

2 Corinthians 13:1-7 The Obligation of Self-Evaluation

INTRODUCTION:

- Throughout the history of man, God has taken rebellion against His spiritual authority very seriously.
- One such rebellion is chronicled for us in the book of Numbers.
 - *Numbers 16:1-3, Numbers 16:31-35*
- Even in the New Testament in Acts 5 we see Ananias and his wife Sapphira see immediate death judgment for lying about the gift they presented from the sale of their property in front of Apostolic authority.
- How will God deal with the Church in Corinth who were questioning the Spiritual Authority God had put in place? Perhaps more importantly what does that mean for us today?

BACKGROUND:

- Ancient Corinth is in modern day Greece. It was a maritime city located between two seaports. Cargo and smaller ships were transported across a thin strip of land that saved 200 miles of treacherous sailing.
- The landscape of ancient Corinth was dominated by the AcroCorinth that was about 1000 feet tall. At the top was the Temple to Aphrodite, 1000 courtesans that served the temple with acts of prostitution during the day and in the streets of Corinth at night. They were identified by shaved heads.
- Ancient Corinth was prosperous, and lascivious. It was the Vegas of the Mediterranean.
- The problems within the Corinthian church were numerous.
 - ✓ They were divided by the leaders they followed.
 - ✓ They thought they were wise, and they were boastful.
 - ✓ They were stuck in spiritual immaturity.
 - ✓ They were sexually immoral.
 - ✓ They avoided church discipline.
 - ✓ They took each other to court.
 - ✓ They did not have a Biblical view of marriage and divorce.
 - ✓ They argued over food sacrificed to idols.
 - ✓ They were guilty of idol worship.
 - ✓ They took advantage of Christian liberty.
 - ✓ They lacked reverence for the Lord's Supper.
 - ✓ They abused Spiritual Gifts.
 - ✓ They lacked love.
 - ✓ They were confused about the resurrection.
 - ✓ They struggled with Biblical financial giving.
 - ✓ They questioned Apostolic authority, more specifically the authority of the Apostle Paul himself.
- 2 Corinthians 13 is Paul's final warnings and exhortations.
- In verses 1-7 we see Paul's warning of what to expect on his next visit; along with his exhortation for self-examination.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

1. Fair *"Every matter will be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."*

*"One witness cannot establish any iniquity or sin against a person, whatever that person has done. A fact must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses -- **Deuteronomy 19:15 (CSB)***

*Don't accept an accusation against an elder unless it is supported by two or three witnesses. -- **1 Timothy 5:19 (CSB)***

*But if he won't listen, take one or two others with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established. -- **Matthew 18:16 (CSB)***

2. Unsparing *"I will not be lenient"*

*I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth. For you say, 'I'm rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing,' and you don't realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. I advise you to buy from me gold refined in the fire so that you may be rich, white clothes so that you may be dressed and your shameful nakedness not be exposed, and ointment to spread on your eyes so that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be zealous and repent. -- **Revelation 3:15-19 (CSB)***

3. Power (Verse 4)

- The world mistakes what appears to be weakness but is actually the power of God.
- "If dependence on God is the goal, then weakness is the advantage." **Allistair Begg**
- The world misunderstood the apparent weakness of Christ, and the church in Corinth was making the same mistake with the Apostle Paul.

*I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not be based on human wisdom but on God's power. -- **1 Corinthians 2:2-5 (CSB)***

- The Gospel does not have to be shouted louder than its opponents, but by the power of God.

Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was one like the Son of Man, dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest. The hair of his head was white as wool — white as snow — and his eyes like a fiery flame. His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of cascading waters. He had seven stars in his right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from his mouth, and his face was shining like the sun at full strength.

*When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. I was dead, but look — I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades. -- **Revelation 1:12-18 (CSB)***

EXAMINATION

- The world loves division and tribalism.
- We live in a world that is increasingly becoming more divided and tribal.
- Divisions over politics, ethnicity, masks, vaccines, and the list goes on.
- Does the Bible make divisions?

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES:

1. The Bible divides people into two categories.

▪ Saved	Perishing
▪ Spiritually Alive	Dead in our trespasses and sin.
▪ Sheep	Goats
▪ Seeing	Blind
▪ Wheat	Tares
▪ Found	Lost
▪ Narrow road few find	Wide road with many on it

2. God desires everyone to be saved.

*This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants **everyone to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth. -- **1 Timothy 2:3-4 (CSB)***

As for me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw **all people** to myself.” -- **John 12:32 (CSB)**

3. There is a subset of people who believe they are on the narrow road, but actually are still walking on the wide one.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. **On that day many** will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?’ Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!’ -- **Matthew 7:21-23 (CSB)**

PAUL ADDRESSES THIS SUBSET OF PEOPLE.

- Spiritually speaking this is one of the most dangerous places to be.
- This might be a pastor’s greatest fear; that being charged with loving and leading a group of people that some of them will never show up.
- When it comes to our health, we will subject ourselves to tests all the time.
- How often do we subject ourselves to spiritual tests?

How do we take this test? No instructions are given.

1. **The goal of the test** “in the faith” “Jesus Christ in you?”
2. **How is this accomplished?**

Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, -- **1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (CSB)**

If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, -- **Romans 10:9-11 (CSB)**

3. **How do I know?**

I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God **so that you may know that you have eternal life.** -- **1 John 5:13 (CSB)**

- 1 John lays out the spiritual evidence of someone who is truly walking on that narrow road and those who are not.
- Not a snapshot.
- Take a piece of paper.

This is how we know that we know him: **if we keep his commands.** The one who says, “I have come to know him,” **and yet doesn’t keep his commands,** is a **liar,** and the **truth is not in him.** But whoever keeps his word, truly in him the love of God is made complete. This is how we know we are in him: The one who says he remains in him **should walk just as he walked.** -- **1 John 2:3-6 (CSB)**

The one **who loves his brother or sister remains in the light,** and there is **no cause for stumbling** in him. But the **one who hates his brother or sister is in the darkness,** walks in the darkness, and **doesn’t know where he’s going,** because the darkness **has blinded his eyes.** -- **1 John 2:10-11 (CSB)**

GROW GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Does God want us to know that we have eternal life?
2. Why do you think believers will sometimes struggle with knowing they are saved?
3. Read 1 John 1 and detail attributes of believers and non-believers detailed for us.
4. Which list are you demonstrating?
5. Are there any changes you need to make based on what God has shown you?
6. Is there anything in the list of the Corinthian Church's problems that you need to work on?
7. Why does God take sin so seriously in His church?