

“The Collective Influence of God”

2 Corinthians 13:11-14

Theme: Fellowship with the Triune God leads to a church that cultivates a deeper love for Him and for one another.

Introduction: Every family has its parting words. Parents sending their children off to school, loved ones saying goodbye at an airport, or even pastors closing a letter—those final words are often the most meaningful. They are not filler; they are the essence of what matters most. Here, in the concluding verses of 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul shares his final words with a troubled church. These words are not casual—they are Spirit-inspired instructions meant to shape how God’s people live together.

The Corinthians were divided, prideful, and often distracted from Christ. Yet Paul does not conclude with harsh words; he ends with grace. He reminds them that true fellowship with the **Triune God**—Father, Son, and Spirit—creates a church that loves Him more deeply and cares for one another more faithfully. What flows from the God of grace should be evident in a people of grace.

In these closing verses, Paul shows us three vital marks of a church under the influence of fellowship with the Triune God:

1. **The Appeals of Grace** (v. 11) – practical exhortations that call us to unity, joy, holiness, and peace.
2. **The Affections of Grace** (vv. 12–13) – warm demonstrations of love and fellowship that bind believers together.
3. **The Acclamation of Grace** (v. 14) – the doxological blessing that celebrates the grace of Christ, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Spirit.

As we reflect on Paul’s final words, we are reminded that a church filled with grace is not built by human wisdom or effort, but by living in communion with the Triune God, who provides everything His people need to thrive in love and unity.

Theme: *Fellowship with the Triune God leads to a church that cultivates a deeper love for Him and for one another.*

I. The Appeals of Grace – *13:11*

A. The Cooperation with Grace

1. Having clearly laid out what God’s Spirit had led him to say to the saints in Corinth, Paul provides a masterful conclusion to his letter – *“Finally, brethren ...”*
2. These saints have been ravaged by the deceptions and manipulations of false teachers – enemies of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, men who were driving them further away from Christ and not to Christ.

3. Of course, Paul's desire was for them to reject the world and the influences of the god of this world, and to experience the joy of Christ's presence among them.
4. He provides them with certain summaries of what he has been saying throughout the epistle, cited in five imperatives, commands that—when obeyed—result in the benefits of grace.

a) *“rejoice” [χαίρω] – (Pres. Act. Imp.) - a term that describes a priority for those who know Christ, who have been touched by the Gospel, and whose reconciliation with God governs the way they look at the world. – cp. [Philippians 4:4](#).*

- (1) It literally means “to be in a state of happiness or gladness” and is possible only because of the work of Christ – cp. [John 15:11](#).
- (2) However, it was the first word of Christ after His resurrection as He greeted the disciples - [Matthew 28:9](#).
- (3) When it exists, it is attributable to the saints' submission to the Holy Spirit, who produces joy – [Galatians 5:22](#).
- (4) As a result, it became a common greeting when meeting another believer, aspiring that their condition be one of Spirit-filled, Christ-centered joy as well as a farewell – similar to the Hebrew “Shalom.”
- (5) Thus, the KJV translate this as “Farewell.”

b) *“be made complete” [καταρτίζω] – (Pres. Pass. Imp.) – the Present passive conveys that we are to allow ourselves to be “put in order” or “outfitted” for God's purposes.*

- (1) It was used to describe the mending of broken nets – cp. [Matthew 4:21](#).
- (2) It is also used to describe to power of God's Word to establish and create – cp. [Hebrews 11:3](#).
- (3) Essentially, Paul is admonishing the Corinthians to allow themselves to be exposed to and aligned with the truth of God's Word, which transforms and perfects them – cp. v. 9.
- (4) To whatever degree they were out of place from obedience to the gospel, they needed the Word of God to put them back into place.

c) *“be comforted” [παρακαλέω] (Pres. Pass. Imp.) – again, they needed to allow God to come alongside them to appeal to them through His Spirit – cp. [John 16:7](#).*

- (1) This describes the role of the Spirit of God to address matters in our lives where we need aid – cp. [2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#).
- (2) Again, this is an appeal to surrender to the Holy Spirit, so

that His influence might “pick us up” and establish us more fully in the joy of the Lord and in His work to complete in us a devotion to Christ alone – cp. [John 16:13-14](#).

d) *“be like-minded” [αὐτός φρονέω] (Pres. Act. Imp.) – describes coming to the same opinion through the influences of the greater opinion or will of God.*

- (1) A church that knows the blessing of the Lord aligns itself with the truth of God’s Word, interpreting it the same way, coming to the same conclusions, so that unity is around truth.
- (2) It is not merely majoring on the majors – it is sharing the same convictions and beliefs on what God has said.
- (3) It describes the environment in a church where everyone has a different opinion on truth, and each gives up their own perspective in deference to what God’s Word actually says – [Romans 12:16; 15:5-6](#).

e) *“live in peace” [εἰρηνεύω] (Pres. Act. Imp.) – describes the effort one puts forth to cause others to be at peace; reconcile with those who are opponents.*

- (1) We must value one another so that we seek harmony and shun divisiveness – cp. [Ephesians 4:3](#).
- (2) Where it does not exist, we must seek to establish it – cp. [Romans 12:18; 14:19](#).

5. These five commands are evidences that God is at work – so much so that when they exist, it proves that God is among you.

B. The Cohabitation in Grace

1. Paul states that when believers cooperate with the grace of God that enables us to be obedient, *“the God of love and peace will be with you.”*
2. Although there are numerous places where the love of God is referenced, this is the only instance where God is referred to as *“the God of love.”*
3. God is the source of both *“love and peace”* – provided to those who are willing to submit themselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit.
4. When churches abandon these imperatives, the “appeals of grace,” then the blessings of God turn into the chastisement by God – cp. [Revelation 2:5, 16; 3:16](#).
5. Instead of the warm presence of God and the blessings He brings to an obedient church, a disobedient church will know the searing heat of God’s discipline and ultimately His abandonment.

II. The Affections in Grace – **13:12-13**

A. The Affection for the Saints – **v. 12**

1. In demonstration of the peace, love, and like-mindedness of a submissive response to Paul's letter, he calls on them when they hear this letter read to immediately show their affection to one another – *“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”*
2. Since this is an *Aorist Middle Imperative*, it is meant to show an immediate action rather than an ongoing tradition.
3. It is not a present-tense reference, so it does not imply a continuous practice.
4. Although placing cheek to cheek—men with men and women with women—was a common Middle Eastern greeting, even outside the church, it served as an immediate way for a divided congregation to reconcile.
5. This should be the prevailing spirit when we gather—an affection for one another that is evident, and seeing people shake hands, embrace, and express the love of God for one another is a beautiful sign of the unity of the Spirit in our love for Christ – cp. **Romans 16:16**.

B. The Affection from the Saints – **v. 13**

1. Yet, the affection for saints extends beyond one's local congregation and extends to the church at large – *“All the saints greet you.”*
2. This refers to *“the saints”* that are with the Apostle Paul when he was writing to the Corinthians, most likely either Philippi or Thessalonica, as he was in Macedonia (2 Corinthians 7:5-7).
3. Christian brotherly love extends beyond one's own congregation and includes genuine believers from other churches and even denominations – **2 Corinthians 9:12-13**.

III. The Acclamation of Grace – **13:14**

A. The Means of Grace – *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ ... be with you all.”*

1. Here is one of the greatest Trinitarian verses in the Bible – combining the Godhead in one reference while respecting the Persons in a benediction of grace.
2. He interestingly begins with a reference to *“the Lord Jesus Christ”* through whom we know *“grace”* - cp **2 Corinthians 8:9**.

3. Our ability to know *“the love of God”* is through what Christ did for us in dying for our sins and delivering us from the power of sin.
4. Independent of Jesus Christ, there is no way to know God, the means of grace initiate with Christ and consummate in Christ – cp. *John 1:14, 16-17.*

B. The Motive of Grace – *“... and the love of God ... be with you all.”*

1. Of course, it was *“the love of God”* that sent Christ – cp. *John 3:16.*
2. We are told that the love of God was the fountainhead of His redemptive work through His Son – cp. *Ephesians 2:4-5.*
3. Essentially, Paul is praying that God's initiative will be consummated, that the work of redemption—the greatest expression of God's love—will be perfected in them and have a continual influence on their faith as they value God's love as they seek to respond to Him – cp. *Jude 20-21.*

C. The Maintenance of Grace – *“... and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”*

1. Finally, *“the Holy Spirit”* is referenced as the 3rd Person of the Trinity.
2. He aspires that the influence *“of the Holy Spirit”* in their lives be unhindered, using the relational description of *“fellowship”* [*κοινωνία*] – a term meaning “close association involving mutual interests and sharing.”
3. Of course, the mutual interest of the saints and the Spirit is the preeminence of Christ Jesus – *John 15:26; 16:14; 1 Corinthians 12:3.*
4. Hence, Paul aspires for the Corinthians, through their response to the Gospel, to know the work of Christ instigated by the love of God and to share in the passion and interest of the Holy Spirit, seeing Christ exalted in and through their lives.
5. This is the essence of every biblical church – and I pray it will be true of Grace Bible Church of Fair Oaks.

So What?

1. In what areas of my life am I resisting God's work of making me complete?
2. If I am to find comfort through the work of God's Spirit using His Word, why do I so quickly seek comfort in lesser things?
3. How is my affection for others most often demonstrated?

4. **How does the fellowship of the Holy Spirit influence your delight in the grace of Christ?**

Fellowship with the Triune God leads to a church that cultivates a deeper love for Him and for one another.