

Chapter 8
 Study #11 (Chapters 8 & 9)
 Worshipping in Giving

First Time for Everything

So today we come to two chapters on giving. I teach so much on money, haha, that I can't remember ever teaching a Sunday morning message that was entirely on giving. So if you are visiting for the first time, you may be part of something else that is happening for the first time. So the saying is true, there is a first time for everything.

To Not Teach – would be to Rob You / God is raising Kids

For me to not teach on giving, on money, on possessions, would be to rob you. Satan would love to rob you, and I will be honest it took me a few days to engage on preparing for this study because I dread talking about money, until God reminded me in the power of giving. Money is not evil, only the love of money is evil. God does an amazing and mighty thing through our giving. Let's remember this, God doesn't need our money as He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, He is not broke, if He wanted money, just like He wanted light, He would say "let there be money", and money was. Remember, God is not seeking money, but God is seeking you. Therefore is God doesn't need money, and God is seeking you, then we can see His word regarding money is not to raise money, but to raise kids (as we are His children).

1 Timothy 6:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Psalm 50:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ *I will not take a bull from your house, Nor goats out of your folds. ¹⁰ For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills. ¹¹ I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine.*

2 Corinthians 12:14–15 (NKJV) ¹⁴ *Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. ¹⁵ And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.*

Why 2 Chapters / Word will not Return Void

Why did God use two chapters to talk about money and giving, the answer is because He wants it done right, he wants it not to be abused (as we see so many churches and minister totally abuse the collection of money), He wants to do something supernatural in your life, and if you will hang with me for these two chapters, I will promise you that His word will not return void.

Isaiah 55:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ *"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, ¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

Summary

Here is a summary of what God is doing through giving of money:

- Giving releases us from the grip of the world and materialism.
- Giving brings us to a place of trusting in the Lord, rather than in ourselves.
- Giving is God's way for the church to be "in it together".
- Giving is a form of worshipping the Lord.
- Giving produces supernatural wisdom within a person.

Quick Note

Just as a quick note, for everyone's information, this is a total volunteer church and no one receives a salary, which is just where we are at as a church. And, secondly I nor anyone in leadership knows what anyone gives. We do not pass an offering plate. That is our policy. But that is our place as a church and churches that pass an offering plate and have full-time paid staff are well within a biblical realm to do so. I would never recommend anyone in leadership know who gives what though.

2 Corinthians 8:1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:

2 Corinthians 8:2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

2 Corinthians 8:3 For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing,

Background on the Offering

So here is the background on what is happening. There is a drought and famine going on in Jerusalem at this time, and the impact has hit the church and the brethren in Jerusalem. Now when the churches in Macedonia heard about it they got busy gathering a love offering to send to the brethren in Jerusalem to help them in their time of need. The church in Corinth we will see said they wanted to help too, and we will look at that in this chapter. Now back to the church in Macedonia, they were not a church with money (verse 2), but they sure were a church with heart. What little they had, they wanted to bless their fellow brethren with. They gave in faith according to their ability, and beyond their ability, freely and willingly..... In spite of their circumstances.

1 Corinthians 16:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: ² On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. ³ And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.

God is a giving God / Imagine God's Heart as saw Macedonians Giving

We have a giving God, He is ever so gracious and kind in His giving to us. He withheld nothing from us, even His only Son. We see a theme throughout this book, especially these last chapters, and that is us having a heart that is like God's. Last chapter we look through to see how Paul's heart just was so open and loving to the people, he was restless and burdened on how they were doing, were they growing in the Lord, were they growing in unity and love for each other. We saw an awesome heart, and came to the place that is the heart of God, and it is the heart that God wants for us to have, and how a heart like that can't be taught but must be given by the Lord, and thus we need to desire to have such a heart first, and then ask the Lord to give us such a heart. As we move into these two chapters, we see another aspect of the heart of God, and that is a giving heart. God is a giving God, and God gives us the opportunity to have a heart like His, and to have a giving heart, and those that respond are blessed accordingly. Can you imagine the smile this church in Macedonia brought upon the face of the Lord, can you imagine how they warmed His heart as he watched them who had so little reach out to love on those who had less.

Abundance of Joy in Affliction / Joy can come through Giving / Church of Philippi

Verse 2 - that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality – Please notice here, even in your affliction and great trial, there is abundance of joy..... in great trial of affliction. One of the churches in Macedonia was the Church of Philippi, and of the church at Philippi, Paul said, “Although they were in great affliction, they shared out of their poverty.” The result? Paul's letter to the Philippians is the most joyous of all his letters. How do we keep from becoming small, harsh, and caught up in our own little materialistic worlds? By giving. Giving is a privilege and a joy—a fact proved conclusively by the Philippians. Many people have no joy in life, even though they are very well off, because they are not a giving person. Interestingly to me is that it is this poor church in Philippi that it would be recorded, because they knew first hand, God shall supply all our needs.

Philippians 4:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Giving Puts World in Perspective

You see giving puts the world into perspective, we can so often be stressed about how little money we have, but when we see how much we have compared to others, we see how blessed we are. We respond in giving God praise for what we do have, compared to what we don't have.

2 Corinthians 8:4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

Sweet Fellowship in Ministering to the Saints / Missionary Support

The Macedonian knew there would be sweet and special fellowship with the Lord and the brethren when they gave. Hence why the importance on teaching and talking about giving, because the Lord shows up in it, and does a sweet intimacy of fellowship through it. We have fellowship with the Lord and with the other saints. We obviously experience that here as we give and have a place to be a family and separate from the world for a time. We also get the great blessing of blessing us churches across the oceans that are less fortunate than us. We tithe our offerings every month to churches and missionaries around the world. We have a stake in other ministries, we have fruit to our account, we have fellowship with saints we have yet to meet, because we faithfully give. Now we are by no means a money church, but because of your giving hearts we can give and minister to the work God is doing in (India, Nicaragua, Cambodia, Sudan, Syria, USA). God has blessed us greatly because of our giving heart, we have fellowship with them, with each other, and the Lord through giving.

God said Test Me

God said to me, test me on this, see if I won't meet every one of your needs if you give 10% of the offering to the less fortunate churches. Now some people may say but just think if you kept that money imagine all you could have. Well I say I think we are doing ok (anyone see a thermometer on the wall when we were trying to get into this building?). But here is something I notice that a few times when I wasn't diligent on getting the money out to the missionaries, mission bases, wasn't meeting our full tithe, our tithe immediate dropped. Then when I fixed my error, our offerings returned to their normal level again. So I believe God increases our offerings, which means you income, so we have that money to give to our brethren. That is a pretty good financial formula when you think about it.

Malachi 3:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.

2 Corinthians 8:5 And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.

2 Corinthians 8:6 So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well.

2 Corinthians 8:7 But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.

Great you have Faith – But Give Also / Giving is Abounding in Grace

So Paul is saying to this church in Corinth, it is great that you have faith, that you can speak the word and know the word, you are diligent in serving, but I also want you to be a giving people. We see that giving is grace. We see that grace....gives. We see a gracious person is a giving person. Something for all of us to ponder. God considers our giving to be part of our personal spiritual thermometer.

2 Corinthians 8:8 I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:10 And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago;

2 Corinthians 8:11 but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have.

Paul Reminds them of the Sacrifice of Jesus

Paul destroys any name and claim it, he destroys false teachers who say we should be a people who are the "King's Kids" therefore we should be wealthy. Jesus became poor for us, gave His all for us, that we can be like Jesus and be givers like Jesus. But, we will see that Paul under inspiration of Holy Spirit isn't saying we have to give everything like Jesus did, just what is in our hearts.

Year Later – Still no Action / Still attached to Materialism

It was there idea to raise funds for the churches that were in need, but it is a year later and they still haven't provided the offering. It was an indicator that they were still attached to their money, and not attached to the cares of others.

Not a Command / Opening of the Heart / God is Raising Kids not Money

Now notice that in verse 8 Paul doesn't say it is a command. We will see that God is all about the heart rather than the money. He doesn't want giving to be some ritual or rule we do, but the opening of our heart. Is tithing a commandment you may ask, the answer is no? God doesn't want or need your money, He wants you, He isn't raising money, He is raising kids.

Churches who Pressure / I've been to a Few / Skits – Thermometers – You are Sitting on It / We don't Pass

I can see why many people get turned off from church because of churches who push and push about the giving thing. They continually lay trips upon the people to give. It is like half the church service is about money. I visited a church with a friend that did a drama skit every week about giving, as the giving portion of the service was 15 minutes long. Those thermometers on the wall must embarrass the Lord. Seems like every time a church enters a building project they have to have a month long teaching series on giving. Those jokes, aren't jokes, they say them for a reason, you know the one ok we need another 80,000 dollars to finish the building and the good news is we have the money, the problem is you are sitting on it. I'd be embarrassed to say that, I personally have decided I would rather quit then have to beg people for money. We don't pass an offering plate, that is our witness, and God has never left us lacking. We will never poor-mouth God, we will never portray Him as broke. Why would anyone want to follow a God who doesn't even have the power to pay the electric bill?

2 Corinthians 8:12 For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.

2 Corinthians 8:13 For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened;

2 Corinthians 8:14 but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack—that there may be equality.

2 Corinthians 8:15 As it is written, "He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack."

No Pressure

Look at verse 13, the Lord says I am not asking you to give that it burdens you, but that you consider can you give? If so, then give so that others may be blessed.

Willing Mind

Verse 12, first there has to be a willing mind. God wants to change our hearts about materialism, and the grip of things of the world, He wants us to be engaged and involved in the needs of others in the world, but He can't change our heart until we change our minds. We have to get alone with the Lord and say what is it that you want me to do with what you have given me.

Gathered Little – Had no Lack / Gather and Gather, Never Enough

Verse 15, Paul is saying that He who gathered much, they work and they work so they can have more money find that they never have enough money, they always need a little more, which never comes. But those that are content to gather enough to live on, and share with others, trusting God will provide, always have enough. These are the people who are free from the slavery that materialism brings.

2 Corinthians 8:16 But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus.

2 Corinthians 8:17 For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord.

2 Corinthians 8:18 And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches,

Titus will carry the Offering

These verse here cover that Titus will receive the offering and take it to the saints that are in need. Titus will travel with other brothers so everyone knows all the money given was delivered. God is making sure there is no appearance of evil, and that the ministers took not a penny for themselves, and thus were not in it for the money. So yea, no one got a jet out of the deal, mansions in Galilee, decked out chariots, and new robes and sandals; does that sound familiar?

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

2 Corinthians 8:20 avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us—

2 Corinthians 8:21 providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

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

2 Corinthians 8:23 If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.

2 Corinthians 8:24 Therefore show to them, and before the churches the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.

Money Must be handled Wisely

How important that the money be handled wisely. The church is responsible to protect the hard earned money that was given out of the heart. There is a place for all the protections and safeguards you can apply as the world offers (double-signatures for withdrawals, audits, etc), and those are good things. It is much easier today in the digital age, as for us 99% of the money comes in digitally, so there is no cash to palm in the pocket. Spending is 90% digital, so that is easy to audit via the credit card statement. But in the end, someone has to be trusted with the money, and so as great as the safeguards of the world are, churches continually make the mistake of trusting in them, rather than trusting in the word of God, as He gives the requirement of who handles the church business, and that is people of good reputation, and full of the Holy Spirit. If a church follows that guidance, then they will have implemented the greatest safeguard that is available.

Acts 6:3 (NKJV) ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;

We are Gracious – but Must be Wise in Benevolence

I take this serious, and I know where every dollar is spent. And as my wife can tell you, I can make a penny sweat. But, although we have a tight control over the finances, we are a gracious and giving church. We must be wise in our benevolence. We have a set percentage of our finances that we give for benevolence. Church first, and then the community if there is anything remaining. But we believe that in benevolence we have to help the person to financial freedom, and it would be a misuse of God's money, to give to someone who is not being wise with their finances, who isn't doing all they can do to get out of that situation. You know, no one has ever asked for help paying for their cable bill, never! They always ask for help with utility bill or mortgage; you see where I am going with that, as they aren't willing to make tough decisions, to make remedies to get out of the situation, and I can see they are not being wise with their money.

Chapter 9

Continued on from Chapter 8 (Study #11)

2 Corinthians 9:1 Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you;

2 Corinthians 9:2 for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority.

2 Corinthians 9:3 Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready;

2 Corinthians 9:4 lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting.

Don't Embarrass

Pau is saying hey I have been bragging about how you are putting an offering together to help the poor, so don't embarrass me when I get there by not having the offering ready.

2 Corinthians 9:5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

2 Corinthians 9:6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

2 Corinthians 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Verse 6 / Selah

He who sows sparingly, will reap sparingly..... Selah

He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.....Selah

A Great Promise

This is not condemning words, but words of promise.....sow bountifully and you will reap bountifully.

Cheerful – Hilarious / Be Glad you can Give

The word there for cheerful in the Greek is “hilaros”, it is where we get our word for hilarious. It means to be happy. God loves a happy giver..... Listen here is a key, “a glad” giver. Folks, be happy that you can give. Consider what it would mean to not be able to give.

The Tithe / Abraham - Melchizedek

Satan has manipulated tithing just like so many other principles. So much that people like myself can become afraid to teach on it, but for me to not would be to rob you. Tithing was a commandment in the Old Covenant, but before the Law was established, tithing was a biblical principle. Tithing was and still is, now listen closely, a form of worship. Long before Moses and the Law, tithing was a principle between God and the people who worshipped Him. In Scripture, “tithing as worship” was practiced prior to both the establishment of “tithing as covenant” and the perversion of “tithing as legalism.” The principle of “tithing as worship” is “pre-Law.” It's established in Genesis 14:17-24 where Abram gives a tenth of his plunder to Melchizedek, King of Salem (which was a literal physical appearance of Christ in the Old Testament). Melchizedek, in turn, blesses Abram. Hebrews 7:1-10 defines the significance of these acts, declaring that it is the superior who blesses the inferior, and the inferior who pays tithes to the superior. Tithing is an act of worship.

Genesis 14:17–24 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. ¹⁸ Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he gave him a tithe of all. ²¹ Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.” ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’—²⁴ except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.”

Hebrews 7:1–10 (NKJV) ¹ For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ² to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” ³ without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. ⁴ Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. ⁵ And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; ⁶ but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷ Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. ⁸ Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. ⁹ Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, ¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Tithing - Jacob

“Tithing as worship” does more than acknowledge God. It expresses our personal allegiance to Him. We see this in Genesis 28:10-22. Here, God reveals Himself to Jacob in a dream. In response, the patriarch vows, “the Lord shall be my God...and of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.” For Jacob, the “tithe as worship” became a natural expression of his decision to follow the God of His Fathers. In the same way, the “tithe as worship” becomes an almost instinctive way for us to express our allegiance to the God of our Salvation.

Genesis 28:10–22 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹ So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. ¹² Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. ¹⁴ Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.” ¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” ¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!” ¹⁸ Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. ¹⁹ And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. ²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, ²¹ so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. ²² And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”

Tithing was Before the Law / Not in NT so not Legalistic or Burdensome / Faithful my Dog

So we see that tithing was before the Law; we tithing was an expression of the heart, an act of worship. Tithing was before the Law and what we see in the New Testament is no mention of tithing. I believe the Lord purposely had the word tithe left out of the New Testament writings because He did not want us to become legalistic in our giving. He does not want giving to feel like some obligation, some burden, He wants us to be glad to give, He wants us to experience what Abraham and Jacob experienced, as they met the Lord and were blessed by Him so much so that said oh I must give you something, words are not enough I want to give you something of mine. Not to diminish this in any way, but our dog faithful most always when I come into a room, when he comes running to me he stops and picks up a stuffed animal, a bone, a shoe, something....because he always wants to give me something. That was the heart of Abraham and Jacob, they were so moved by the Lord they just wanted to give himself.

It is a Guide / Jesus Superseded the Law

We are no longer under the Law, but I need to make this point in that everything Christ did, was an elevation of the Law. It was no longer a lamb for the covering of sin, but the Lamb of God for the total cleansing of sin. It was no longer a temple to go worship God in, but God turning us into a Temple that He came to dwell in. It was no longer circumcision of the skin but of the heart, it was no longer the law written on tablets of stone but upon our hearts. And if God elevated and superseded all those things of the law, how then should we apply that to tithing.

Greats of the Bible

There are some “greats” of the Bible, Abraham and Jacob are two of them. They show us and lay for us a pattern, a principle, of ways to greatness.....they were givers.

People who Continually Struggle Financially

Here is what I have seen over the life of walking with the Lord, and that is the people who continually struggle with finances, always pressed to make ends meet, I have seen they all have a common thread, and that is that they do not tithe, they do not make giving a priority in their lives. People say I can’t afford to give, and I say you can’t afford not to give, as the Lord teaches you wisdom as you give.

2 Corinthians 9:6 *But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*

Malachi 3:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.

Psalms 81:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

What God Does Supernaturally

Giving, will take you back to simplicity, simple living. It is supernatural, and the Lord uses it, He will show us what is important and what isn't. For many times we are distracted and distant from the Lord because we can become so wrapped up with the things of the world. We buy things, we have to maintain them, we have to worry about them, we have to invest mind time into them, and that is time we can't spend thinking on the Lord and the things of the Lord. Having stuff is ok.....stuff having us, is not. Giving detaches us from the world. We will learn to live more simple lives. Giving puts us in a place where we trust the Lord, we trust Him enough that if we give, He will provide. And, another major thing God does when we give, is that God gives us financial wisdom, supernaturally, when we are givers. We learn how to handle our money, we make wise choices with our money, we value our money more and thus we handle it more wisely.

2 Corinthians 1:12 For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

You will Never Out give God / My Personal Giving / Tithing is a Great Guide

If you are afraid to give, it is an indicator that you don't trust the Lord to provide for you. I can tell you that you can, in fact I can tell you that you will never out give God, as He will be a debtor to no man. I have already testified about God providing for the church, and I can testify to that in my personal giving too. I felt impressed from the Lord to tithe.....wait you may say, I thought you said tithing isn't a command? It is not a commandant, but it is a great guide. He who

My Personal Story

So, we can never out give God. I felt impressed from the Lord to tithe, so as a business manager type that I am in the workplace I apply the same detail to my giving then. Well my paycheck has like 20 lines on it, and it is actually hard to see what your actual pay is, because the company includes you healthcare, your pension, 401K, etc, and some of that money actually doesn't equate to money in your hand every month. So anyways I look at it and calculate what is real money and what isn't, and I base my tithe on it. Then a year later I have a meeting with the boss and he said congratulations we are giving you a raise. And it is on his piece a paper I get to clearly see how much I make in real money, money that goes in my pocket. So here is the point of my story, and that is that I was actually giving 12%, not 10% over the past year, and so my new salary now equaled 10%. God will be a debtor to no man, but more so, He is a gracious and giving God.

Bounty comes in Different Forms

Now bounty doesn't always come in the form of a dollar bill. I have come to realize and see that my car making it a little longer before it is time for a new one, and that sale I got on that appliance, or that home HVAC making longer than average, those discount tickets you stumble across, or hearing about tax advantages that apply to you, they are all ways the Lord provides. Thus, it isn't just I got a raise. And, as I had mentioned it is also God giving you wisdom in your spending (hey I really don't need to buy this or subscribe to that), or just quitting something. So look for those things, look at how the Lord provides in special and unique ways.

Make Thanksgiving part of Every Prayer Time

See, here is a reason in our prayer times we make "thanksgiving" a part of it every time. We have so much to give Him thanks for, such as, His grace, His love, His mercy. But when you reflect on His provisions, give Him thanks for that, and watch your heart be drawn to Him. When I put my son to bed and draw covers over him in this cold winter I say thank you Lord for your great provision, when the rain is falling and the snow is piling up I say thank you Lord for your great provision, after a week off for Christmas and the night before work is to begin for another year I say thank you Lord that I have a job to go back to tomorrow. Give thanks, thank Him for His great provisions for your life. Giving is a form of worship, just so thankful for His great provision unto us.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Thankful Heart – Giving Heart

A thankful heart becomes a giving heart.

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:9 As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever."

2 Corinthians 9:10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,

2 Corinthians 9:11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

2 Corinthians 9:12 For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God,

2 Corinthians 9:13 while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men,

2 Corinthians 9:14 and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you.

2 Corinthians 9:15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Giving Unites Us

Grace giving unites us.

The Indescribable Gift

His gift is indescribable, and that is the gift of His only begotten Son. The Lord compares the dollars we give to the Son He gave, so we can truly see how big that dollar really is. Paul closes this thought with saying, I can't even put into words all that God has given to us.....it is.....indescribable!

Chapter 10
Study #12 (10:1-18)

Overview

So we come to chapter 10 in our verse-by-verse study. Paul had written a letter of correction/instruction to the church there in Corinth. Many received it openly and made course adjustments to their lives, and were thankful to Paul for writing it. Others, and that is what we will read Paul addressing in these next few chapters, were not open to the letter of correction, nor were they thankful to Paul for writing it. So men in the church there in Corinth started a smear campaign against Paul, they started an all-out attack against Paul saying who is he to write such things to us, and they were trying to divide the church against Paul.

Paul Addresses the False

Paul begins here in chapter 10 to address these men he calls “false apostles”, as these men think they speak for God, chosen by God, but Paul clearly declares are not. Paul calls them deceitful workers.....wow. Paul says these men are not workers of God but of Satan himself..... double wow! So imagine this, catch all that Paul is saying, grab all that is going on here..... and that is that there are men inside a church who are viewed as spiritual, as leaders, leaders of God at that, and people are listening to them, many are following them, and these men are in the church and viewed as super-spiritual. Paul says these men are “ministers of Satan”. Hey, it still happens today in the church, we need to be on guard, and the Word of God gives us insight and understanding on how to identify them, and then address them.

2 Corinthians 11:12–15 (NKJV) ¹² But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. ¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Parallel Topic – Spiritual Warfare

So Paul under inspiration of Holy Spirit will give us some of those insights on how to see them and address them, and I will make those points as we come across them, but what I want to do mainly in our study today is cover more in-depth the parallel message that is being delivered here in this chapter, and that is the topic of “Spiritual Warfare”.

Do you feel: – Irritated – Depressed – Anxiety – Marriage a Battle / Kids Exasperate You

Let me ask you, do you find yourself often downcast for no specific reason, do you feel anxiety and you are not sure over what, do you wake up and just feel like you are irritated all day (but at what you are not sure), do you feel like your marriage is a continual battle, your kids exasperate you to no end? It might not be the things you think are causing it, it might not be it is because of them or because of this, it might be, and more times than not, it is spiritual warfare, and we just don’t recognize it. Let’s get into the Word and see what the Lord wants to show us and teach us about spiritual warfare.

Pray – for God to illuminate His Word

Let us open in prayer, that God’s Word will do what He promises it will do (Hebrews 4:12):

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

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

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

First Thing – War is Spiritual

Verse 3, the first thing we need to see (AND BELIEVE) is that the war is not in the flesh. My flesh or that person bugging you flesh, *the flesh is just the avenue that the spiritual warfare flows through*. Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, said, "For we wrestle not against flesh and

blood, but against principalities, and powers, and spiritual entities in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). Our real battles, our real warfare are not physical battles. They are spiritual battles with these spirit entities that surround us, and there is spiritual warfare constantly going on. We do not and cannot imagine the extent to which this spiritual warfare is being waged in the universe around us.

Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV) ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Remember Daniel

You remember when Daniel set his heart to seek the Lord in fasting and in prayer. And after twenty-one days, the angel came to Daniel and said, "From the day you first called unto God I was dispatched to bring you the answer; but lo, the prince of Persia captured me and held me until finally Michael, that great prince, came and set me free and now I am come to reveal unto you those things that you desire to know of God." This great spiritual warfare that was going on hindering the answer to Daniel's prayer for twenty-one days, as this angel dispatched from God was held and captured by the prince of Persia, by the powers and the spirit forces of darkness and held until Michael came and delivered him.

Daniel 10:12-13 (NKJV) ¹² Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.

We are not Cognizant of the Spiritual Warfare / We get the Flack/By-Product (Heaviness/Depression)

We are not really cognizant of the spiritual warfare that does go on in the universe around us. It would be well if we would be more sensitive to the fact that there is a spiritual warfare going on, and many times, we get the flack of that spiritual warfare. The by-product of it oftentimes are feelings that we really don't understand and can't really define. A feeling of heaviness, a feeling of depression, a feeling of discouragement or a feeling of despair, despondency. A feeling of restlessness, just a feeling of agitation. These feelings can often result from the by-product really of the spiritual warfare that is going on around us.

Battle on for Souls & Mind / We must Recognize to be Victorious / Don't Pass it Off

There is a tremendous battle over the souls of men being waged by the Spirit of God and by Satan. That desire to control the mind and the soul of man. And many a time a person is in the midst of that conflict as it is their soul that is in the balance. God's Spirit tugging; Satan holding on. Tremendous spiritual battle. And to be aware of them is vital for us as Christians if we're going to maintain a life of victory. One of our problems is that we do not always recognize when Satan is attacking. And quite often, we're prone to just pass it off on just, you know, our own nature or our own just feelings or, "I just woke up this morning feeling horrible, and I just get in these cranky moods sometimes. You're just going to have to forgive me and all." And we're not aware of the fact that we are under a spiritual attack. And because we're not aware of the fact that it is a spiritual attack against us, we just go on, rather than standing against it and resisting it. For the Bible tells us if we resist the devil he'll flee from us. But I've got to recognize that it is Satan's attack before I resist it.

James 4:7 (NKJV) ⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

3 R's / As You Do – things Leave / But too Many Times – We Bow Head / Even Complain to God

So, there are really the three R's I call the spiritual victory. And the one is to recognize the source of the attack. This is the enemy at work. He's attacking me. Having recognized it, then I can deal with it by resisting it in the name of Jesus. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. And then the third key to victory is to rejoice in the victory of the Lord over the powers and the forces of darkness, and as you rejoice you find the depression goes; you find that the irritation leaves, and you begin to really feel victory in Christ. And what a difference the day becomes because you have taken that victory that is yours through Christ over this attack of the enemy against you. But too many times we just bow our head and we, you know, go on being battered and beaten, feeling lousy and don't know why. Complaining to God (or others) because things are going so horribly. Failing to recognize that it's actually a spiritual attack of Satan against you, against your home, against the family. And they can be manifested in so many ways.

You can whip Satan in Spiritual Realm (Home Field Advantage) / Flesh Fight – You fight Alone

When you get into the spiritual realm, you can whip Satan day in and day out. You have the home field advantage. When you get the battle brought into the spiritual realm, you will have a confidence and a renewed power to fight.

See in the earthly warfare you always feel that it is your fight, and you are the deciding factor on winning or losing (and that is total pressure); we have to devise strategies, we think and wonder how we can turn the tide. But when we get into the heaven realm, where Jesus reigns, we are released of the burden that we are the deciding factor and we just say ok Lord this is all yours. I ask, and you release.

Legion of angels

Remember this, when Jesus was taken in the garden and His boy pulled out the sword, Jesus said put that away. First of all Peter brought a knife to a gun fight, pretty stupid. But more so, Jesus said hey if I wanted to I could call down 12 legions of angels to fight for Me. Jesus didn't because nothing was going to keep Him from the cross to redeem you and me. And since He went to the cross for you and me, Romans 8 tells us He now sits at the right hand of God living to make intercession for us. He prays for us, he fights for us. So I just want you to consider, Jesus may not call the 12 legions of angels for Himself, but will do so in a second for us, for He withholds nothing from His children. The context is Roman Empire, a Roman Legion was a military force (military is for fighting), and it comprised of about 6,000 foot soldiers and 700 calvary men (that is horseback). Mind you that one angel was able to destroy 185,000 men by himself (2 Kings 19). So I suggest to you, that God will withhold nothing good concerning you, so not just one legion is at your disposal, but 12. So twelve times 6,000 is 72,000 and 12 times 700 is 8,400. And that equals 80,400, and times that by 185,000, that means you have the arsenal power to defeat 14,874,000,000 people in the flesh. I think you are covered, but the war has to be battled in the spiritual realm, and it has to be recognized that the battle field is spiritual if we are to have victory.

Matthew 26:52–54 (NKJV) ⁵² But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

Romans 8:34–39 (NKJV) ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Kings 19:35 (NKJV) ³⁵ And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.

The Ambush

If Satan ever had an original thought it would die of loneliness, and Satan just counterfeits and steals the brilliance of God. God told Joshua how to lay an ambush and defeat the fortified city of Ai. An AMBUSH is a military tactic of hiding a unit of troops for surprise attack while carrying on normal battle with the remainder of the troops. Joshua used the tactic against Ai (Josh. 8). Summation of the story was Joshua had men hid all around the city (which was walled), then Joshua took a contingent of men and attacked from the front, then acted like he was retreating, which the men of Ai stormed out of the city (leaving the gate open), and chased Joshua. Then the men who were hidden jumped out, set the city on fire, and the men of Ai were totally disheartened as they realized they left the city unprotected and their families were now in enemy hands, and they themselves were surrounded. The end was that not one man of Ai survived. See, that is what Satan does to us all the time, as the fight in in the city (the spiritual realm), but he draws us out into a worldly/carnal/fleshly battlefield, and there he can easily ambush us. We start to fight our spouse, our fellow brethren, our kids, our neighbors..... and we are totally ambushed we look back and see our city burning, and we just lose heart, and we have no power in our fight. Christian, don't get ambushed, don't come out and fight the war in the flesh, but take it to you home field advantage, where the King reigns, where the city is walled and protected, where God fights for you.

Joshua 8:1–29 (NKJV) ¹ Now the LORD said to Joshua: "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. ² And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind it." ³ So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor and sent them away by night. ⁴ And he commanded them, saying: "Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. ⁵ Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city; and it will come about, when they come out against us as at the first, that we shall flee before them. ⁶ For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, 'They are fleeing before us as at the first.' Therefore we will flee before them. ⁷ Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. ⁸ And it will be, when you have taken the city, that you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the LORD you shall do.

See, I have commanded you.”⁹ Joshua therefore sent them out; and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua lodged that night among the people.¹⁰ Then Joshua rose up early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai.¹¹ And all the people of war who were with him went up and drew near; and they came before the city and camped on the north side of Ai. Now a valley lay between them and Ai.¹² So he took about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city.¹³ And when they had set the people, all the army that was on the north of the city, and its rear guard on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.¹⁴ Now it happened, when the king of Ai saw it, that the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at an appointed place before the plain. But he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city.¹⁵ And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness.¹⁶ So all the people who were in Ai were called together to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city.¹⁷ There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. So they left the city open and pursued Israel.¹⁸ Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Stretch out the spear that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand.” And Joshua stretched out the spear that was in his hand toward the city.¹⁹ So those in ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire.²⁰ And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended to heaven. So they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people who had fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers.²¹ Now when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai.²² Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were caught in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them remain or escape.²³ But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.²⁴ And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword.²⁵ So it was that all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand—all the people of Ai.²⁶ For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.²⁷ Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua.²⁸ So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day.²⁹ And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones that remains to this day.

2 Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

2 Corinthians 10:6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

We have Weapons

We have weapons to use in this spiritual warfare, and notice that the word is weapons plural. Ephesians 6 list all the weapons at our disposal and these weapons are all mighty in pulling down the strongholds. We have armor, we have truth, we have a breastplate to cover our heart, we have the gospel (which notice is a weapon), we have a sword, we have the word of God, and we have prayer. Please refer to our study in Ephesians 6 for a detailed study on these weapons. I remember at Bible College a guest teacher came in to speak on Ephesians 6 and he said who today put on their armor and of course all the hands went up, in which he replied, why did you take it off? Let me encourage you today to have Ephesians 6 on a notecard or something that is attached to your prayer cards or journal, so you can refer to it regularly, if not daily, to remind you of the arsenal that is available to you, and that the warfare is not in the flesh but the spirit.

Ephesians 6:10–20 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Look at what Weapons Destroy

Now look at what the weapons can destroy.

Verse 4 - for pulling down strongholds, - You know what are some of the strongest strongholds, and that is what I call the cultural strongholds. They are things of this world, that we continually go back to when we fell defeated, discouraged, anxiety, etc. Things like alcohol, sex, drugs, pornography, overeating, etc. It is a place we go back to because we can feel some type of release, comfort, acceptance..... it is often the place where we say “what

does it matter anyways". Satan loves to go back to the well. Satan will continually go back, take you back, to the place that he has beaten you time and time again, the perfect ambush. Grab those weapons of Ephesians 6, and start to use them offensively.

Cleave to the Sword

One of the weapons is the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Eph 6:13). We are told to take it up so we can withstand the evil. That makes me think of one of the mighty men of David, his name was Eleazar (son of Dodo). It is recorded of him (and two others with him) that after all of Israel had retreated from a battle against the Philistines (which is a picture of the flesh in biblical typology) that Eleazar fought so hard against the Philistines, and so long against them, that at the end of the battle his hand cleave to his sword. The Hebrew word there for cleave/stuck is "dabaq", and it meant to be glued to, to become one. The word is first used in Genesis 2 when it says that and shall be joined (dabaq) to his wife and the two shall become one. Eleazar became one with his sword, they became glued together. There is an illustration there for us of becoming one with this word, joined together, an intimacy that we know each other so well. For the word is a mighty weapon in this spiritual warfare, and against these cultural strongholds, as they try to draw us back, we draw the sword and say I will not be ambushed.

Ephesians 6:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

2 Samuel 23:8-10 (NKJV) ⁸ These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite, chief among the captains. He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time. ⁹ And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. ¹⁰ He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder.

Genesis 2:24 (NKJV) ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Verse 5 - casting down arguments – the word for arguments means, way of thinking, imaginations. How our imaginations can so defeat us unless we get up into the spiritual realm and see things clearly, see things from God's perspective and not this world's (flesh). The word also lends itself to mean a hostile reasoning against God and His word, and we see it all around as the world becomes more hostile to God's word. We need to gird ourselves with the truth, for the truth of God's word will always cast down our imaginations, they things are real but truly are just lies made up by man or are own minds..

Ephesians 6:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

Verse 5 - and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, So many things today that want to exalt above the knowledge of God, that it knows better, or is better. I think of evolution thinking it is so much smarter than God, that God is just a fairytale. I look at the things the world offers as money, possessions, power, and looks as being great and wonderful. It is easy to buy into those things, and hence why we need to spend that time in prayer so God can keep those things in proper perspective for us, so they don't become exalted over Him.

Ephesians 6:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

Verse 5 - bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, - The battle over the mind, and we must take every thought captive. Jesus showed us that battle is in the mind on the Sermon on the Mount as He said if you have lust in your heart, if you have hatred in your heart). Satan is constantly launching fiery darts at us and our minds. We are not to think they won't come, but when they do we have to take them captive so they can't be free to roam in our thoughts and expand themselves. When a thought comes in, and we know it is not in-line with God, we need to quench it right there. The first look/thought doesn't kill, that is called being alive, it is the second one that brings destruction. What will you do with the first one? You must take it captive instantly and give no second thought to it. Let me also say, the best way to avoid temptation is to remove it, so if you have to cut that cable, delete that Facebook account, change that job, or quit that recreation thing that puts you in a place where your mind is being bombarded with carnal thoughts, then remove. Start there with taking them into captivity. Put on helmet of salvation, the helmet covers your mind, and you say I am saved and set apart for God, I am not going to cheapen myself with these thoughts. I am reminded of Saul after a great victory over the Amalek, in which God said leave nothing breathing, including their livestock, utterly destroy it. But Saul left for himself

some of the spoils of victory, and God removed the kingdom from him. We can't leave any remnant of the world, we can't allow just this one thing to remain, because Satan will always go back to the well, that cultural stronghold, and draw you back to it in his perfect timing. You have to utterly destroy those thoughts, and realize that it is not just your flesh, but that they are fiery darts in the spiritual realm being launched against you, to take you down.

Ephesians 6:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Ephesians 6:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

1 Samuel 15:3 (NKJV) ³ Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' "

1 Samuel 15:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, ¹¹ "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.

Verse 6 - and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. – get nasty, take no prisoners, destroy anything that comes between you and the Lord. Cleave to that sword like Eleazar did, but unlike Saul, destroy anything and everything that would try to exalt itself against the knowledge (wisdom) of God. Christian, can our heavenly Father shower us with blessings if we cling to and practice the same sins that nailed Jesus Christ to the cross? I think not. Destroy them, completely, leave no prisoners nor spoils.

2 Corinthians 10:7 Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.

2 Corinthians 10:8 For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—

2 Corinthians 10:9 lest I seem to terrify you by letters.

2 Corinthians 10:10 "For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

Laying Charge against Paul Appearance

So these guys are laying charge against Paul. They are saying oh he writes so powerfully but when he is physically present he isn't so tough. He hides behind his email, but won't face you face to face. And then we see verse 10 that they were making comments about Paul's physical appearance too. They say look at his body it is so weak, he doesn't speak with authority or articulate very well. They are associating looks, physical appearance, the way he carries himself, with spirituality. God warned of it as He picked David to be king, even though he was like his professor Saul who stood head and shoulders above all others. We live in a Madison Avenue society and men and woman with physical appearance get more respect we time and time again. I remember my one friend's dad, and he would say you know Ray sometimes I wish I was born rich instead of good looking. We would laugh, and he was a humble man. But he was good looking and his two sons which were my best friends got all his looks, and I always noticed how they got double portions at restaurants, preferred seating (as me and Bob Uchker sat up in the peanut gallery). It is much of our world today.

1 Samuel 16:7–13 (NKJV) ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." ⁸ So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰ Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." ¹¹ And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here." ¹² So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!" ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

1 Samuel 9:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. ² And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

5 Lies about your Body

But I want to make an important spiritual point regarding this, in terms of warfare, and in term of our imagination, and in terms of taking every thought captive. And that is the 5 lies that our culture tells us how we should perceive our bodies:

- Lie #1: Your body is decorative. It should be used to attract the attention of men and the envy of women. What matters most is how it looks.
- Lie #2: Your body's appearance is flawed but fixable. You are not the right size, shape, or color. But you can (and should) go to enormous effort and expense to change that.
- Lie #3: Your body is a source of power. It can and should be trained, toned, and preserved from all signs of age. Its level of attractiveness or strength can and should be leveraged to give you dominance over and independence from others.
- Lie #4: Your body is yours. You are its owner. You may neglect it, obsess over it, indulge it, punish it, pamper it, or alter it as you wish.
- Lie #5: Transforming the outside will fix the inside. By making changes to your body, you can change the condition of your heart. You can have more self-confidence, better self-esteem, and greater happiness.

Take those Thoughts Captive

Take those thoughts captive, they are all lies. You are beautiful as you are, and Satan uses all these lies to beat you up, tear you down, and distract you from the Lord. In many cases cause us to pursue the world for acknowledgement and reinforcement, and countless times ruin marriages.

2 Corinthians 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.

2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Same Absent or Present / Wants Sweet Fellowship

Paul is saying I am the same in present as I am while absent. We will see in later verses that he wrote heavy so when he was with them physically all the discipline stuff would be past and gone, and they could just enjoy sweet fellowship.

Don't get Drawn into the Ambush / Knife to Gun Fight

But notice a key here in the realm of spiritual warfare and that is the comparison of other people. Paul is saying hey I know all the things they are saying, I see how they try to elevate themselves and elevate themselves over me by saying this and saying that about me, but I won't enter into that banter back and forth. And here is just quick bit for you when people start to attack you and your character..... don't get drawn into the ambush. They (fueled by Satan) want to get you drawn into their level, the carnal level, and battle you there for that is their strong fortress. It is what I call bringing a knife to a gunfight, and you are the one with the knife. Many times sad to say I have had to face this, and I always say to myself "don't", for you are no match for their flesh. You see, these men were liars, manipulators, deceivers,..... they were simply carnal self-seeking men. You are as a spirit filled believer can't match them on a fleshly level because you won't lie, you won't leave out details, you will admit your faults but they will not. Their flesh is fueled by Satan, and if Satan can get you into a fleshly battle, he will knock your block off every time. Don't leave the fortified wall city, don't get drawn into the ambush

2 Corinthians 10:13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you.

2 Corinthians 10:14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ;

2 Corinthians 10:15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere,

2 Corinthians 10:16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

Paul didn't Build on Another Foundation

Paul is saying the church in Corinth was not established by these men, but by him and the missionaries that came with him. Paul didn't come in and build on another man's work. Paul didn't come in and start the church by going to the church around the corner and inviting everyone to come to his new work, and as these men did, Paul did not tear down the other men in order to build himself up so he could draw the people away unto himself. Paul makes the point that he came to a place to plant a church, and loved the people, preached the gospel, and people got saved, people found a home, and Paul said "you are the proof of that".

Romans 15:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation,

2 Corinthians 10:17 But "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

2 Corinthians 10:18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

What does this Mean to You / Don't Compare Yourself to Others

Paul said, but his glory is in the Lord, he doesn't commend himself, but allows the Lord to confirm and commend. Here is another quick application for all of us, and that is that we need not look for man's acknowledgment of our service, only the Lord. And as we tie in these past several verses I want to show a subtle theme, and that is don't be looking around at what others are doing either, don't be comparing yourself to others. Glory in the Lord, keep your eyes on the Lord, and don't care what other people think of you, or what the other people are doing themselves. There is a danger as we start to get used by the Lord that we are not pleased with "only His glory" and we can start to look around and say hey why aren't they glorying in the Lord like I am, how come they aren't helping out, how come they aren't coming out to join in. That takes us right back into, the flesh, and we have been drawn out of the heavens and totally ambushed by Satan. If Paul started to compare himself to these men, after all the labors he invested in the church of Corinth, how could he become anything but angry, bitter, resentful, and full of the flesh. Paul said, I served the Lord faithfully, and I did it for His glory alone, not for any other reason.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

I think a fitting passage to sum all that up is Jeremiah 9, which is literally the greatest weapon, and that continual to glory in the Lord, and that you know Him and He knows you.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 (NKJV) ²³ Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; ²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

Study Overview

So, we covered a lot of ground on spiritual warfare, to recap:

- The War is Spiritual – Not Fleshly
- Don't Get Ambushed
- Remember the 3 R's (Recognize, Resist, Rejoice)
- You have Weapons – Use Them
- Don't Believe the Lies of Satan
- Don't Compare Yourself to Others
- The Greatest Weapon – Glory in the Lord.

Chapter 11
Study #13 (11:1-33)

Overview 1st & 2nd Corinthians

So we come to chapter 11 in our verse-by-verse study. Paul had written a letter of correction/instruction to the church there in Corinth. Many received it openly and made course adjustments to their lives, and were thankful to Paul for writing it. Others, and that is what we will read Paul addressing in these next few chapters, were not open to the letter of correction, nor were they thankful to Paul for writing it. So men in the church there in Corinth started a smear campaign against Paul, they started an all-out attack against Paul saying who is he to write such things to us, and they were trying to divide the church against Paul.

Paul Addresses the False / Actually within the walls of the Church

Paul begins here in chapter 10 to address these men he calls “false apostles”, as these men think they speak for God, chosen by God, but Paul clearly declares are not. Paul calls them deceitful workers.....wow. Paul says these men are not workers of God but of Satan himself..... double wow! So imagine this, catch all that Paul is saying, grab all that is going on here..... and that is that there are men inside a church who are viewed as spiritual, as leaders, leaders of God at that, and people are listening to them, many are following them, and these men are in the church and viewed as super-spiritual. Paul says these men are “ministers of Satan”. Hey, it still happens today in the church, we need to be on guard, and the Word of God gives us insight and understanding on how to identify them, and then address them.

2 Corinthians 11:12–15 (NKJV) ¹² But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. ¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

If Paul Remains Silent – Apostasy/Division

If Paul doesn’t respond to these wolves in sheep clothing, if he remains silent, if he does not address these challenges to his ministry as it applies to this church in Corinth, then the church in Corinth is in a place to fall into apostasy, division, and ruin. Paul, as much as he does not want to do this, is stepping up to address this men and the attacks upon him..... Which ultimately are an attack against the church in Corinth.

But for You – Come a Time of What you Believe and Why

There will come a time in every believer’s life, that you will be challenged on what you believe and why you believe it. You will be challenged on why you do what you do and live like you live. People will challenge why you believe in the inerrancy of the scriptures, creation over evolution, why only 1 way for salvation, why the gifts of the Spirit are still available today, why we are called to evangelism, why we believe that Jesus is going to return to this earth again! At some point in your life, probably many points in your life, people will challenge you on why you believe what you believe and why you do what you do, and you need to be ready with a response.

1 Peter 3:14–16 (NKJV) ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.” ¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

Some Point in your Life – Personal Attacks will Come

And, at some point in your life, especially if you are salt and light in this world, people will (like these men did here to Paul) lay attacks against your personal character, and beliefs. Listen, Satan will lie about you, and he will fuel people to lie about you, he will fuel people to mock and challenge you, and that is just a matter of fact, as he has the ability to influence and stir people up because he is the father of all lies, and he is the prince and power of the air, and as I say..... whoever is dialed into his station, will pick up his signal, and be moved by his message.

John 8:44 (NKJV) ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Ephesians 2:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once

conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

We must Glean – How we Respond could be Far Worse than the Lie

But here is something that we must glean as believers, and that is that Satan/people will lie about us, but how we react could be far worse than the actual lie spoken about us. We can glean greatly from this book and these last chapters (10-13) on how Paul reacted, and how we are to react. I say it starts with taking every thought captive so our minds don't race into over-defense mode, so we don't get filled with emotions and then start to react in the flesh. We have to keep the battle in the spiritual realm and not be drawn into the fleshly battlefield, for if we do we lose home field advantage (see last chapters study for a refresh on that passage). Christian, how you react to these challenges and attacks and lies, can be worse than the actual challenge or lie, because if we react in the flesh then that is now the new topic, the new battle point that they can stand on, of what you said and how you said it, and it won't matter what was the catalyst to start it, only now what you have actually done, not what you were accused of.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6 (NKJV) ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Let's See how Paul Handled This

So let's see how Paul handled these things, and we can learn much for our personal lives when our day comes. Maybe your family will challenge you now that they think you are some fanatical Jesus freak (PTL if they do by the way), maybe old friends you use to hang with who can't stand the light you eminent, maybe even like Paul it will even be people inside the walls of the church, but how will you handle it determines how deep and far the challenge will impact (good or bad).

2 Corinthians 11:1 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me.

They Tear Paul Down – Paul reestablish his Credibility

And so in order to bolster their own position among the people, they would seek to tear down Paul. Now, Paul was the one that founded the church. Paul went out and did the groundwork. He was the one who went into a heathen, pagan city and shared Christ with them and brought the people into the glorious knowledge of Jesus Christ. These men were parasites. They would come in after Paul and seek to profit off of Paul's work bringing the people into bondage. So they would bolster themselves. They'd say, "We are real Jews. Paul isn't a real Jew. We're the real Hebrews. We're the real Israelites." And the rabbis in those days would often yell at their students, and if they thought they weren't getting a point, they would start slapping him in the face. And evidently some of these fellows were following some of the typical rabbi customs, for Paul will get to that in a moment as he talks about his ministry and the difference between his ministry and those who came in after him. Now having put Paul down, trying to destroy Paul's credibility, Paul feels that it is necessary that he re-establishes his credibility, though it shouldn't be necessary. That he should answer some of the charges that these persons had made against him and against his own character.

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

Marriage by Arrangement in those Days

Now marriage in those days was by arrangement, and the parents would get together and say, "You know, you've got a pretty daughter; I've got a handsome son. Why don't we marry my son and your daughter, you know." There were three aspects to marriage. There was, first of all, the engagement. Now this could take place as early as three or four years old. You have friends? Been friends for a long time? They've got a little girl; you got a little boy. Well, why don't we marry them off when they get old enough. They're engaged to each other. So little kids in kindergarten, "Who are you engaged to?" As they grew up and the time came for them to get married, a year before the marriage they would enter into an espousal, which was a total commitment much as marriage. It was necessary to get a divorce from an espousal. However, the marriage was not consummated until the marriage

ceremony. It was during this year of espousal that Mary conceived of the Holy Spirit the child Christ. That's why it was such a problem with Joseph.

Overview Jewish Wedding/Espousal

It was during this time of espousal that the son would build an addition on to his father's house. Then on the wedding day the groom at any given time, unannounced (thus the bride would be dressed and waiting), would come for his bride and take her back to the little mansion, there the vows would be exchanges and the marriage consummated. Then for 7 days all the wedding guests would celebrate out in the living area of the house. The bride would be tucked away in the little mansion for those 7 days, no one would see her but the groom. The groom would come out to get food and socialize with the guests, but then take food and drink back to the little mansion where his bride would be. Two things happened on the wedding night, and that was that first the bride would take her veil off her face, and lay it on the shoulder of her husband and it was a symbol of her giving herself to him, and that he was taking the responsibility to protect and provide for her (the government was upon his shoulder). And also, when the marriage was consummated, then they would have to show what they call the tokens of virginity. The father would keep this as proof in years to come that his daughter was a virgin. It was an extremely important thing.

Paul – Jealous to Present Spotless / Not Corrupted – Spoiled – Led Away

And so Paul says, "Hey, I'm like a father. I'm jealous for you. My desire is that I present you unto Jesus, unto Christ as a chaste virgin. Don't want you corrupted by these other teachings and by these other teachers. Being led away into another Jesus, another gospel. I sought to keep it pure. I sought to keep you pure in the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Picture of Us & Christ / We are Betrothed to Jesus

So we see this beautiful picture of us, as Jesus the groom whom we are engaged to is preparing a little mansion for us off His Father's house. He is coming for His Bride at a time we do not know, and then for 7 years (not just 7 days) we will have the Marriage Supper of the Lamb where we will be tucked away from the world (and the earth will be a terrible place to be as the 7 year tribulation is going on – which it will be hell on earth). But we, will lay our veil upon His shoulder, and He shall tuck us away and amazingly "serve us".

John 14:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Mark 13:32–33 (NKJV) ³² "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is."

Isaiah 9:6–7 (NKJV) ⁶ For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Revelation 19:7–8 (NKJV) ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Revelation 6:15–17 (NKJV) ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Husbands / Parents

Husbands, can I ask you, is this your passion to present your wife a chaste (spotless) bride to Christ? Do you invest your heart and your soul into her spirituality that she might be a spotless bride before Christ? Parents, do you have this same jealousy over your kids that Paul did, that it would grieve you, bring you sleepless nights should they be deceived and taken away from being a spotless bride before Christ.

You Personally

And maybe you are here today saying I feel totally defeated right now, for I have been anything but spotless. In fact the more you talk Pastor the more I feel soiled and unworthy. Listen, He came to make you clean, and His blood is greater than any purity you could try having in your own energies. We look at our physical actions we have done, but God is so far beyond that, and He is looking for perfection (in deed and thought), and He says I can make you clean, I will make you the spotless Bride, come to me and let me make you white as snow.

Isaiah 1:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool."

I want you to Consider the Washing Part of Cleansing

And let me add this here, important to see and understand for it is so often corrupted in our minds and by the evil one, and that is there is an intimacy that is involved in the washing (the confession of sin). Yes, impurity separates us from the Lord, but today I want you to consider the washing part, the part where we say Lord make me clean, Lord forgive me of my failings (and we all them daily), Lord I want to be made clean. There is an intimacy with the Lord during the washing. In John 13 we have the account of Jesus washing the disciple's feet, we clearly see Jesus makes a point about being a servant of all, and we should be a servant too. But in the verses leading up, Jesus says "If I do not wash you, you have no part of Me. Jesus is speaking of being made clean before Him, it is an illustration of being made spiritual clean, sins washed away, and how every person must be cleansed of their sin to come before Him and be a part of Him. We do that once for our sin (singular) as being a sinner and needing our sin to be judged upon the cross, that positionally (Hebrews 10:10) we can become sons and daughter. And then we do it daily, for relationally (1 John 1:9), so that our personal sin doesn't cause a division and stress upon our relationship (not keeping our salvation, but keeping a sweet union with each other – just like when a husband or wife offends the other, there is tension in the relationship until that "thing" is ironed out). Now back to the cleansing, Jesus saying you must let me clean you else you have no part with Me

Hebrews 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV) ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

There is an Intimacy in Cleansing

Consider the cleansing, there was and there still is, an intimacy with Jesus when He washes us, cleanses us. Imagine these disciples the night of Passover and Jesus girds the towel, and comes with the wash basin. Imagine your dry, dusty and dirty feet. Imagine how refreshing the water feels as it pours over your parched skin. Then imagine the touch of the Savior's hand, gently caressing your feet, imagine the touch of His strong hands against your hardened feet, sore from sandals and walking all those miles. Then imagine Jesus pressing the towel around the foot to make them dry. It would be sheer delight, whose heart would not be pounding, as it is such a moment of tenderness, sweet kindness, a moment of intimacy. That is a picture that the Lord gives to us when we come to Him to be cleansed again; His gentle hands touching us, a moment of tenderness and kindness, a warm and loving caress. The Lord is not angry in cleansing, He is pleased, well pleased, because we have come to Him, we have agreed with Him, and only in agreement can He change us as He will not force Himself or ways upon any one. And in the cleansing, just like the foot washing, He loves the intimacy, He loves the opportunity to have alone time with you. Don't hide or ignore the place of confession, for it is not only a place of forgiveness, but of intimacy.

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Paul Referring to these False Apostles

Paul is referring to these false apostles, how they are influenced by Satan to try to corrupt (perverse/corrupt) the simplicity that is in Christ. They change the word of God, the gospel, the message of God and complicate it, make it something other than the simplicity that it is.

Eve Deceived by Spirituality

How did the serpent deceive Eve, it wasn't hey take a smoke of this, take a sip of that, indulge in this sensual experience, it was nothing like that; Satan tempted Eve by saying you can become more spiritual, you can see into

the things of God, you can expand your spiritual depth. And so nothing changes today as men and woman alike often get deceived by wanting to be more spiritual by creating some complex spiritual way of living or religion. Yes we should grow in our knowledge and maturity..... but not at the expense of losing the simplicity that is in Christ.

When I got Saved – All I knew was Jesus Loves Me

When I got saved all I knew was Jesus loves me and died for my sins, and I am free. Did know anything about theology, doctrine, or church history. I couldn't pronounce Psalms, thought King Saul was the same Saul of Tarsus (later name changed to Paul the apostle), and of course the great Italian prophet Malachi'. I didn't know much, but I knew I was saved, I knew I was going to heaven, I knew I was clean and forgiven, and I knew God Himself left the throne of heaven to come and die for me personally (a wretched sinner). My spiritual life was real simple, I love Jesus, and Jesus loves me.

Satan wants to Complicate your Relationship with Jesus

Satan wants to complicate your spiritual life, ultimately he desires to separate you from the Lord. And if he can't take away your salvation, he at least wants the next best thing, and that is to try to complicate your relationship with the Lord that it becomes burdensome, heavy, discouraging, and defeating to you that you have no joy or passion for it. I will be the first to admit that sometimes I get so busy with the details, I forget to sit and enjoy the sweetness of the simplicity. To just go for a walk with the Lord, to just sit and have a coffee with the Lord, to make a date with the Lord first thing in the morning to just think on Him over the word and worship songs.

Keep it Simple / Never lose the Awe of God / He is Coming for You

Keep it simple, God loves you, calls you His Bride. He is coming for you, and He is preparing a place for you. What and Amazing God, may we never lose the awe of how amazing He is, and how amazing His love is for us.

Has your Relationship lost the Simplicity

Christian has your relationship with the Lord lost that simplicity? If so then purpose today to get back to it, get back to that time of first love.

Summation of Walk – To be a Spotless Bride

And here is a simple summation of what our ultimate aim is for being Christians, and that is simply to be presented to Him as a spotless bride. Lord we say, what is it that you want from me, what is it you want me to be and do we ask.....the answer is.....to be a beautiful bride for my Son.

2 Corinthians 11:4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

Paul says are you kidding Me

So Paul is going to start rolling now by saying are you kidding me, are you allowing these guys to come in here and preach another Jesus, and you are going to put up with it.

2 Corinthians 11:5 For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles.

2 Corinthians 11:6 Even though I am untrained in speech, yet I am not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested among you in all things.

2 Corinthians 11:7 Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge?

2 Corinthians 11:8 I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you.

2 Corinthians 11:9 And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.

2 Corinthians 11:10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

2 Corinthians 11:11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows!

Paul Took no Money

Paul said I did all this because I love, not the lie from these false apostles that he did not love the saints at the church of Corinth. Paul took no money from them, he did not want to burden them financially. Paul got support from other churches (Macedonia), and he made tents on the side we know:

Acts 18:3 (NKJV) ³ So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.

1 Corinthians 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

They attack because not Polished / Not Money

If you can believe it, some of that attack against Paul was because he didn't take money. What they were saying is his message is so weak, his speaking ability so poor, that he knew he couldn't ask for money. You see Corinth was an intellectual center, and many a great intellectual came into the region to speak and people would come from miles away to listen, it was a form of entertainment. Those speakers would get great sums of money to speak. Hence, polished speaking was the gauge of truth, not the truth of the message. So it is in many avenues of Christianity today, the charismatic men and woman, the fine orators, the humorous, they are the ones viewed and valued as the ones with truth..... Not the truth of the message itself.

Shakespearean Actor

"My speech might be a little rough," said Paul, "but not my knowledge."

Asked to quote Psalm 23, the famous Shakespearean actor articulated each and every phrase perfectly. Then the host of the party asked his pastor, who was also in attendance, to quote the same psalm. The pastor lacked the rhythmic cadence, the powerful voice, and the smooth speech. All he had was a tear rolling down his cheek.

"I know the psalm," said the actor. "But this man knows the Shepherd."

Paul knew the Shepherd. Paul knew Jesus. "I might not match up to your favorite speakers or profound teachers," he said. "I might not measure up in speech, but in knowledge I do, for I know Him."

2 Corinthians 11:12 But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast.

2 Corinthians 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Right there inside the Church

This is something to see, these ministers of Satan are inside the church. They come across as spiritual, are revealers of light, and people are wowed by them. Paul's says they are deceitful workers, and look where they are, right inside the church walls.

Cults / Jesus Christ - AND

One of the tail signs of any cult is always this, they will say salvation is through Jesus Christ (AND). They always have an AND on the next statement. Jesus Christ AND the Book of Mormon, Jesus Christ AND keeping the Sabbath, Jesus Christ AND Witnessing for Jehovah. They love the AND part because it adds a "works trip" which now takes them from being wretched sinners in need of a Savior, to being good sinners (just a little sin) who do great works for God. Their works they believe is what earns the favor of God. Thus, the complicated gospel, no longer the simple gospel.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV) ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Titus 3:4-7 (NKJV) ⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us

abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

2 Corinthians 11:16 I say again, let no one think me a fool. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little.

Doesn't Want to Boast / I will be Quiet if they remain Quiet

Paul doesn't want to boast, but for the sake of making sure that the beloved in the church of Corinth are not deceived by these deceitful workers, he feels he must speak. You know we have some folks come through this church, they cause division, and they hurt and harm people. So we have to deal with them, that is part of shepherding the flock of God. Now I won't get into a carnal public argument or debate with them, for I won't step down to their carnality, however I let them know, I will remain quiet if you remain quiet, but if you continue on in hurting or harming people, then I will speak, and I will let people know what you are all about.

2 Corinthians 11:17 What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

2 Corinthians 11:18 Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast.

2 Corinthians 11:19 For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise!

2 Corinthians 11:20 For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face.

2 Corinthians 11:21 To our shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also.

Ok – Let's Compare

So Paul says ok, they came and gave a list to you why they are so great, Paul said let's compare lists.

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.

2 Corinthians 11:23 Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

2 Corinthians 11:24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

2 Corinthians 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

Imagine if this was a Reality

Could you imagine if Paul's life was one of today's reality shows? It would be the most watched show ever. Duck Dynasty currently is and it is about a bunch of characters running through the swamps of the south blowing duck whistles! Imagine if Paul's life was a reality show today, people would be tuning in ever weak say man I wonder what is going to happen next. This guy is off the hook.

2 Corinthians 11:26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of 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;

2 Corinthians 11:27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—

2 Corinthians 11:28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

2 Corinthians 11:29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?

2 Corinthians 11:30 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.

Pastor Chuck

Pastor Chuck read this passage at the last Pastor's Conference, and when he finished reading it he lifted his head and looked at all the pastors and said "you wimps".

Great Take Away – Let Nothing Separate us from Love of Lord

Paul went through many things, but never quit and gave up. And, here is a great take way for each of us, and that is that we let nothing separate us from the love of the Lord. Can any of these things separate us from the belief that God loves me, that God is desperate for us? Last study we talked about cultural strongholds and things that happen in our lives and we say oh what is the use, oh I give up, oh I am going to check out for a while and go back to those old places of comfort like drugs, alcohol, pornography, self-pity, and the likes - but we see Paul that none of these things moved him, moved him away from the Lord, if anything they made him draw closer to the Lord.

Romans 8:35–39 (NKJV) ³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* ³⁶ *As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."* ³⁷ *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.* ³⁸ *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,* ³⁹ *nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

I can't Take it we can Say / Light Afflictions

We can say I can't be single anymore, I can't take this unemployment, I can't take this marriage anymore, I can't take (you feel in the blank). But Paul is saying nothing shall move me away from my Lord, nothing shall move me from the path he has me on, regardless of how hard it is. Paul actually called all the things he faced as light afflictions.

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.* ¹⁷ *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,* ¹⁸ *while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Nothing shall Diminish the Inward Spiritual State

No one, and nothing, no outside condition will affect and diminish the inward spiritual state is what we see in Paul; how about us? We live inside of a fallen world, but the fallen world is no longer in us. Paul wasn't just living to present them a chaste perfect spotless bride for Christ, he himself was living to be such for Jesus. He was making his life an offering unto the Lord. He knew where Jesus pulled him from, and he was living with the same zeal Jesus had for him. Ok Lord, you going to take all that I am, then I am going to give you all that I have.

2 Corinthians 11:31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

2 Corinthians 11:32 In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;

2 Corinthians 11:33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

List of 30 / False apostles made it to 3

So Paul compares lists with these guys who came to elevate themselves over him. Paul lists soe 30 things, some of which were a summation of multiple things (like whipped 5 times, beaten with rods 3, shipwrecked 3 – hey would you let Paul on your boat?). So Paul's list is some 30 things, and these guys made it a whole 3 down the list, and all of it they got from their parents (Hebrews, Israelites, lineage of Abraham).

Freedom not having to Compare

Isn't it wonderful that we have the freedom of not having to compare ourselves with others. We know God loves us for who we are, and He isn't comparing us to others, that He doesn't rack and stack us according to our talents and successes. These guys wanted to elevated themselves but after they got racked and stacked against Paul, they lost. We have great freedom of simply being the Bride of Christ, accepted in the Beloved

Ephesians 1:6 (NKJV) ⁶ *to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.*

Recap of Study

- Be ready to give a reason why you believe what you believe
- How you respond to attacks greater than the actual attack
- Beloved, we are the Bride of Christ - His desire is that we be presented as perfect and pure

- There is an intimacy in the cleansing
- Keep your Salvation simple – don't lose the Awe of God
- Let no hardships separate you from the Love of God
- There is great freedom in not having to Compare ourselves with others

Chapter 12
Study#14 (chapters 12-13)

Overview 1st & 2nd Corinthians

So we come to chapter 12-13 in our verse-by-verse study. Paul had written a letter of correction/instruction to the church there in Corinth. Many received it openly and made course adjustments to their lives, and were thankful to Paul for writing it. Others, and that is what we will read Paul addressing in these next few chapters, were not open to the letter of correction, nor were they thankful to Paul for writing it. So men in the church there in Corinth started a smear campaign against Paul, they started an all-out attack against Paul saying who is he to write such things to us, and they were trying to divide the church against Paul.

Paul Addresses the False / Actually within the walls of the Church

Paul began back in chapter 10 to address these men he calls “false apostles”, as these men think they speak for God, chosen by God, but Paul clearly declares are not. Paul calls them deceitful workers.....wow. Paul says these men are not workers of God but of Satan himself..... double wow! So imagine this, catch all that Paul is saying, grab all that is going on here..... and that is that there are men inside a church who are viewed as spiritual, as leaders, leaders of God at that, and people are listening to them, many are following them, and these men are in the church and viewed as super-spiritual. Paul says these men are “ministers of Satan”. Hey, it still happens today in the church, we need to be on guard, and the Word of God gives us insight and understanding on how to identify them, and then address them.

2 Corinthians 11:12–15 (NKJV) ¹² But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. ¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

If Paul Remains Silent – Apostasy/Division

If Paul doesn’t respond to these wolves in sheep clothing, if he remains silent, if he does not address these challenges to his ministry as it applies to this church in Corinth, then the church in Corinth is in a place to fall into apostasy, division, and ruin. Paul, as much as he does not want to do this, is stepping up to address this men and the attacks upon him..... Which ultimately are an attack against the church in Corinth.

Paul continues to Address – but Nuggets of Gold for Us / Emotional Letter / We see the Heart of God

So Paul continues to address them through these last two chapters, and through it, we glean tremendous nuggets of gold to apply for our lives personally. Next week we start the Book of Galatians which was written by Paul, we have studied 1 Corinthians obviously written by Paul, and those books have lots of doctrine and theology in them (which is awesome for us – Theo (God), ology (study) – hence the study of God); but 2 Corinthians has been the great apostle opening his heart up, making himself vulnerable, and we get to see even deeper into his heart, and the heart that God has for His people (that includes each one of us here today). At times this epistle has been somewhat “jumpy” as it seems to jump to a theme, then move on to another, and then move back to the theme he had been on. That is because Paul isn’t writing a doctrinal thesis but pouring his heart out to the people. What a blessing for us to read someone’s personal email, and see how his heart moved from highs to low, and what made this great man who he was..... not just a servant of God, but a man of God, and why we come here week after week, to be conformed into the image of God, and to be His servant.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Going to miss this Book / Bible College

I am going to miss this book, it has been such a blessing. I remember when I was back in Bible College and I took this class on this epistle. People were dropping the class left and right because of the instructor (who was also a senior pastor of a large Calvary Chapel); some people dropped because they thought he was too harsh, some said too in your face. I remember we had to write a paper on it and I read some of my classmate’s paper and said this is ok, I think they captured most of the correct doctrine and theology, they missed some main points though. I felt I nailed the paper and the book, as I captured all the points of doctrine and theology. I cranked the paper out in just a few hours and had moved on to other things. When grades came back, I saw other grades before I got to the

office. Everyone had A's or B's, so I am figuring I am going to get an A+. Imagine my shock when I get my paper and see a C+. I was like what? Then in a note the pastor/teacher wrote, Ray I didn't grade you on content, but on potential, I expect more out of you than the others. I knew what he meant, I knew he meant I could have went deeper, but did only enough to meet the course requirements. Eighteen years later I more fully see the heart of the book, and it is the heart of the great apostle, and the heart of our God wanting us to not just be perfect in doctrine and theology, but to have the heart and love that is that doctrine and theology. To be conformed into His (God's) image, and to love like "this" (all we have read in these 13 chapters).

Overview of this Study

- God arranges for Us to have Intimate/Unique Moments with Him (12:1-4)
- God Works through Humility (12:5-7)
- There is Power in Weakness (12:8-11)
- God seeks Us, not our Stuff (12:12-19)
- God is Preparing a Spotless Bride (12:20 – 13:10)
- God wants Intimate Communion with You (13:11-14)

God arranges for Us to have Intimate/Unique Moments with Him (12:1-4)

2 Corinthians 12:1 It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:

Paul's Embarrassed he has to Talk about this

"I'm embarrassed that I have to glory in anything—even in my difficulties," said Paul. The false teachers who were undercutting Paul's ministry said, "He's a lightweight. All he does is teach doctrine. We have visions and revelations." "All right," said Paul. "If you want to talk about visions and revelations...."

2 Corinthians 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

2 Corinthians 12:3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—

2 Corinthians 12:4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

I know a Man / Verse 7 it is him

Verse 2 – I know a Man – Paul is speaking in humility, not wanting to boast, but verse 7 makes it clear that he is referring to himself.

2 Corinthians 12:7 (NKJV) ⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

Paul has an Intimate/Unique Moment with God

So here Paul is describing this intimate and unique moment that he had with the Lord.

Over 14 Years / Even Paul didn't Know

The more literal translation is "over 14 years ago". So over 14 years ago Paul had this experience, and he says I don't know if I actually died, or if this was a vision, but I was taken up into heaven. Some think this experience happened when Paul was stoned in Lystra, and that may be so, I really am not sure to be honest, and Paul didn't say it was that experience so it is really just speculation at this point. And along that line read other commentators and pastors and they will tell you "by their reasoning" that Paul was actually dead, or that Paul was only having a vision. I think it foolish preaching because even Paul said he didn't know, and he was there! So, I am always concerned with people who add to or take away from the Bible.

Here is Beauty - We will be Free of our Body Thoughts

But here is a beautiful take away regarding this account, and that is that we see that when Paul was in heaven, he had no thought about his body, he was not conscious of it, so much so he did not know whether he was in it or

not. That is surely one of the wonderful things to look forward to when we get to heaven, and that is that we won't be mind-consumed with our bodies. We won't be consumed with how do I look, how do you think I look, do these pants make me look fat, will all the beautiful people get the best seats at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We will be free to do what Paul did, and that is to simply enjoy being in the presence of God. Can I say this to you today, you are beautiful today just as you are, and do you know why, because you have the radiance of God emanating from you, you are adorned in beauty because you are and have been made into the spotless Bride of Christ. Live like, believe it, you are beautiful, you are His Bride and nothing is going to stop Him from coming for you, so don't you allow anything from stopping you to live free for Him.

2 Corinthians 12:4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Skeptical about Stories of going to Heaven / Unlawful to Speak

This verse makes me a bit skeptical of those who write books and embark on speaking tours after "dying" on the operating table. I'm just skeptical that is all, I mean Paul even says it would be unlawful to say what he saw, so I am just skeptical.

3rd Heaven

What is the third heaven? The Bible refers to three heavens: The atmosphere around us is the first. The stars above us constitute the second. And the place where God dwells is the third. Another aspect of the 3 heavens is, the heavens we see (sky and stars), and secondly the spiritual realm where angels and demons are, and thirdly heaven where God is. So, Paul was in the heaven where God was.

Inexpressible Words / Walled Garden / Song Solomon – Moments of Intimacy

In expressible words, trying to put it into human words would be against the law he says. The word "Paradise" means "walled garden". Just that begins a beautiful imagery in my mind. Paul experienced heaven in a unique way, a way that probably no one else ever will experience in that way, but I do believe God has that walled garden ready and accessible to us at all times, a place that is apart from this world, a place where He meets with us in a special way, a unique way, and shows us things that are just for us, special to us. He walked with Adam in the cool of the day, it was a special time and a unique time between God and his precious love, and we don't know what they talked about do we, as it is not recorded for us their conversations. I think of Song of Solomon as the Lord speaks of the garden enclosed. This imagery of the walled garden, this beautiful place the Lord prepares for us. Seek it out, come away with Him (as He calls to His Bride come away). And there you will find moments of intimacy apart from this world, moments of joy where you aren't consumed by your body and your thoughts of this world, just Him and His presence. And those times won't be explainable, you won't be able to put them into words that anyone else can understand for it will be a time that "you just had to be there", for words can't describe.

Genesis 2:8 (NKJV) ⁸ The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.

Genesis 3:8 (NKJV) ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Song of Solomon 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, A spring shut up, A fountain sealed.

Song of Solomon 2:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ My beloved spoke, and said to me: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away.

Paul had Visions

Now Paul had visions, we read of them in Acts. He saw the Lord on the road to Damascus, he saw in a vision Ananias praying for him, the man from Macedonia saying come over here to preach, the Lord came to him while he was in prison and said be of good cheer, and the angel of God came to him and said don't worry the ship is going down but you and all the men will be saved. So Paul has had plenty of visions, mighty visions, but there was nothing like this vision. It appears that Paul never mentioned this vision in all the 14 years after it happened. I would think his silence on the matters tells me something, and that was it was an intimate moment, of just He and

the Lord. He didn't want to spoil that time he had with the Lord by going around and going on an interview circuit about his trip to heaven..... it was an intimate moment between he and the Lord.

Acts 9:3–5 (NKJV) ³ As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" ⁵ And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

Acts 9:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. ¹² And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

Acts 16:8–10 (NKJV) ⁸ So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Acts 23:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

Acts 27:23–24 (NKJV) ²³ For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, ²⁴ saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'

Seek out the Intimate Moments

Beloved God wants to have those intimate moments with you in the walled garden. Come away with Him so you may.

God Works through Humility (12:5-7)

2 Corinthians 12:5 Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities.

2 Corinthians 12:6 For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.

2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

We need to be Careful it doesn't go to Our Head

So Paul is telling us, those times in the walled garden are great, but we can think ourselves something because of them. God works best through humility, in fact God will only work through humility and nothing us. God loves us enough to keep us humble. Paul says here that God made sure he stayed humbled so he would not become full of himself.

Tent Stake / Purposeful that we don't Know what it Was

So Paul here now makes reference to this thorn in the flesh. And the Greek word is actually a stake or a tent stake, which was about 18 inches long (ouch). Paul said there was this tent stake in my flesh. The spike, this stake really. Not a thorn, not a little irritant. This thing was really major. "There was given to me," interesting statement. Now I'm sure that as Paul was praying that it be removed, he didn't know that it was given to him. That's something he discovered in prayer. This thorn in his flesh, whatever it is. And God doesn't tell us what it is, and I think that that is deliberate that it wasn't told us what the thorn in the flesh was. There are hints; there are those that have made their guesses. Some believe it was an oriental eye disease that made Paul very repulsive to look at. Some believe that it was malaria fever, a special form that they have around Asia there that so incapacitated him and left him with constant migraine headaches. There have been all kinds of guesses, but we don't know. The scripture is silent and so it's only guesswork. And really, you're better off if the scripture is silent that you remain silent. I believe that God deliberately didn't let us know what his thorn in the flesh was because any of us who have any thorn in the flesh can relate to Paul and relate to his experience. You see, if we knew exactly what it was, we'll say, "Oh well, that's Paul, mine's different. God could do it for Paul, but you know, mine is so different than Paul." The fact that we don't know, we can all relate to it. Because it was a bothersome thing; it was a painful thing. It was a weakness. He calls it an infirmity, and we have the word infirmity, infirmity, they are both the same root. An infirmity is a hospital, a place where the sick people are taken. And so Paul talks about this infirmity, a weakness, an ailment. Whatever it was.

Beauty in Humility

Paul's humility – there is a beauty in humility. Humility is not threatening, humility disarms even the most cynical person.

Sports Illustrated Called

One morning, during a particularly successful season, the wife of a college basketball coach knocked on the bathroom door as he was shaving.

"Honey," she said, "someone from Sports Illustrated is on the phone."

"Sports Illustrated!" he said as, with lather still on his face, he grabbed a towel and ran down the stairs.

"Sports Illustrated?" he said eagerly, adjusting the phone to his ear.

"Yes," said a cheerful voice on the other end. "For seventy-five cents an issue, you can subscribe to Sports Illustrated for a full year!"

And his bubble was burst.

Life keeps us Humble

Life has a way of keeping us humble. And in the next verses we see there is power in the weakness.

There is Power in Weakness (12:8-11)

2 Corinthians 12:8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul comes to New Attitude towards this Thorn

So Paul came by the spirit to a totally new attitude towards this thorn in his flesh. Where at one time he was praying to be delivered, no longer was he praying to be delivered but now he speaks about, "I glory in it."

God knows Best

Why? Because I am now experiencing God's strength he says. So the way that Paul dealt with the thorn in the flesh. You see, God didn't answer his prayer as he prayed it, because God is sovereign. God doesn't have to answer my prayers as I pray them. God is not a genie. He isn't there to fulfill three wishes. He isn't there to bow to my demands. I'm not running the universe. And if I have good sense, I won't even seek to run my own life. But I will commit the keeping of my life to Him. I will commit my destiny to Him. I will seek His guidance and His direction. A man is a fool who tries to direct God to condescend to his will, to his demand.

Some won't See God Intimately – because wont Yield to Trial

There are so often times that God is using trials and hardships in our lives so that we might see Him in a new way, experience Him in a more intimate way, but when a trial comes, a hardship, an unpleasant experience, we immediately look for ways out, we look everywhere but up, we talk to everyone but God, and we fight Him all the way through it, many times complaining, and we miss this what Paul experienced, a sweetness of intimacy and fellowship with the Lord that he would not have experienced apart from the thorn.

Knee – Ground Zero

About 3 years ago through a freak accident I blew my knee out. I was at Ground Zero in New York, bent down to tie my shoe, and it was just one of those things, my knee twisted and damage was done. I soaked it, I prayed, I went to physical therapy (they heated, they zapped it with ultrasound, they prodded it, everything and it never fully healed). The knee specialist says the surgery won't fix it. So every day for 3 years I have this throbbing, some days ever so slight but still a pain, other days a deep-deep throbbing pain. Here is the thing, if you offered to take

it away today, now after 3 years, I would say no thank you. Because every day for 3 years, I remember Ground Zero. Ground Zero reminds me every day of the world I live in. Doesn't matter that the economy recovered, or borders are relatively safe, I know that there is an evil that exist that will not stop, and is waiting for its next opportunity. Ground Zero reminds me of the evil of man, the fragility of life, and shapes my focus on what is important, of why I am here, and what God has called me to do.

Paul Prayed – Got Answer – Not what he Expected / But Greater Answer – Greater Revelation

Paul prayed; He got an answer. It wasn't the answer that he was praying for. Many times, this is true. God doesn't give us what we ask for because He has something better. And what God had for Paul was a greater revelation of Himself. "Paul, no matter what you're going through, my grace is sufficient for you. I'm going to see you through, Paul." "My grace is sufficient for you and my strength will be made perfect in your weakness." Now you see, this new revelation gave Paul a totally new attitude towards the thorn. Rather than complaining and griping and saying, "Oh God, take it away. God, remove this thing," he says, "Oh, all right. I glory in that thorn, you know, because through it I've come to a deeper relationship with God where I know more of His power in my life than I've ever known before." "A messenger of Satan to buffet me." But God has turned it into an instrument of His to bring me into a greater experience of God's power working in my life. And so I take pleasure in this weakness. Because when I am weak, hey, then I'm really strong. The changed attitude that came to Paul through prayer.

Elizabeth Elliot

Maybe you are suffering, and you ask why. Why do you suffer, why hasn't God done something, or even where is He. Here is one who can relate, missionary author Elisabeth Elliot, whose husband Jim perished at the hands of the Auca Indians he was trying to reach, lists six scriptural answers she has found to the question "Why?"

1 Peter 4:12–13 (NKJV) ¹² Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Romans 5:3–4 (NKJV) ³ And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NKJV) ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

John 14:31 (NKJV) ³¹ But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

Romans 8:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Colossians 1:24 (NKJV) ²⁴ I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,

What was Heaven Like – My Grace is the Message

We all wish Paul would have at least tried to explain what the walled garden (heaven) was like, even in the weakness of human words, at least try Paul. But here is what God wants to make point of, and that is that the message He wants to give you, for you to understand, to grasp and absorb into your whole being, is..... My Grace is sufficient, and My power is made perfect in weakness. This is what God considers most important to get across to us (and the church there in Corinth).

When you are in that Place of Hardship

Christian, when you are in that place of suffering and hardship, don't look to (or expect) the church, the pastor, your friends; but go to Him. All others will fail you, go to Him, go to the One that says "His Grace is Sufficient", for in that/His grace you will find the power you need to face what is before you. Heaven, tell us what it was like Paul..... God says here is the message I want to get across to you, and into you, and that is that My Grace is sufficient, for My strength and power is made perfect when you are weak.

2 Corinthians 12:11 I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.

An Apostle – But Nothing

Paul says I am an apostle, but I am nothing. Weakness will humble you, and humility will be all the power you need to be used by God and do great things for Him. I like the progression of Paul's life, as we look in the chronological order of what he wrote and what he said, and we see him going from the least of the apostles, to the least of the saints, the chief of sinners as he writes shortly before his death. The more we see God and His holiness, the least we will see and think of ourselves. Get to the garden, and embrace the thorns of this world, the Ground Zero's of your life.

1 Corinthians 15:9 (NKJV) ⁹ *For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

Ephesians 3:8 (NKJV) ⁸ *To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,*

1 Timothy 1:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*

God seeks Us, not our Stuff (12:12-19)

2 Corinthians 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

Signs of Apostle / Paul's Miracles

Now Paul here declares that a mark of the apostle was really the gift of miracles. There were signs and wonders and mighty deeds. This is a part of the credentials, you might say, of an apostle in those days. Not only did Paul have visions, but miracles were performed through him. He struck a sorcerer blind, he healed a man lame since birth, he heals a demon-possessed girl in Philippi, people who touched his garments and handkerchiefs were healed, he brought a young boy back to life who fell from a second floor window, and he healed people on the island of Malta while there after the shipwreck. Paul worked the miracles of an apostle.

Acts 13:6–11 (NKJV) ⁶ *Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, ⁷ who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. ⁸ But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹ Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him ¹⁰ and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? ¹¹ And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.*

Acts 14:3 (NKJV) ³ *Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*

Acts 14:8–10 (NKJV) ⁸ *And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. ⁹ This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, ¹⁰ said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked.*

Acts 16:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." ¹⁸ And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour.*

Acts 19:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ *Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.*

Acts 20:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ *And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. ¹⁰ But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." ¹¹ Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.*

Acts 28:7–9 (NKJV) ⁷ In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. ⁸ And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. ⁹ So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed.

Lots of Debate – Didn't Change History / Didn't Stop Pentecost

Let me side bar here for a second, and that is there has been lots of debate on who should have been the 12th Apostle (Matthias, or is it Paul – for Paul would call himself an Apostle); and to that debate I have absolutely no idea, never really cared for the debate because it doesn't change the written Word, it didn't change church history. If they were wrong it doesn't appear that it effect the Day of Pentecost where 3,000 people were saved.

Preached with Disciples Acts 6 / Missionary Ethopia / Died a Violent Death

We know that after the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Matthias preached the Gospel at Jerusalem and in Judea together with the other Apostles (Acts 6:2). Now after that it is what all Matthias did after his appointment to be an Apostle is hard to track down in the early church writings (because of the various alternate names assigned to him), but some writing have him being a missionary to Ethopia, and dying a violent death for his witness (whether that be true is a matter of speculation). My point? No doubt Matthias heard his whole life, especially after Paul came on the scene, that he wasn't meant to be the 12th apostle, the church made a mistake; but what I want you to see is that Matthias never let that debate stop him from living out his appointment as an apostle. So the word for you, should people challenge you, question that you are a Christian, who are you to speak for God.....be like Matthias and just live it out, don't listen to the words of man, but the word of God.

(Acts 6:2 NKJV) Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

2 Corinthians 12:13 For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!

2 Corinthians 12:14 Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

2 Corinthians 12:15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

2 Corinthians 12:16 But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning!

2 Corinthians 12:17 Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you?

2 Corinthians 12:18 I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?

2 Corinthians 12:19 Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.

I want You – not Your Stuff

Verse 14 - I do not seek yours, but you - I love that. "I'm not here because I'm wanting to be enriched. I'm here because I love you. I don't want your possessions, I want you." And that is what the Lord says to you, He says it all through this Bible, He doesn't want your stuff (He doesn't need it for that matter because He is God), He only wants you, His bride. He is waiting for His Bride, He loves you, not you stuff.

All for Edification

Verse 19 – for your edification – Paul says I do this all for your edification, not for myself. All this is to build you up, because Paul like a father wanted to present them to their groom as a spotless perfect bride.

2 Corinthians 11:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. ² For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Sad Words – More I Love

Verse 15 – the more I love the less I am loved – sad words, as Paul poured himself out for these people, but says the more I love the less you love me. Giving of yourself to others will never be easy. But don't quit because the people quit on you. Paul loved them to the end, even in spite of them.

Fruit of the Spirit

Catch this, you who can relate with this painful verse (the more I live the less I am loved), and that is see what you have, not what you don't have right now. Paul loved them because Paul loved, you love them because you love..... you love because it is the fruit of the Spirit. You are filled and overflowing with the fruit of the Spirit because you are Spirit filled. You continue to love because you are Spirit filled. The Spirit isn't some force, but is the 3rd person of the Trinity. You are filled with God, God is flowing through you. God is love, you are loving, God is in you and His fruit is blossoming upon you. Now, if you have not love.....

Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV) ²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

1 John 4:8 (NKJV) ⁸ *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

1 Corinthians 13:1–13 (NKJV) ¹ *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. ¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

David Livingstone

It won't be easy, the road of loving can be extremely hard at times. I think of David Livingstone, the pioneer missionary to Africa, who walked over 29,000 miles. His wife died early in their ministry and he faced stiff opposition from his Scottish brethren. He ministered half blind. David Livingstone went to darkest Africa as a lone missionary. After some time his missions committee wrote to him saying, "Some people would like to join you. What's the easiest road to get where you are?" He replied, "If they're looking for the easiest road, tell them to stay in England. I want people who will come, even if there's no road at all!" The body of David Livingstone was buried in England where he was born, but his heart was buried in the Africa he loved. At the foot of a tall tree in a small African village the natives dug a hole and placed in it the heart of this man who they loved and respected. Keep loving my friends, even when you are not loved back, don't block up the fruit of the Spirit flowing through (God Himself), else you will actually rob yourself by quitting on loving the people who don't love you back.

God is Preparing a Spotless Bride (12:20 – 13:10)

2 Corinthians 12:20 For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

2 Corinthians 12:21 lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

Soiling of the Bride

God does not mix words, here is what soils His Bride.

Protecting the Body Inside / Protecting the Body Outside

Notice the two groups, the group in verse 20 versus the grouping in verse 21. Verse 20 are things that cause division inside the body of Christ (a person who tries to draw people to himself rather than Christ, a person through aggression drives people away from Christ). Paul says stop it, don't allow it. Then verse 21, it is the outward action of sin. God wants a spotless bride. People often ask me, as a set-up to attack me as a hate-monger and bible-thumper, what do I think of sex outside of marriage, what do I think of homosexuality, etc, etc..... and my answer is always the same, who cares what I think, I did not create man, I did not die for man, and it will not be me

that man stands before on the day of judgment. Each man should only care for one thing, and that is what does God think? You will find what God thinks here in His word, not out of Washington or Hollywood. Like a father with his child, God knows what is best for them. God calls sin, sin, because He wants to protect us and provide for us. Pick any sin you read of, and think it through, and you will see what God is protecting from, and providing for. I need not worry about a sexually transmitted disease, nor wrapping my car around a tree, nor overdosing..... God's word protects me from those things as I believe and trust that He knows what is best for me.

Chapter 13

2 Corinthians 13:1 This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

2 Corinthians 13:2 I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare—

2 Corinthians 13:3 since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

2 Corinthians 13:4 For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives 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 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

Paul not going to Wink at Sin / Come Heavy / Silence is not Condoning or Acceptance

"I'm going to be really hard on you this next time." Paul says as an apostle, an ambassador and speaker for God, I will not wink at sin. Sometimes we take God's patience as His condoning, we feel we have a special case and God understands it, and thus why things are going to so well. We can even be deceived into thinking God is giving us a special blessing. Be careful that the special blessing isn't coming from Satan, that he is leaving you alone to drink it all in, and he won't harass you because he has you right where he wants you..... nullified and occupied.

Examine Yourself / Paul blinds Elymas

I mean, Paul is saying, "Look, I'm going to come, and it's going to be heavy. I'm going to come, not in weakness, but in the power of God's Spirit to deal with the issues that are there in Corinth. And so you better examine yourselves, because this is going to be a heavy-duty thing when I arrive." You remember when Paul was on the isle and ministering to the governor Sergius Paulus, and the guy was listening and very interested, and this sorcerer Elymas started to say things against Paul. And God turned and said, or Paul turned and said, "God smite you with blindness, man!" And immediately the guy was blind and everybody feared, you know. They said, "Wow, what kind of a preacher is this?" You know. And they gave greater attendance to the Lord.

2 Corinthians 13:6 But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

2 Corinthians 13:7 Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified.

2 Corinthians 13:8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

2 Corinthians 13:9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete.

2 Corinthians 13:10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

They are Against Him – but He still has Loving Heart towards Them

Isn't that glorious? Here the guys are giving Paul a bad time speaking against him and all, and yet his heart towards them is that they might be perfected. He's longing, he said, "I wish that you were strong and I was weak. I would, I desire your perfection."

God wants Intimate Communion with You (13:11-14)

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

2 Corinthians 13:13 All the saints greet you.

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Beautiful Exhortation

So these beautiful exhortations of Paul: be fully matured, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace.

Heartwarming Ending

And so we come to the end of this second Corinthian letter—a beautiful and heartwarming ending to what was sometimes a necessarily brutal and heart-rending Epistle. Paul’s closing statement begins with some simple and solid exhortations—“be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace.”

And then he shares with them the wonderful ramification that if they do these things, the God of love and peace would be with them.

Notice Trinity

Notice the Trinity here in Paul's benediction. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." So Paul joins the Father, Son and Spirit in this benediction to the Corinthian epistle.

Communion Service

Recap of Study

- God arranges for Us to have Intimate/Unique Moments with Him (12:1-4)
- God Works through Humility (12:5-7)
- There is Power in Weakness (12:8-11)
- God seeks Us, not our Stuff (12:12-19)
- God is Preparing a Spotless Bride (12:20 – 13:10)
- God wants Intimate Communion with You (13:11-14)

End of Study