



Dr. Jimmy Stewart | August 24, 2025

Sermon | Final Exhortations

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 13:1-14

Summary: In his final words to the Corinthians, Paul prepares them for his third visit and reminds them that he will not spare those who continue in sin. He urges self-examination to see whether their faith is genuine, encouraging repentance and restoration. Though perceived as weak, Paul affirms that Christ's power is displayed through weakness—both Christ's and his own. His apostolic authority, though gentle in writing, will be firm in person if necessary. He ends with a call to joy, unity and peace, invoking the triune blessing of grace, love and fellowship.

Spotlight: Strength in the church comes not through dominance but through humble dependence on Christ's power in our weakness.

I. Examine Yourselves Honestly and Thoroughly (vv. 1–5).

2 Corinthians 13:1-5

1 This is the third time I am coming to visit you (and as the Scriptures say, "The facts of every case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses"). 2 I have already warned those who had been sinning when I was there on my second visit. Now I again warn them and all others, just as I did before, that next time I will not spare them. 3 I will give you all the proof you want that Christ speaks through me. Christ is not **weak** when he deals with you; he is powerful among you. 4 Although he was crucified in **weakness**, he now lives by the power of God. We, too, are **weak**, just as Christ was, but when we deal with you we will be alive with him and will have God's power. 5 Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith.

- Paul warns of coming judgment on unrepentant sin
- Three Strikes and your out!
- Encourages the church to test whether they are genuinely in the faith
- Self-examination is a grace, not a threat
- "Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves." (v. 5)
- To Fail - not standing the test, not approved - properly used of metals and coins

II. Embrace Christ's Power in Weakness Everywhere Always (vv. 6–10).

2 Corinthians 13:6-10

6 As you test yourselves, I hope you will recognize that we have not failed the test of apostolic authority.

7 We pray to God that you will not do what is wrong by refusing our correction. I hope we won't need to demonstrate our authority when we arrive. Do the right thing before we come—even if that makes it look like we have failed to demonstrate our authority. 8 For we cannot oppose the truth, but must always stand for the truth. 9 We are glad to seem weak if it helps show that you are actually strong. We pray that you will become mature.

10 I am writing this to you before I come, hoping that I won't need to deal severely with you when I do come. For I want to use the authority the Lord has given me to strengthen you, not to tear you down.

- Paul reminds them he may seem weak, but Christ's power is present in him
- Weakness is the very place God chooses to display His strength
- Apostolic authority is for building up, not tearing down
- "For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for." (v. 9, ESV)

III. Encourage One Another Toward Spiritual Maturity at All Times (vv. 11–14).

2 Corinthians 13:11-14

11 Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words: Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet each other with a sacred kiss. 13 All of God's people here send you their greetings. 14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

- Final exhortations: rejoice, aim for restoration, live in harmony and peace
- A united, loving, grace-filled church reflects the God who indwells them
- Benediction invokes the grace of Jesus, love of God, and fellowship of the Spirit
- "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (v. 14)

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians specifically to help the young church grow spiritually and become strong and healthy. Among the targeted themes are five that stand out as common to all healthy churches.

"Community is not something discovered; it is something *forged*."
- James Emery White

True Christian community is not accidental or effortless—it is forged over time through shared suffering, sacrificial love, gospel truth, and Godly leadership.

Defining elements of a healthy church community from 2 Corinthians *The Local Church is Greater than the Broken world because it's . . .*

1. Community Is Forged Through Shared Suffering and Comfort 1–2

We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us. (1:7)

2. Community Is Built on Authentic Lives and Gospel Transformation 3–5

Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (5:17)

3. Community is Purified through Holiness, Repentance and Separation from the World 6–7

Come out from among unbelievers and separate yourselves, says the Lord. (6:17)

4. Community Is Fueled by Generosity and Shared Mission 8–9

You must each decide in your heart how much to give... For God loves a person who gives cheerfully. (9:7)

5. Community Is Protected by Godly Leadership and Bold Confrontation 10–13

Our authority builds you up; it doesn't tear you down. So I will not be ashamed of using my authority. (10:8)

Life Application Sermon Questions:

1. What does true self-examination look like in your daily walk with Christ? Are you open to correction from God's Word and from trusted believers?
2. How might Christ be using your current weakness to display His strength? What would it look like to boast in that weakness rather than hide it?
3. Are you building up others in the church or merely pointing out their flaws? How can your words and actions better reflect the restorative mission of Christ?
4. Is your church marked by grace, love, and fellowship? What role can you play in strengthening unity and peace among the community of believers?
5. When you consider power, do you picture worldly strength or Christlike humility? How does this affect the way you serve, lead and suffer?
6. Of the five themes defining community from 2 Corinthians, which is the strongest at your church? Which is the weakest? What can be done to help strengthen the weakest area? What will you contribute to strengthen your church community?

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