

SEVEN YEAR WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

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FOREWORD

BEHOLDING HIS FACE (II Cor. 3:18)

“The Old Man of the Mountains” is a protrusion of granite rock above the gap of the White Mountains at Franconia Notch, New Hampshire. This giant rock, bearing the resemblance of a face strong in character, measures 48 feet from the top of the forehead to the bottom of the chin.

This is the statue that inspired Nathaniel Hawthorne to write the short story, “The Great Stone Face.” He tells of Ernest, a little boy who lived in the shadow of this rock. His mother told him of a prophecy that there would appear some day in the valley a man who would resemble the face of on the mountain. Ernest hoped this would come true, for his man’s features would be noble, his expression grand and sweet, embracing all mankind in his affections. He would be kind and strong, a true gentleman.

You will remember how in the story the first man to be compared to the Great Stone Face was Mr. Gathergold. The people acclaimed him, but Ernest knew his face to be one of greed. Others were compared to the Face and Ernest hoped each would be the one. But Mr. Blood and Thunder, a war hero, would not qualify. Neither could Old Stony Phiz, though he was an eloquent politician; nor the Poet who gave only “lip service” to truth and beauty.

After all these had failed to qualify, Ernest was one night addressing a crowd of his neighbors in the vicinity of the Face. As he spoke, “His words had power, because they accorded with his thoughts; and his thoughts had reality and depth, because they harmonized with the life that he had always lived.” As Ernest was speaking a man in the crowd shouted: “Behold! Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face!”

Hawthorne must have gotten his idea from the Bible, possibly from II Corinthians 3:18. It is true that a man grows to resemble whatever is the center of his thoughts and affections. Paul says, “But we all, as with unveiled face we see the Lord’s glory mirrored, are changed into the same likeness from one degree of glory to another, derived as it is from the Lord’s Spirit” (II Cor. 3:18). This is the reason why we must constantly worship and keep the Lord in our minds. We become like what we admire and worship. And this is true of the preacher and the people, too!

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE
Year VI
First Quarter

Lesson 1

Page 1

II Corinthians 2

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 2:14

Memory Verse:

“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place” (II Corinthians 2:14).

THE CASE OF DISCIPLINE

A sensible, Spirit-led man of God may change his plans. Paul did. He had planned to go into Macedonia (northern Greece) first, then to Corinth. “Now I will come unto you,” he writes in I Cor. 16:5, “when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.”

Later Paul planned to go first to Corinth. “I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit. And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you... “ (II Cor. 1:15, 23). His enemies accused him of “double-mindedness”, of fickleness! Rather, it was Spirit-mindedness.

Paul shows why he postponed his visit to Corinth. “Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I come not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand” (II Cor. 1:23, 24). It was “to spare” them severe rebuke, and give them opportunity to repent and to get right with God before the apostle arrived. He did not want to “Lord it over them;” he wanted to HELP THEM HELP THEMSELVES. Had he come before they repented, his coming must have been in severity. Read Romans 15:13.

Paul’s humility is revealed as he explains his personal feelings. Today we need to “follow in his train.”

I. Joy through Grief (II Corinthian 2:1-4)

A. Compassion in correction (II Cor. 2:1).

“But.... I would not come again to you in heaviness” (II Cor. 2:1): By “again” does Paul mean he had paid them another visit besides the one described in Acts 18? Or does he mean that having had one joyful visit (Acts 18:1-18) he does not wish the second one to be “in heaviness” or sorrow? In II Corinthians 12:14 “The THIRD TIME I am ready to come to you” may refer to the proposed SECOND VISIT of II Corinthians 1:15f. We have “absolutely no way to tell clearly whether Paul had already made a second visit” to Corinth (Robertson). Paul sought to help them, not hinder them. He was not a religious autocrat, a religious hireling, or dictator. He was ready to suffer in sympathy with them; to feel their ‘sorrow and joy. By postponing his visit, Paul would give them time to repent. This is genuine compassion in correction. If we must wound by discipline, let us provide the salve of healing.

B. Joy through correction (II Cor. 2:2).

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“For if I make you sorry...” (II Cor. 2:2): The Corinthians were Paul’s SOURCE of Joy. His letter to them was LOVE-INSPIRED, although severe. He did not want to prolong the sorrow. He did not want to “come unto you with a rod” of correction (I Cor. 4:21). He would rather “feed” them than punish them. The minister’s or teacher’s greatest joy is in seeing those whom he leads and teaches blossoming in the radiance and fragrance of a happy Christian life.

C. Confidence by assurance (II Cor. 2:3).

“And I wrote...having confidence in you” (II Cor. 2:3): The apostle was confident the Corinthians would CORRECT THE SINS AMONG THEM. He had brought their sins before them. They knew God’s way. Paul’s friendship for them attributed to them the highest motives. He was not suspicious of them. Eagerly he craved their advancement in the Christian life. Then they could rejoice together.

To what Epistle does Paul refer in “I wrote?” To I Cor. 5 or to a lost letter? It is possible that when Paul decided not to come to Corinth, he sent a letter. “The language that follows in verses 3 and 4 and II Cor. 7:8-12 can hardly apply to I Corinthians” (Robertson).

D. Love in discipline (II Cor. 2:4).

“For out of much affliction.... I wrote unto you” (II Cor. 2:4): In any harsh measure he had to use, the prompting purpose of Paul was LOVE. He loved them; therefore, he hurt them. The greatest proof of love is NOT PAMPERING BUT DISCIPLINE. God disciplines us because He loves us (Heb. 12:5-13). It is not love that allows a wayward child to go unrebuked and unpunished. A preacher does not love his people when he allows them to go untaught, unrebuked, and undisciplined (Matt. 28:18-20; II Cor. 4:2-5). “The greatest blessings and fullest joys are sometimes those which are distilled from the deepest sorrows. The greatest affections sometimes come from the strictest discipline.” “With many tears”: Paul was a man of heart. Read Phil. 3:18. He twice mentions his tears in his speech at Miletus (Acts 20:19, 31).

II. Restoration through Forgiveness (II Corinthians 2:5-11).

A. The offender’s greater grief (II Cor. 2:5, 6).

“But if any have caused grief.... “ (II Cor. 2:5): A reference to the immoral man of I Cor. 5:2, 5, 13. The church was to exercise discipline. The man was to be excommunicated or cut off from fellowship of the church. The church by majority action expelled the offender.

The man in sinning had hurt himself, his Lord and his church. The injury he inflicted on himself was greater than the injury inflicted upon Paul and the church, He who slander’ another does more damage to himself (or herself) than to the slandered.

“Overcharge you all”: Paul does not wish to give pain by too severe language.

“Sufficient to such a man is this punishment...inflicted of many” (II Cor. 2:6): The most part of the church at Corinth carried out Paul’s injunction. The incestuous man was expelled by “many,” the majority.

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The sinner **ACCEPTED THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH**. He repented of his sin. Our Lord taught: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:3, 4).

B. The forgiveness of brethren (II Cor. 2:7, 8).

"So...ye ought rather to forgive him" (II Cor. 2:7): It is easy to play the Pharisee, to be critical and censorious, cruel and unforgiving. Even Christians are apt to thank God that they are "not as the rest of men."

The motive in forgiveness is the complete restoration of the penitent offender. He must repent before forgiveness is required of the offended. In this case forgiveness was required of those who sympathized with the one offended. Many times the offended person, who may have been injured very grievously, is quicker to forgive than those who sympathize with him.

The devil's device is to get a man into sin and then tell him there is **NO FORGIVENESS**. This incestuous sinner was "swallowed up," over-whelmed in sorrow. Paul said: "Restore him, forgive him, love him, take him back that he may not be overwhelmed in grief and Satan get the man forever!" Christians must discipline and **RESTORE IN LOVE** (Gal. 6:1; Matt. 18:15-22). We must **FORGIVE AND FORGET!** This would "confirm" their love. It was valid. To gloat over another's fall is to prove we are not children of God. To "air" another's sin willfully is hell-inspired.

C. The purpose of Paul (II Cor. 2:9-11).

"For to this end also did I write..." (II Cor. 2:9): One object of Paul's writing was to **TEST THEIR OBEDIENCE** to I Cor. 5:5, 13.

"To whom ye forgive... I forgave it... in the person of Christ" (II Cor. 2:10): Literally this means "in the presence of Christ." Paul was not acting **FOR** Christ, or **AS** Christ, but instead **WITH CHRIST** who dwelt in him (Gal. 2:20). As Paul acted as the servant of Christ, under his direct orders, his official acts represented the Master. No one can take the place of Christ, but we can act in such a way as to multiply Him in daily life. We can **LIVE FOR** and **WITH HIM** and **LEAD OTHERS TO AIM** (Matt. 5:16).

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us...not ignorant of his devices" (II Cor. 2:11): Satan led the man at Corinth into the sin of incest. Then Satan tried to get the Corinthians to be "tolerant" of the sin. That failed. The church obeyed Paul's commands and disciplined the man. "It is as much a sin to keep a sinner **OUT WHEN HE REPENTS** as it is to keep him in (the church) when he persists in willful and known sin!" Since the sinner repented of his sin, **FORGIVE AND RECEIVE HIM**.

Practical Principles

The practical principles involved in this passage are plain, important, and abiding.

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1. No church should fail to discipline its offending members.
2. This discipline should not be administered by the decision of any one man in the church, but by the “many” (II Cor. 2:6).
3. The one supreme purpose of such discipline should be the reformation and restoration of the offender.
4. When the offender is truly repentant, he should receive forgiveness and be treated with Christian affection.
5. Pharisaical severity and lack of Christian sympathy may drive the offender to desperation and again place him under the power of Satan.

III. Triumph through Christ (II Corinthians 2:12-17).

A. A preacher’s concern (II Cor. 2:12, 13).

Furthermore, when I came to Troas...door was opened unto me of the Lord” (II Cor, 2:12): Two visits to Troas are named (Acts 16:8; 20:5-12), but the one alluded to here is omitted. Troas was then a large city, situated not far from the site of old Troy, and almost within sight of Europe.

“A door was opened”: An opportunity for the gospel. Here was an “open door” Paul could not enter because of the sins of the Corinthians. A little later we find a church there (Acts 20:5).

“I had no rest in my spirit... “ (II Cor. 2:13): Paul had expected to meet Titus at Troas and get news concerning the state of affairs at Corinth. The apostle was so agitated at this disappointment that he left Troas without completing his mission. He went to Macedonia where he apparently hoped to meet Titus.

No preacher can be at his best while concerned over the CONTINUED FAILURE OF HIS PEOPLE TO DO GOD’S WILL. Paul was so upset over the Corinthians he could not enter “the open door” of opportunity at Troas. It is a solemn reflection to consider how quarreling or indifferent saints HINDER GOD’S WORK. Time spent in getting such “babes in Christ” right with God is time that had better be USED in entering some OPEN DOOR for Christ. Have YOU by indifference, misunderstanding, or a desire to hurt or hinder the work in your church, taken the time of your minister and others when THAT TIME COULD HAVE BEEN SPENT IN ENTERING OPEN DOORS FOR CHRIST? If so, you will answer to God for it (Rom. 14:12; II Cor. 5:10)! Repent, get right with God and man, and GO TO WORK IN EARNEST FOR GOD NOW!

B. A preacher’s triumph (II Cor. 2:14).

“Now thanks be unto God...causeth us to triumph” (II Cor. 2:14): A new paragraph begins here. It has been called “OUT OF THE DEPTHS TO THE HEIGHTS.” This is a sudden outburst of gratitude in contrast to the previous dejection at Troas.

Paul met Titus in Macedonia, and heard news that filled him with thankfulness. The apostle’s rebound of joy on meeting Titus has given the world the finest exposition of the Christian ministry in

existence. Read if possible A. T. Robertson's THE GLORY OF THE MINISTRY (An Exposition of II Cor. 2:12-6:10).

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“Always”: The sense of present triumph has blotted out the gloom at Troas.

“Triumph”: Paul uses the figure of a Roman triumph. The victor rode in triumph; the vanquished was often chained to the victor's chariot wheels and led off to a life of captivity. Long lines of captives bore censers filled with burning incense. Sweet spices and aromatics were strewn upon the street and everywhere was the scented fragrance of victory's perfume. The knowledge of God is here the aroma that Paul had scattered like an incense bearer.

To Paul, those engaged in serving Christ are VICTORS. Their work is a triumphant march. Those mastered by the gospel accompany them in the triumph. “Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 15:57). No matter what the adversities or adversaries, the END will be the TRIUMPHANT PROCESSION OF CHRISTIAN VICTORY.

C. A preacher's influence (II Cor. 2:15, 16).

“For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ... “ (II Cor. 2:15): “In spreading the fragrance of Christ the preacher himself becomes fragrant” (Plummer). Wherever men take Christ in this dark world, there is being scattered the sweet smell of redemption.

Seneca said: “He who frequents the perfumer's shop and lingers even for a short time, will carry with him the scent of the place.”

“The savor of death... of life.” (II Cor. 2:16): There are two classes of men among whom the gospel perfume circulates -- those on the way to salvation and those on the way to perdition. As in the triumphal procession there were the conqueror and his troops, and the conquered captives, all breathing of the same incense. To the victors the fragrance was a symbol of present gladness and future safety. To the captives it was a token of defeat and condemnation and approaching death.

The gospel brings life to him who hears and OBEYS (Heb. 5:9). It brings death, condemnation to him who hears and disobeys (John 3:18-19, 36; II Pet. 3:9).

“And who is sufficient for these things?”: Who possesses the love, the wisdom, the humility, the earnestness for a calling, and the issues of which are eternal life or death? In himself no one is. But some one has to preach Christ and Paul proceeds to show that he is sufficient. This is a bold thing to say, but necessary and only from God (II Cor. 3:6).

D. A preacher's message (II Cor. 2:17).

“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God...(II Cor. 2:17): In its original sense the expression Paul used refers to a vintner or wine merchant who deals in corrupt trading practices by diluting his wine and selling it as a pure product. There are false teachers who are like that. They are men who seek to make a personal profit from divine things. Like dishonest merchants, they mix the wine of truth to gain a selfish advantage. They adulterate the truth and are fraudulent hucksters of God's message.

The Judaizing teachers at Corinth who adulterated the gospel with ingredients of Judaism, were the “false brethren” (II Cor. 11:26) with whom Paul's whole ministry was a struggle.

“For we...as of sincerity.” Paul and his fellow-preachers spoke the words of genuine sincerity and with a sense of responsibility to God! “Sincerity” is more to be desired than oratory, brilliance, education and personal prominence.

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QUESTIONS

1. Does a sensible, Spirit-led man of God ever change his plans?
2. Can you cite an apostle who changed his plans a number of times (I Cor. 16:5; II Cor. 1:15, 16, 17, 23)?
3. Why did Paul postpone his visit to Corinth (II Cor. 1:23, 14)?
4. What do you think would have happened at Corinth, had Paul gone there before the church repented?
5. Can you explain the meaning of “again” in II Cor. 2:1 (Acts 18:1-18)?
6. Do you think Robertson is right when he says there is “absolutely no way to tell clearly whether Paul had already made a second visit” to Corinth (II Cor. 1:15f; 12:14)?
7. Who was Paul’s source of joy (II Cor. 2:2)?
8. Of what was the Apostle Paul confident regarding the Corinthians (II Cor. 2:3)?
9. With what spirit did Paul write the Corinthians (II Cor. 2:3)?
10. Is the greatest proof of love to pamper or discipline the object of our love? Why does God discipline his people (Hebrews 12:5-13)?
11. To whom does “But if any have caused grief” refer (II Cor. 2:4; I Cor. 5:1-5)? Meaning of “overcharge you all?”
12. Who carried out the expelling of the immoral man at Corinth (II Cor. 2:6)? Did the man repent of his sin?
13. What did Paul tell the Corinthians to do to the repentant sinner (II Cor. 2:7)? How often did Jesus tell us to forgive a truly repentant sinner (Luke 17:3, 4)?
14. What purpose did Paul have when he wrote the Corinthians (II Cor. 2:9-11)? What are the “devices” of Satan (verse 11)?
15. What practical, and abiding, principles are involved in this plain passage?
16. Why was Paul so anxious to find Titus (II Cor. 2:13; 7:6-16; 8:6, 16-23; 12:17, 18)? Why could Paul not enter the “open door” at Troas?
17. Why did Paul say, “Now thanks be unto God...” (II Cor. 2:14; I Cor. 15:57)? What is the meaning of “triumph?”
18. What is the meaning of “For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ” (II Cor. 2:15)?
19. Can you explain “the savor of death unto death... the savor of life unto life” (II Cor. 2:16)? What does the gospel bring to the one who obeys (Heb. 5:9)?

20. Did Paul “corrupt” the Word of God (II Cor. 2:17)? What “false brethren” did (II Cor. 1:26)? What marked Paul’s speaking?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE
Year VI
First Quarter

Lesson 2	Page 1
II Corinthians 3	Memory Verse: II Corinthians 3:2,3

Memory Verse:

“Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart” (II Corinthians 3:2, 3).

THE GLORY OF PAUL’S MINISTRY

The very best credentials for a Christian minister are to be found in the lives and characters of his people. Jesus said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:16).

Christians are “born of water and of the Spirit” (John 3:5; I Peter 1:23), but they are NOT BORN MATURED or ADULT. Christians MUST GROW and DEVELOP SPIRITUALLY. “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18).

Do you think that a bird flies naturally? It is born to be a flier, but it must learn how to fly. It must learn to use air currents for soaring; it must understand how to angle for air with its wings, how to bank, power-dive, roll, take off, zoom and land in relation to the wind. It must learn to use its wings as man learns to use his feet.

Christians must learn to LIVE THE IDEALS of the NEW NATURE WITHIN HIM IN THE NEW BIRTH.

I. The Christian’s Qualifications (II Corinthians 3:1-6)

A. The personal qualification (II Corinthians 3:1).

“Do we... commend ourselves?” (II Cor. 3:1): Paul had just defended his own sincerity in a burst of triumph for the true servant of God (II Cor. 2:14-17). He affirmed that he was “sufficient for these things,” a claim for competency in preaching a gospel which involves the issues of life and death for the hearer. His enemies would twist his words, so Paul beats them to the gun and discusses the subject of his so-called self-glorying. See I Cor. 9:1-6, 15, 19; 14:18; 16:10.

“Or need we... epistles of commendation?” Judaizing teachers, enemies of Paul, carried letters of introduction from Jerusalem. They edged in on Paul’s work. They were among his chief troublemakers. They now asked, “Who is Paul? Can he show letters from anybody of STANDING IN JERUSALEM?”

Does a father need a letter or recommendation to his children? Paul had lived and worked in Corinth for eighteen months (Acts 18:11). He had founded the church at Corinth. Paul did not need credentials or letters about his character and work. OUR RECORD is our best recommendation.

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Letters of recommendation and credentials have their place, but they can never take the place of personal performance. Read some New Testament examples of commending persons (Acts 15:25f; 18:27; I Cor. 16:10f; Romans 16:1; Colossians 4:10; II Cor. 8:22f).

B. The Corinthian qualification (II Cor. 3:2, 3).

1. The Corinthians were Paul's credentials (II Cor. 3:2).

"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts..." (II Cor. 3:2): You Corinthians are my epistle, Paul affirms. They were his recommendation. They had been pagans. Now they were Christians. The change in their lives was of God and Paul was the instrument of bringing them the Gospel.

"Written in our hearts": Paul was writing in their hearts. When Paul looked into his heart, he saw the Corinthians enshrined there, and felt he needed no commendation to them.

2. The Christians are Christ's credentials (II Cor. 3:3).

"Forasmuch as ye are... the epistles of Christ" (II Cor. 3:3): The Corinthians Christians constitute the REST PROOF of the truth of Christ and His Gospel. The church as a whole was the EPISTLE OF CHRIST. Of course, each individual is an epistle. All men who see the changed lives of the Corinthians read each one as an epistle. Professing Christians are the Bible that men read and know. It is a sober and solemn fact that each of us pulls people to Christ, or pushes them away from Christ by indifference to His Word, His work, His worship!

"We are the only Bible the careless world will read,
We are the sinner's gospel. We are the Lord's last message, given in deed and word.
What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?"

"Written not with ink... not in fables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." Christ is the author and dictator of the Christian as His epistle. Paul was the penman or writer. Ink might fade, but the changeless "Spirit of the living God" wrote not on "tables of stone," like the law of Moses, "but in fleshy tables of the heart." It is a solemn thing to hear and obey the gospel. Our work, words, and our walk of life must conform to a new pattern of life.

C. The divine qualification (II Corinthians 3:4-6).

1. Paul's call (II Cor. 3:4).

"And such trust have we through Christ to Godward" (II Cor. 3:4): Paul is describing his ministry. He has declared it to be triumphant and fully accredited. This is not self-conceit on Paul's part, but through Christ. Christ personally called Paul to be His minister on the Damascus Road (Acts 26:15-18).

2. Paul's equipment (II Cor. 3:5).

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“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves... our sufficiency is of God” (II Cor. 3:5): Paul would claim no credit for the work at Corinth, as though it was his own. His qualification as an apostle and as Christ's worker was from God. Paul was an honor student of far-famed Gamaliel. Paul was no intellectual or worldly novice. He knew life and was well trained, but all of this was not enough. He had to have more; “our sufficiency is of God.” God must equip His workers for His work!

3. Paul's ministry (II Cor. 3:6).

“Who also hath made us able ministers... “ (II Cor. 3:6): Paul was not egotistical when he called faithful servants “able ministers”, Above all things, Paul was a New Testament preacher, not an Old Testament prophet, priest or scribe. Christ gave him a new message, or “new testament,” or covenant.

“Not of the letter, but of the spirit”; The law was by letters written and engraved on stones, hence of “thee letter,” the law of the Old Testament. The “spirit” is the Holy Spirit of the New Testament.

“The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life”: The law condemns all who do not obey its commands, but the law could make no man perfect. The law places under the sentence of death (Romans 7:9, 10).

“The spirit giveth life.” The gospel bestows eternal life. “The contrast in verse 6 is not between the outward and inward sense of Scripture, but between the outward and inward power of those two great dispensations, Jewish and Christian.” The Christian has a power not enjoyed by those under the Old Testament law.

Contrasts between the Old Law and the New

The Old

1. The letter killeth (II Cor. 3:6).
2. Given by Moses (John 1:17).
3. Ministration of death (II Cor. 3:9).
4. Ministration of condemnation (II Cor. 3:9).
5. Written/engraved in stones (II Cor. 3:7).
6. Glorious, done away (II Cor. 3:11).
7. Veil upon heart (II Cor. 3:14).
8. The Old Testament (II Cor. 3:14).
9. Spoken unto the father by the prophets (Heb. 8:8-9).
10. Changeable priesthood (Heb. 7:12).
11. Imperfect priesthood (Heb. 7:12).
12. Priests of the tribe of Levi (Heb. 7:13).
13. Priesthood changed (Heb. 7:13).

14. Priests without an oath during the law (Heb. 7:21).

The New

1. The Spirit giveth life (Rom. 8:2)
2. Given by Christ (John 1:17).
3. Ministration of the Spirit (II Cor. 2:8).
4. Ministration of righteousness.
5. Written in the heart (II Cor. 3:3).
6. More glorious; it remains.
7. Veil done away in Christ.
8. New Testament (II Cor. 3:6)
9. Spoken unto us by His Son (Heb. 1:1-2).
10. Unchangeable priesthood (Heb. 7:24).
11. Perfect priesthood (Heb. 7:26).

12. Christ of tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14).
 13. The law changed (Heb. 7:12).

14. Christ a priest by an oath since the law (Heb. 7:28)

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Contrasts between the Old Law and the New (Continued)

15. Shadow of good things (Heb. 9:1-9).
 16. Blood of animals (Heb. 10:4).
 17. No forgiveness (Heb. 10:3).
 18. The old way (Heb. 9:19-23).
 19. Tabernacle made with hands (Heb. 9:24).
 20. For Jews (Gen. 17:13)
 21. He taketh away the first (Heb. 8:13).

The Old made Jews.

15. The substance (Heb. 10:1).
 16. Blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14).
 17. Sins remembered no more (Heb. 8:12).
 18. The new and living way (Heb. 10:20).
 19. Tabernacle made without hands (Heb. 9:11).
 20. For “every creature” (Mark 16:15-16).
 21. That He may establish the second (Heb. 10:9)

The New Makes Christians!

II. The Christian’s Inspiration (II Corinthians 3:7-11)

A. Death and Spirit (II Corinthians 3:7-8).

“But if the ministration of death, written in stones... was glorious” (II Cor. 3:7): The Law of Moses was indeed glorious. God introduced the law on stones (Exodus 31:18). The face of the lawgiver shone with such dazzling brightness that the Children of Israel could not look upon it (Exodus 34:29-30). He had to veil his face. Yet that brightness soon faded. Its passing splendor is a fit symbol of the glory of the law, which has grown dim in comparison with the surpassing splendor of the gospel, which is “a dispensation of God.”

“How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious” (II Cor. 3:8): The gospel, the ministration of life, must have greater glory. “If the old covenant which brought death glorified its introducing minister, so that the face of Moses shone as he brought it from God to the people... is it not MORE TO BE EXPECTED THAT THE INITIATORY MINISTERS OF THAT NEW COVENANT WHICH BRINGS LIFE SHALL BE GLORIFIED?” The gospel brings life, not death (Romans 7:7-11; I Corinthians 15:56 VS Romans 6:4, 11; 8:2, 10, 11).

B. Condemnation and righteousness (II Corinthians 3:9-10).

“For if the ministration of condemnation be glory...” (II Cor. 3:9): This contrast reveals the effects of the respective administrations of law and grace. Law brings condemnation without salvation. Grace brings righteousness without retribution. The law revealed the justice of God. Grace reveals the mercy of God,

“For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect... “ (II Cor. 3:10): The glory on the face of Moses was temporary, though real, and passed away (verse 7), a type of the dimming of the glory of the old dispensation by the brightness of the new. The moon makes a dim light after the sun rises. Christ as the Sun of Righteousness has thrown Moses in the shade. Read the claims of superiority by Christ in Matthew 5-7.

C. Past and present (II Corinthians 3:11).

“For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious” (II Cor. 3:11): The old covenant, or law, was glorious. The Decalogue is done away. Christ “blotted out the

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handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col. 2:14). The law is not “done away” in the sense that its principles are not in force. It is “done away” in its relation to salvation. It is fulfilled in Christ and the Gospel (Matthew 5:17). We are not “under law, but under grace.” See Hebrews 8:13. If that which was done away is glorious, much more is that glorious, which abides forever! Christianity is still alive; it is not dying. It is not a system of self-improvement. It is the inner power of a great transforming power (Romans 1:16; 12:1, 2).

III. The Christian’s Transformation (II Corinthians 3:12-18)

A. Transition (II Corinthians 3:12-17).

1. The bold speech (II Cor. 3:12).

“Seeing then we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (II Cor. 3:12): Paul was fearlessly outspoken in preaching Christ. Paul asked the Ephesians to “Pray always... for me... that I may open my mouth boldly to preach the gospel” (Ephesians 6:18, 19). Every Christian can boldly say: “I’m a Christian by the grace of God; I’m saved; He’ll keep me forever if I endure for Him to the end” (Revelation 2:10c; Matthew 10:22).

2. The fading glory (II Cor. 3:13).

“And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face... “ (II Cor. 3:13): Why did Moses veil his face? Not because of the excellent glory of it; he veiled himself to hide the shining that was passing. It was fading. He veiled his face that they might not see its passing. The Authorized or King James Version reads, “TILL Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.” It should read, “WHEN Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face” (Exodus 34:33, R. V.). When Moses returned to God’s presence the veil was removed and his face shone with a new radiance. The Authorized Version had a wrong translation here as if to hide the glory on the face of Moses!

Christ needs no such veiling, for His glory ABIDES FOREVER.

3. The veiled face (II Cor. 3:14-16).

“But their minds were blinded... veil is taken away in Christ” (II Cor. 3:14): This refers to Israel as a people. The Jews as a people are brilliant, but they are “blinded” to the truth in Christ. Christ stands forth in every page of the Old Testament, but not to the Jews (Hebrews 10:7; Luke 24:27). Unbelieving Jews can not, or will not, see that Christ who came to “die” (Romans 5:6-8), and will come again to “reign” (II Timothy 2:12; II Corinthians 3:15). With willful blindness the rabbis set aside the word of God by their tradition in the time of Jesus (Mark 7:8f).

“The veil is upon their heart” (II Cor. 3:14): Note that the veil is not on the Scriptures, but on the mind. The Jewish nation gave us both the Scriptures and the Saviour, yet their mind is dulled to the Scriptures and their heart is dead to the Saviour. It is equally impossible for the Jewish nation to conceive the historical Christ of the New Testament as having any place in the Old Testament system. To them Jesus

is an impostor. Their Talmud teaches that Jesus was a wicked man, a sorcerer, and an idolater. It further teaches

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that He is in hell. “May his name be blotted out and his memory.” The New Testament is called “the margin of evil or a blank page of sin.” All of this is because of the veil that is upon their hearts!

“Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord... “ (II Cor. 3:16): “But whenever one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed” (Berkeley). “It” refers to the heart of Israel. Here Paul has in mind Exodus 34:34 where we find of Moses that the veil was taken from around his face whenever he went before the Lord. After the ceremony the veil is taken from around the face of the bride. When the veil of blindness is taken from Israel they will see clearly that the glory of the law was faded before the surpassing glory of the gospel. Whosoever will take a deliberate step in faith to Jesus Christ will have the veil stripped away! Out of the Scriptures we can gather irresistible facts in favor of Jesus Christ as God’s Messiah for “every creature” (Mark 16:15, 16; John 1:3, 14; Phil. 2:7; Gal. 4:4; Psalms 104:1; Luke 2:12; Luke 2:7 and Revelation 19:15; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:22; Heb. 4:15; I John 3:5; I Peter 2:24; John 19: 5-6 and Acts 3:21; Matt. 27:29 and Heb. 2:9; I Peter 2:24 and Heb. 12:2; Heb. 9:26, 24).

4. The new liberty (II Cor. 3:18).

“Now... where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (II Cor. 3:17): When we give Jesus Christ His rightful place by obedient faith, we find ourselves in a new liberty. The Spirit within transforms us. We are “new creatures” (II Cor. 5:17) in Christ Jesus. The progress from Old to New Testament is a progress from LAW to Liberty. Instead of regulation by an outer law, there is inspiration by an inner law. It is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” And “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

The outer Law of Moses placed restrictions on outward conduct. It regulated conduct by a series of rules. The INNER LAW of the Spirit TRANSFORMS LIFE WITHIN (Rom. 12:1, 2). It changes DESIRES, AFFECTIONS, and CONVICTIONS.

The Christian has freedom of access to God without fear in opposition to the fear of Exodus 34:34 (see Hebrews 4:14-16).

B. Transformation (II Corinthians 3:18).

“But we all... are changed... from glory to glory” (II Cor. 3:18): “We all” means ALL CHRISTIANS, not merely ministers. Paul affirms that we shall not lose the glory as Moses did. That is true IF WE KEEP ON BEHOLDING or KEEP ON REFLECTING “the glory of the Lord.”

In Hawthorne’s story, “The Great Stone Face,” Ernest looked so long at the “FACE” that at last the people said of him: “He has come, the one who is LIKE THE GREAT STONE FACE!”

Let us LOOK AT Jesus, and BECOME CHRIST-LIKE (Heb. 12:2). The place of your gazing and contemplation MUST BE THE BIBLE, for that is where He is revealed (Luke 24:27, 44-48; II Timothy 3:14-17).

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QUESTIONS

1. Where are the very best credentials for a minister to be found?
2. According to Jesus, how do we “know” men (Matthew 7:16)?
3. When we are “born of water and of the Spirit,” are we born matured? What must we do (II Peter 3:18)?
4. Why did Paul defend his glorying for his competency in preaching the gospel (II Cor. 3:1; 2:14-17; 9:1-6, 15, 19; 14:18; 16:10)?
5. Since a father does not need a letter of recommendation to his children, why did not Paul need a letter to the church at Corinth (II Cor. 3:1; Acts 18:11)?
6. Is there a place for letters of recommendation and credentials (Acts 15:25f; 18:27; I Cor. 16:10f; Rom. 16:1; Col. 4:10; II Cor. 8:22f)?
7. What did Paul call the Corinthians (II Cor. 3:2)? Where is the epistle “written”?
8. What contrasts are given in II Cor. 3:3?
9. Did Paul have a divine call to the ministry (II Cor. 3:4; Acts 26:15-18)?
10. How was Paul fully equipped, and who made him “sufficient” (II Cor. 3:5)?
11. What kind of minister had God made Paul (II Cor. 3:6)?
12. What does the “letter” do? The “Spirit” (II Cor. 3:6; Rom. 7:9, 10; Rom. 6:23)? How many contrasts are there between the Old Law and the New?
13. How did God introduce the law, “the ministration of death” (II Cor. 6:7; Ex. 31:18; 34:28-35)?
14. Why did Moses “veil” his face (II Cor. 6:7, 13; Ex. 34:29, 30)? What is the R. V. reading of Ex. 34:33)?
15. What glorious fact does Paul set forth in the question of II Cor. 3:8-10; (Rom. 7:7-10; I Cor. 15:56; Rom. 6:4, 11; 8:2, 10, 11)?
16. What inferior ministry did Paul contrast with his glorious ministry of grace (II Cor. 3:6-11)? What did Christ do to the law (Matt. 5:17; Col. 2:14)?
17. How did Paul present the gospel of hope through Christ (II Cor. 3:12; Eph. 6:18, 19)?
18. What has been veiled, the Scripture or the Jews’ understanding (II Cor. 3:14-16)? How alone can the “veil be taken away”?
19. What great blessing does one have who is in Christ (II Cor. 3:17; 5:17; Heb. 4:14-16)?
20. What are the blessed results of beholding Christ, and how is this done (II Cor. 3:18; Heb. 12:2; Rom. 12:1, 2; Luke 24:27, 44-48; II Tim. 3: 14-17)?

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Lesson 3

Page 1

II Corinthians 4

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 4:5

Memory Verse:

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord: and ourselves you servants for Jesus’ sake” (II Corinthians 4:5).

PAUL’S IDEA OF THE GOSPEL AND THE WORD

At the time of his conversion, the Lord told Ananias of Paul: “I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). Truly ice may speak of “Paul’s Living Martyrdom.” His sufferings for Christ continued for over thirty years.

Paul’s enemies plotted to kill him in Damascus (Acts 9:24), as well as in Jerusalem, “where they went about to slay him” (Acts 9:29). They drove him out of Antioch (Acts 13:50), attempted to stone him in Iconium (Acts 14:5), and did stone and “drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead” (Acts 14:19) at Lystra.

At Philippi they beat him with rods and put him in prison (Acts 16:23, 24). He was mobbed at Thessalonica (Acts 17:5), driven out of Berea (Acts 17:13, 14), plotted against in Corinth (Acts 18:12), nearly lost his life in Ephesus (Acts 19:29; II Cor. 1:8, 9) and in Corinth (Acts 20:3) and Jerusalem (Acts 22:22-24; 23:13, 13). He spent two years in prison at Caesarea, and two more in Rome, suffered things too numerous to mention (II Cor. 11:23-27), and was finally executed as a criminal (II Tim. 2:9; 4:5-8). He “felt himself immortal until his work was done.” The apostle must have had an amazing endurance, for he sang as he suffered (Acts 16:25). None but an iron constitution could have lived through it. Even that would not have been sufficient, had not God’s grace and strength been “made perfect in (Paul’s) weakness” (II Cor. 12:9).

I. The Personal Motive of Service (II Corinthians 4:1-6)

This is a biographical account of a distinguished Christian. It seems strange that a servant of God should be hounded by persecution without and within the church. Those within the church questioned his motives, vilified his character, and tried to besmirch his name. Paul did not defend himself, but did declare his motives of service.

Like Paul, you may be accused of dishonesty, duplicity and of deceit. Remember that human nature is ever prone to suspicion, to envy, and to slander. Note

A. The worker’s sincerity (II Corinthians 4:1,2).

“Therefore, seeing we have this ministry... “(II Cor. 4:1): Paul received the Christ and His call on the Damascus road while on the way to arrest Christians (Acts 9:1-16; 22:1-16; 26:9-18). He was “baptized into Christ” (Acts 9:18; Gal. 3:27) to “wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16; 2:38), and became a “new creature” (II Cor. 5:17). The risen Lord appointed Paul the glorious service of proclaiming the gospel.

“As we have received mercy, we faint not”! Paul’s motives were according to God’s mercy. This once proud Pharisee was on the Damascus road as a persecutor of Christians. Christ had mercy on him, and

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forgave him through obedience to the gospel (Acts 22:16). He could not be a faint-hearted coward when meeting trouble and persecution. He was determined that the greatness of the mercy he had received would be the measure of the greatness of the service he would render.

“But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty...” (II Cor. 4:2): Paul lived the gospel he preached. A false lit is as bad as a false doctrine. Paul renounced all underhanded dealings and practices. He did not “tamper” with God’s message. Idle tradition he renounced, as did Jesus (Matthew 15:1-9), “To be right matters more than to be thought right.”

Paul denounced the false and deceitful teachers who sought to bring the Corinthians unclear the old Jewish covenant. They resorted to dishonesty, craftiness, and adulterated the Word of God with elements of the law, tradition and false ideas of Christ (Gal, 6:12, 13).

“Commending ourselves to every man’s conscience...” Paul presented the truth and made his appeal to “every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

B. The unbeliever’s blindness (11 Corinthians 4:3, 4).

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost” (II Cor. 4:3): The blind are those who by choice wear the veil of unbelief. Such blindness is not the fault of the gospel, or of the messenger, or teacher. There is no veil in Christ (II Cor. 3:16). Paul preached the gospel of liberty, not things hidden by a veil. The Judaizing opponents replied that his gospel was as much veiled to them as he said that the law was veiled to the Jews. Paul replied that the gospel is only veiled to the lost, those who are blinded by the god of this world. “I can’t believe” usually means “I love my sins too much to accept the gospel way” (Isa. 59:1, 2; John 3:16-21).

“God of this world hath blinded the minds...” (II Cor. 4:4): Satan does not arbitrarily impose blindness. It is self-chosen. Whenever a state of personal blindness exists, it is because men permit it to be so.

Satan is given a unique title: “The god of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), of space and time. Satan blinds by lies (John 5:44) so that men should not see the light of the gospel. Satan reigns today in the hearts of men, in fashions, in philosophy, in nations, in commerce, in every enterprise and individual that does not accept the truth.

“The glorious gospel of Christ... image of God”: One must CHOOSE to be a Christian. It does matter WHAT YOU BELIEVE. You either choose Christ, or you choose the devil (Matt. 12:30). He who would “see” God may see Him in the face of Christ (John 14:9). Christ is declared to be the image of God. Christians are the image of Christ (Gal. 2:20). You may choose your character and destiny. Decision determines direction. Direction determines destiny.

C. The source of lights (II Corinthians 4:5, 6).

1. The divine source (II Cor. 4:5).

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus...” (II Cor. 4:5): Christ Jesus is thy source of the gospel. The gospel is Christ-centered. He is not a religious relic for veneration, but a LIVING PERSON around whom all our religious life revolves (Acts 4:12; I Cor. 3:11). Paul did not want to attract attention to himself, but to the gospel (I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; John 3:30). He became “servant of all” “for Jesus’ sake”

(I Cor. 9:19). Your bond-slave “for Jesus sake” is sufficient motive for any preacher’s or missionary’s sacrifice.

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“For God... shined in our hearts” (II Cor. 4:6): This is a paraphrase of Gen. 1:3. God “hath shined in our hearts” by bringing the light of the gospel into the world. “The Christian who looks on the face of Jesus Christ as Moses looked upon the glory of God will be able to give the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God” (Matt. 5:15-16). Knowledge is light.

The bondservant (slave) of Jesus Christ must be prepared for opposition – inside as well as outside the church. Who are we that we should escape (11 Tim. 3:10-12; Matt. 10:24, 25)?

II. The Victorious Service (II Corinthians 4:7-11)

A. The vessel and the treasure (II Corinthians 4:7).

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels... “(II Cor. 4:7): Paul likened himself and his fellow gospel workers to fragile earthenware pots. The value lies in what the pot contains. It was customary in Oriental countries to keep gold and jewels in such vessels.

The message is more important than the messenger. The treasure is more valuable than the vessel that holds it. The vessel was Paul, the treasure was “the GLORY OF GOD in the face of Jesus Christ” (verse 6), that is, the gospel!

The vessel has its importance. You may be an ordinary clay vessel, or crippled, sick, or limited in many ways. YOU are INDISPENSABLE AND EXPENDABLE IN YOUR PLACE (I Cor. 1:26-29). If you are FAITHFUL, TO CHRIST and the gospel, Christ can greatly use you no matter what your handicaps may be (Matt. 25:19-30). The very frailty of the minister or vessel enhances the glory of God!

B. The victim and the victory (II Corinthians 4:8-11).

“We are troubled... yet not distressed” (II Cor. 4:8). In verses 8 and 9 Paul changes his figure, and describes the Christian minister as a warrior defending a divine treasure.” The four pairs of contrasts show the frailty of the instruments and the greatness of the power.

1. “Troubled... not distressed”: He was “pressed”, from “thlibo,” to press as grapes, to squeeze. He was not “distressed” or hemmed in by the pressure.

2. “Perplexed, but not in despair”; Paul was in many a narrow, tight place. Paul was never vanquished by any of his adversaries. Circumstances often brought him to wit’s end, but never to “despair,” At times he was bewildered, but he never gave up hope or surrendered the fight.

3. “Persecuted, but not forsaken” (II Cor. 4:9): Jesus said tribulations would come (John 16:31). Man’s persecution means God’s presence; thus our adversary brings a new advantage.

4. “Cast down, but not destroyed”: This means struck down and beaten to the earth, yet never eliminated or driven from the field of conflict. Victory is not WHAT WE EXPERIENCE, but HOW WE EXPERIENCE IT.

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“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus... “ (II Cor. 4:10): In every persecution Christ is “made manifest in our body.” Paul always was in imminent danger of dying at the hands of foes as Jesus died, in order that by continual deliverances of HIS body it may be manifest to the world that Jesus still lives. Ignatius was called Theophoros, God-bearer. Paul affirmed: “I die daily.” (I Cor. 15:31). The cross was a daily experience with the apostle (Matt. 16:24). “He felt the crucifying effects of Christ’s Cross in his feelings, appetites, activities, and desires” (Gal. 2:20). He showed Christ to the world (verse 11). The seed must die if it wants to live. So must the Christian DIE TO SIN TO BE ALIVE TO CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL (Rom. 6:6-11). “Can the world see Jesus in YOU?”

III. The Inner Secret (II Corinthians 4:12-16)

A. The secret of self-crucifixion (II Cor. 4:12).

“So then death worketh in us... “ (II Corinthians 4:12): It was not mesh crucifixion, but SELF-CRUCIFIXION. George Mueller said the secret of his life was: “There came a time in my life when George Mueller died, utterly died. He died to all his selfish plans and ambitions. When he died, Christ lived through him. This is my secret.”

It is true that to Paul the ever-present image of death, threatening the gospel ministers, was the means of life to the saved.

“PHYLLIS RINE GIVES LIFE” in REPORT for January 1965, Volume XVI, Number 1, recounts: “On November 24, 1964, word was received through the State Department that Miss Phyllis Rine had been killed by gunfire from thy Congo rebels at the time of rescue of hostages in Stanleyville.

“Miss Rine was a graduate of The Cincinnati Bible Seminary in the class of 1961.” Lloyd Dunn, class of ‘61 summed up her death correctly by saying: “Phyllis has only given up that which she could not keep in order to gain that which she cannot lose!”

B. The secret of an intense faith (II Corinthians 4:13).

“...we also believe, and therefore speak” (II Cor. 4:13): The deliverance to physical death or self-crucifixion does not make us sad and silent. We must be like the Psalmist (116:10) who wrote, “I believed, and therefore have I spoken.” To speak is not enough. Paul believed and therefore he spoke. He spoke with sincerity and conviction.

The secret of a glorious hope (II Corinthians 4:14).

“Knowing that he... shall raise up us also by Jesus... “ (II Cor. 4:14): The hope of the resurrection inspired Paul. It inspired Phyllis Rine. Her teaching inspired Master Timmy Schaub, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Schaub, in the face of the death of his teacher, to say: “I want to go to be with Jesus like Phyllis. Let’s go where the Rebels are so we can get dead.”

Death for the Christian merely transfers life and labor into a better and more productive sphere.

D. The secret of self-forgetfulness (II Corinthians 4:15).

“For all things are for your sakes... “ (II Cor. 4:15): Paul considered his sufferings as being beneficial and helpful to others. Our suffering, our dying daily, the glorious hope, and the result of these things is that the thanksgiving of multitudes of the saved should “rebound to the glory of God.” Think of Bunyan’s GRACE ABOUNDING.

E. The secret of spiritual strength (II Corinthians 4:16).

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“For which cause we faint not... outward man... inward man” (II Cor, 4:16): Moved by faith, hope, the love of souls, and desire for God’s glory, “we faint not” (see verse 1). Paul gives the contrast between the “outward” and “inward” man. While the outer man is being destroyed, the inner being is being renewed. It is renewed by prayer, the promises of the Word of God, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

What a blessed comfort to know that while eyesight grows dim, hands become unsteady, limbs weak and memory faulty, the inner man grows stronger through day by day renewal of spiritual strength. My eighty-five year old mother said to me this morning as I took her breakfast tray to her bed, “Son, if there is no hope of the resurrection, I have lost everything. But I believe Christ who said, ‘I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive forever.’ Amen!”

“Here the decay of the bodily organism is set over against the growth in the grace of the man himself” (Bernard).

IV. The Eternal Reward (II Corinthians 4:17-18)

A. The affliction and the reward (II Corinthians 4:17).

1. The present experience (II Cor. 4:17a).

“For our light affliction... for a moment”: The present experience is but for a “light affliction” and in duration is “but for a moment.” Great as his affliction were, Paul called them “light” in view of the glorious reward they will bring. Continual as they were, he speaks of them as “but for a moment” in view of eternity. Affliction is not something to be endured in order to reach glory. It is the very process that creates the glory. Through travail comes birth. Through suffering comes the triumph. Through dying comes the living.

2. The unseen condition (II Cor. 4:17b).

“Worketh for us...” The word “affliction” is translatable into our English word for “pressure.” Affliction is a pressure that works for us, and not against us. Bearing the cross weaves an eternal crown. Sorrows endured for Christ’s sake prepare for eternal joys.

3. The future prospect (II Cor. 4:17b).

“A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” The future prospect is beyond all proportion to the present experience. If the experience is affliction, the prospect is glory. Note the careful balancing of words in contrast in this verse.

B. The temporal and the eternal (II Corinthians 4:18).

“We look... at the things which are not seen” (II Cor. 4:18): The Christian bases his hope on the unseen; this alone lasts! “While we handle the seen, we do it in the SPIRIT OF THE UNSEEN. While we build houses, mend clothes, and keep books, we do it with the devotion of the unseen.”

“Things that are seen are temporal.” All material things, all that the world values, are perishing. Caesar’s greatness, the might of Roman power, the strength of man, the glory of the magnificent Corinth, even the visible heavens and earth SHALL PASS AWAY!

“But the things which are not seen are eternal”: God, Christ, heaven, the Spirit, the spiritual forces resident within us, making us superior to all the pressure, and enabling us to continue – these are permanent, abiding, eternal!

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QUESTIONS

1. What did the Lord tell Ananias of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:16)?
2. How long did “Paul’s Living Martyrdom” continue?
3. Can you cite the type and place of some persecutions he suffered (Acts 9:24, 29; 13:50; 14:5, 19; 16:23,24; 17:5, 13, 14; 18:12; 19:29; II Cor. 1:8, 9; Acts 20:3; 22:22-24; 23: 12, 13; II Cor. 11:23-27; II Tim. 2:9; 4:5-8)?
4. Do you think it is an amazing thing that Paul sang as he suffered (Acts 16:25)?
5. From whom had he received “this ministry” (II Cor. 4:1; Acts 9:1-16; 22:1-16; 26:9-18)?
6. “As we have received mercy” what did Paul determine (II Cor. 4:1; Acts 22:16)?
7. What did a vision of this glorious ministry produce in Paul (II Cor. 4:2; Matt. 15:1-9; Gal. 6:12, 13)?
8. To whom is the gospel hidden (II Cor. 4:3; Isa. 59:1, 2; John 3:16-21)?
9. What title is given to Satan (II Cor. 4:4; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)? How does he “blind the minds” of unbelievers (John 5:44)? Do we choose our character and destiny?
10. What is the Christian’s message (II Cor. 4:5; Acts 4:12; I Cor. 3:11)?
11. Why has God shined in our hearts (II Cor. 4:6; Matt. 5:15-16)?
12. Why is this treasure in weak, earthen vessels (II Cor. 4:7)?
13. What two facts are shown by the four pairs of contrasts (II Cor. 4:8,9)?
14. What was the secret of George Mueller’s life in his own words (II Cor. 4:12)?
15. Is Lloyd Dunn correct in his appraisal of the death of Phyllis Rine in Stanleyville, Africa, November 23, 1964? Why?
16. Can you name three other inner secrets of the minister or Christian (II Cor. 4:13-15)?
17. What is the secret of spiritual strength (II Cor. 4:16)? Can you define the “outward man” and the “inward man”?
18. What is the present experience, the unseen condition and the future prospect of the Christian (II Cor. 4:17)?
19. Have you properly focused the “temporal” and “the eternal” in your life (II Cor. 4:18)? How have you done so? Why?

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II Corinthians 5

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 5:10

Memory Verse:

“For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10).

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE JUDGEMENT SEAT

Paul had a genuine basis for joy in his sufferings. “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen,” the unseen and eternal things (II Cor. 4:18). In II Cor. 4:16-18 the apostle spoke of great contrasts: Great affliction vs. great glory, lightness vs. weight, “for a moment” versus the “eternal!” When God balances the books, the sufferings of His saints shall be as nothing compared to the “eternal weight of glory” which shall be ours!

By faith, the Christian glimpses the future. It has a profound effect upon the present life of the child of God.

I. The State of the Believer Between Death and Resurrection (II Corinthians 5:1-8)

A. A new body (II Corinthians 5:1).

“For we know...” (II Cor. 5:1): The CERTAINTIES of Paul are refreshing in “An Age of Doubt” and uncertainty (see Rom. 8:28; II Tim. 1:12). “Faith is the title deed to the things hoped for” (Heb. 11:7).

“Our tabernacle...” The body of the Christian is spoken of as building and occupant. Bodies die and are buried; the occupant moves out. Paul is contrasting our old and our new habitations. He is telling us the difference between our old and new body. He calls the body a “tabernacle,” a tent-body. The tent is temporary; the “building of God” is “eternal in the heavens.” Our “outward man” (II Cor. 4:16) grows old, feeble and finally dies. Our “inward man” is renewed day by day; receives fresh strength day by day.

“We have a building... eternal”: When the spirit leaves our earth-body, we are in CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE, although we are not in our resurrection bodies. We are not floating around in space as invisible spirits without the capacity of speech or action. We are not asleep, or unconscious. We are ALIVE and very near to Christ, for to be “absent from the body” means to be “present with the Lord.” Our eternal or final habitation will not come to realization until the rapture and the resurrection.

B. A new desire (II Corinthians 5:2-4).

“For in this we groan... desiring to be clothed upon” (II Cor. 5:2): The desire is not the desire for death that dissolves or unclothes the spirit. As a Christian one looks BEYOND DEATH for the time when he shall be clothed with the new body – the spiritual body. Bondage to sin, aches, pains and sufferings cause a

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Christian to “groan” in the outward or physical man. For the Christian, the resurrection will change all these things (Acts 25:14-15; John 5:29; Isa. 61:10). “This mortal must put on immortality” (I Cor. 15:53).

C. A new assurance (II Cor. 5:5).

“God... hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit” (II Cor. 5:5): The Christian’s assurance and hope that “mortality might be swallowed up of life” is something we LIVE FOR and LIVE BY. God guarantees it to us by the “earnest” or surety or pledge of the Person of the Holy Spirit, In Bible times when a man bought a piece of land, he would be given a handful of soil as the assurance of its ultimate possession. In return he would deposit a sum of money. Blackstone says the prepayment of a mere penny would legally bind a contract.

The Holy Spirit is a pledge or preview or foretaste of what is to come. “The Holy Spirit is God come to His temple” (read I Cor. 6:9, 20). He is a pledge already given. If we obey the gospel, the Holy Spirit is IN US (Acts 5:32; 2:38).

D. A new home (I Corinthians 5:6-8).

“At home in the body... absent from the Lord” (II Cor. 5:6): “The soul has TWO HOMES, a bodily and a spiritual.” His body was not Paul, any more than YOUR HOUSE IS YOU. Paul was a living soul who tented in his body. Death to the body causes us to move out of the body. The spirit then, between death and the resurrection of the old physical body into a spiritual body, IS WITH CHRIST! “To be absent from the body” (verse 8) is “to be present with the Lord.”

“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (II Cor. 5:7): To walk by faith does not mean to walk in BLINDNESS. It means to walk with another sense of sight. It is exchanging EYESIGHT for GOD-SIGHTS Paul if left to himself, preferred to be absent from his old physical body and “PRESENT WITH THE LORD” (verse 8; Phil. 1:21f). At the resurrection we shall see Him as He is (I John 3:2), and know as we are known (I Cor. 13:12).

“The disembodied state, though inferior in happiness to the resurrection glory, is yet preferable to our present state.” It is “HOME,” and it is “WITH THE LORD.” How comforting to know these facts of the believer’s presence with Christ at death:

1. It is an immediate state. It occurs immediately after death. It is absent from the body.” It is “PRESENT with the Lord.” There is no long or short interval of punishment or unconsciousness in between.

2. It is a personal state. Death releases the person from the body. The person goes on into Christ’s presence as a complete personality.

3. It is a conscious state. The body is not essential to its conscious existence. The spirit does not sleep because the body sleeps. To be in the PRESENCE of CHRIST MEANS TO BE CONSCIOUS of Christ’s presence.

4. It is a preferred state.

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The apostle spoke of being “willing rather” to be absent from the body in order that he might be present with the Lord. He said that he **PREFERRED DEATH TO LIFE!** “For me to live is Christ, and to **DIE IS GAIN...** For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be **WITH CHRIST, WHICH IS FAR BETTER:** nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you” (Phil. 1:21-23). Read also John 14:1-3; II Cor. 12:2-5.

II. Three Great Motives of Paul (II Corinthians 5:9-14a)

A. The judgment seat (II Corinthians 5:9-10).

“Wherefore we labor...accepted of him” (II Cor. 5:9): The word translated “labor” is the word for “ambition.” We are “ambitious” to be pleasing or “accepted of Him,” Christ! Do you think it is possible to go through life selfishly and recklessly, giving no consideration to God or loyalty to His church and His Word, and then expect to have His approval?

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ... “ (II Cor. 5:10): What a stimulus to labor so as to be “accepted of” Christ! The object of this judgment is that he may reap the fruits of what he has done in the body. If the character of one’s deeds is like the character of gold, silver and precious stones, the Christian will be rewarded. If the deeds were like wood, hay, or stubble, he shall “suffer loss” but be saved (I Cor. 3:12-15).

“The judgment seat”: Or “bema” was a lofty seat on an elevated platform usually at the end of the judgment hall, so the figure of the judge could be seen towering above the crowded room. It referred to the tribunals of the Roman magistrates – tribunals that were august representations of justice.

Before the judgment seat of Christ pretense or sham cannot stand. ‘Away we always act from love of honor to be ambitious to please Him in the good sense (I Thess. 4:1). This judgment will be **WHEN CHRIST COMES!** We do not go immediately from death to his judgment, or to our “eternal” reward. There is an interval between. “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12).

B. “The terror of the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:11-13).

“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord... “ (II Cor. 5:11): Many today regard “fear” as a outdated motive, but not so with Paul or this writer. It is hard work to persuade men to turn to Christ, but Paul did’ it because he feared the Lord and was accountable to Him! Ponder Heb. 10:31; I Pet, 4:17, 18; Luke 19:10; Prov. 9:10.

God is not a dread tyrant to those who love and obey Him. Through your house flows an invisible current of power. It lights your lamps, powers your washer, and heats the house. This is one side of the current of electricity. If under adverse conditions you take hold of the naked wire, it will kill you! To know God is life. Not to know God means death – eternal separation from Him. I fear this. I want to win you to Christ, so your blood is not on my head in the judgment (verse 10).

“We are made manifest unto God”: God sees our whole life and knows our motives as well as our deeds.

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“I trust also... “: Paul’s life was known to God and approved. He hoped, too, that the saints at Corinth knew it, and that he had a witness in their conscience, in the effect of his preaching among them.

“For we commend not ourselves again unto you...” (II Cor. 5:12): He gives them an opportunity of glorying over his work and life so that they can answer the false teachers who assail him.

“For whether we be beside ourselves...” (II Cor. 5:13): People often accuse those whom they dislike with being a bit off. Later Festus said, “Paul, thou art beside thyself” (Acts 26:24). He spoke with tongues (I Cor. 14:18) and had visions (II Cor. 12:1-6) which probably the Judaizers used against him. A like charge was made against Jesus (Mark 3:21).

C. “The Love of Christ” (II Corinthians 5:14a).

“For the love of Christ constraineth us...” (II Cor. 5:14a): “The love of Christ overmaster us.” It makes us helpless to do otherwise than to win men. Magnificent obsession!

III. Why Christ Died (II Corinthians 5:14b-21)

A. Love caused Christ to die for us (II Corinthians 5:14b-15).

“Because... if one died for all, then...” (II Cor. 5:14b): As head of the race, Christ DIED FOR US. Therefore, ALL MEN DIED WITH HIM to their sin. We must “die to sin” daily and live for Him (Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 5:4; 2:19, 20; Col. 3:3).

B. The “new” things of the “new creature” (II Corinthians 5:16-21).

1. A new creation (II Cor. 5:16-17).

“Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh...” (II Cor. 5:16): The new life in Christ gives us a new way of measuring man – by the Spirit. As “all” have died to live new lives in Christ, they are not Jews and Gentiles; Romans, Greeks or Scythians, but all are Christians, not to be known as belonging to the old fleshly races longer. Worldly standards and distinctions of race, class, cut no figure now with Paul. He looks at men from the standpoint of the Cross of Christ (Ga. 3:28).

“Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh...” “: Paul admits that he had once looked at Christ “after the flesh”, but now no longer does it. Before his conversion he had known Christ “after the flesh,” according to the standards of the men of his time, the Sanhedrin and other Jewish leaders. He led the persecution against Christ till our Lord Jesus challenged and stopped him (Acts 9:4). Those events turned Paul totally around and he no longer knows Christ in the old way “after the flesh.” Paul may or may not have seen Jesus in the flesh before His death on the cross. He says nothing on that point here.

The Christ risen and sitting on the throne as our Lord is not in the flesh, and the Christ whom the church adores is that Risen Christ!

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature...” (II Cor. 5:17): Because, crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6), buried into His death (Rom. 6:4), we have died with Christ (II Cor. 5:14), and risen to walk in a new life (Rom. 6:4). The “old life” ended when we died and were buried. Born anew, we are “new creatures” who must live a new life.

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“Old things are passed away:” The old standards of judgment, the old distinctions between men, the old dependence upon ceremonies and rites, the old purposes and aims, the old weaknesses and faults, the old pride and conceit, the old hypocrisies and sins.

“All things are become new”: The affections, the motives, the thoughts, the hopes, the whole life is “NEW!” The NEW BIRTH (John 3:3-6) has implanted the “new life” in Christ (Gal. 3:27).

When we become a “new creature” or Christian, we do not immediately get rid of a bad temper or a quick tongue. The “new birth” does not annihilate the old nature, but brings in a new nature to control it. The old temper and the old tongue have a NET MASTER and are under a NEW CONTROL. Potential control and conquest lie within us the moment we are “born again” (John 3:7)! Actual control and conquest of evil temper and tongue DEPEND ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE WILL YIELD OURSELVES TO THE TRANSFORMING POWER OR OUR NEW NATURE.

2. A new ministry (II Cor. 5:18).

“And all things are of God... “(II Cor. 5:18): All “new” things have come from God through the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“God... reconciled us to himself... given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (II Cor. 5:18): Before we were rebels against God. Through Christ we have been brought to love God, to love His will, and to obey Him. This is because we have been brought to love God, to love His will, and to obey Him. This is because we have been changed; we are “new creatures.” Christ reconciled us to reconcile others. This is every Christian’s ministry. The word “ministry” really means, “charter.” The task of winning the unreconciled to God is committed to the Church and every Christian. We have been WON to WIN the unreconciled to God to repentance and the obedience of faith.

3. A new message (II Cor. 5:19).

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (II Cor. 5:19): God through Christ cancels out our old sins (Rom. 8:32) if we make our peace with God through faith and obedience to the Gospel (Rom. 5:1; Heb. 5:9). It was not God who was to be reconciled, but the world. In Christ the world is offered peace and shown the love of God (John 3:16; II Pet. 3:9).

4. A new title (II Cor. 5:20).

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ... “ (II Cor. 5:20): Christians have God’s message, are His authorized messengers or ambassadors, and speak for God, beseeching the world for Christ, and in His name or authority, to be “reconciled to God” by repentance and obeying the gospel. In Christ’s place as His ambassador or representative we say to the world: “Get reconciled to God – now!” (Heb. 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20).

5. A new condition (II Cor. 5:21).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us... “ (II Cor. 5:21): Christ was sinless. He “knew no sin” (John 8:46; I Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; I John 3:5).

“Made him to be sin for us”: In the mystery of divine grace, God made the sinless Christ to take the place of sinful men. He was our sinless substitute who suffered for OUR SINS, that our sins might thus be atoned for, the law satisfied, and we be forgiven and accounted righteous. Since we die with Christ, in Him we pay the penalty, and are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1).

The gospel is not good advice, but good news. The gospel announces to a guilty, hopeless world a great atoning, redeeming, reconciling act. “Christ died for all.” “Be ye reconciled to God” today!

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QUESTIONS

1. Why is the Christian unafraid of death (II Cor. 5:1; II Cor. 4:16-18)?
2. What is our “earthly house of this tabernacle” (II Cor. 5:1)? What happens when our tabernacle is dissolved, or dies?
3. What is our condition while we are in these bodies (II Cor, 5:2)?
4. How is the resurrection body described (II Cor. 5:1, 2)?
5. What happens to mortality when we die (II Cor, 5:4; Acts 25:14-15; I Cor. 15:53)?
6. What guarantee of the resurrection body does every Christian possess (II Cor. 5:5; Rom. 8:9, 11; Eph. 1:13, 14)?
7. To be “absent” from the body is to be where (II Cor. 5:6-8)?
8. On what basis do we as Christians “walk” (II Cor. 5:7)?
9. Is the spirit of man unconscious between death and the resurrection?
10. Can you enumerate four comforting facts of the believer’s presence or state with Christ at one’s death?
11. What should be the ambition of every Christian (II Cor. 5:9)?
12. Where must all believers appear (II Cor. 5:10) and why (I Cor. 3:12-15; I Cor. 4:5; Rev. 22:12)?
13. Is the “terror of the Lord” a motive for persuading men to turn to Christ (II Cor. 5:11; Heb. 10:31; I Pet. 4:17, 18; Luke 19:10; Prov. 9:10)? Did it influence Paul?
14. What motive constrains or overmasters us to win men to Christ (II Cor. 5:14a)?
15. What is the meaning of “if one died for all, then were all dead” (II Cor. 5:14)? Must the Christian “die daily” to sin to live for Christ (Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 5:4; 2:19, 20; Col. 3:3)?
16. “If any man be in Christ,” what is he (II Cor. 5:17)? Can you enumerate the five “new” things of the “new creature”?
17. Who needs to be reconciled (II Cor. 5:18-19)?
18. For whom does the Christian minister (II Cor. 5:20)?
19. Who was “made to be sin” for us (II Cor. 5:21)?
20. What are believers made in Him (II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:22; Phil. 3:9)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE
Year VI
First Quarter

Lesson 5

II Corinthians 6

Page 1

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 6:17, 18

Memory Verse:

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Corinthians 6:17, 18).

SEPARATION: FROM THE WORLD AND UNTO GOD

Scofield is right, I think, when he says, “Separation in Scripture is twofold: ‘From’ whatever is contrary to the mind of God; and ‘UNTO’ God Himself.” God cannot bless and use as FULLY AS HE DESIRES His children who compromise or line up with evil.

God has a STANDARD FOR EVERY SERVANT OF CHRIST. Paul accepted God’s standard. It was a “HIGH CALLING!” Here Paul’s defense of his motives in preaching the gospel and of his principles of action as God’s apostle is brought to its climax and its close. Are you not astonished that one so separated unto God and so self-sacrificing as Paul should have been accused of insincerity and of self-seeking? Even professed Christians may become so blinded by bigotry, self-conceit and fanaticism that, in what they regard as the defense of the truth, they are willing to seize any weapons, including insinuation, slanders, and abuse!

I. We Are Partners (II Corinthians 6:1-2)

A. The place (II Corinthians 6:1a).

“We then, as workers together with him... “(II Cor. 6:1a): We are co-workers, partners with God. “For we are laborers together with God” (I Cor. 3:9). We are fellow-workers in Christ’s Church. There is a dignity and obligation to work – physical and spiritual. When members of Christ’s body, the church, STOP WORKING and become RELIGIOUS DRONES, watch out! They become neurotic; they grumble over trifles. Nothing is right BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT RIGHT. They ought to get to WORK TODAY FOR CHRIST. “The night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). Read also II Thess. 3:10-13; Rev. 2:10c.

Let us watch our MOTIVES OF SERVICE and SEPARATION. We are working “for Jesus’ sake” (II Cor. 4:5). To lose this motive is to lose your incentive for working. Paul described his ministry as one of reconciliation. As an “ambassador for Christ” (II Cor. 5:20-21) he was entreating men to be reconciled to God. He shows the church at Corinth that his conduct and his experiences as an ambassador of God are such as to vindicate his claims of genuineness, sincerity and honesty of purpose! He supplied his many friends in the Corinthian church with grounds on which they no way repel the attacks that his enemies are waging.

To work with God and one another requires concentration, cooperation and consecration. Dare we fail God?

B. The plea (II Corinthians 6:14-2).

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“We... beseech you... receive not the grace of God in vain” (II Cor. 6:1b); Paul begins a warning by begging the Corinthians “not to accept the favor of God and then waste it.” The plan of God, Christ’s work on the cross, the pleas of the ambassador may be NULLIFIED by those who received the message and then FAIL TO LIVE IT DAILY.

“For he saith...” (II Cor. 6:2): A “Pauline parenthesis” quoted from Isaiah 49:8. Paul was speaking to Christians. He reminded them, and us, that the “time accepted” and “the day of salvation” is the gospel of grace age. Any Christian who is not concerned with his work as “ambassador” of reconciliation has received the gospel in “vain!” He is failing in his mission for the Master.

If “the day” is the age of grace, it is equally true that the age has its days. The part of the “day” granted to each individual is brief. Delay may be fatal. It may be true of anyone and at any time that the present day is THE DAY, and the ONLY “DAY OF SALVATION.”

If man lives 70 years he has 25,567.5 days on earth. The day of destiny for YOU is “NOW,” TODAY (Heb. 3:15). Let us make our lives today the best credential Christ has in the world (II Cor. 3:2, 3).

II. We Have Painful Experiences (II Corinthians 6:3-10)

A. Testings of the Worker (II Corinthians 6:4-5).

“Giving no offence in any thing...” (II Cor. 6:4): Paul describes the manner of life of himself and fellow-ministers. They were to be careful that “the ministry be not blamed.” Paul insists that his conduct is worthy of an ambassador of God. He is putting no stumbling block in the way of anyone. He is giving his readers no excuse for rejecting his message.

By “offense” Paul does not mean, “hurting people’s feelings.” It is impossible to speak and act so as never to hurt the feelings of someone. Some people carry their feelings on their sleeves all the time. If you do not shake hands with them, you intended to slight them. If you do shake hands with them you “hurt” them, forgetting that they have rheumatism. If you stop to speak with them, you are interrupting them; if you don’t, you’re “high-hatting” them! See what I mean?

The man of God MUST BEHAVE HIMSELF that no one can honestly point to him and say: “That man’s ways are such that I lose confidence in the salvation that he professes.” Our lives must not give “great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme” (II Sam. 12:14) as David’s sin with Bathsheba did in Israel.

“But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God...” (II Cor. 6:4): In everything Paul is “approving” himself, as all ministers should. The means of this approval are set forth in the verses that follow. They can serve in large measure AS IN IDEAL and GIVE INSPIRATION TO ALL WHO ARE SEEKING TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL OF GRACE.

“In much patience...” This is steadfast constancy and endurance, holding out under trials. This section ordinarily will be read to show ten testings. “PATIENCE” is the thing to be developed in the worker. It is the OBJECT OF THE TESTINGS, which then are nine in number.

“In afflictions...” Each word carries a story that can be filled in from Paul’s own life as a preacher with an echo in that of us all. Read II Cor. 1:4-11. It is a part of the curriculum of patience.

“In necessities...” They are needs not supplied. There is no contradiction to Phil. 4:19, “But my God shall supply all your need.” Sometimes for a HIGHER PURPOSE God withholds. Character does not grow out of mere gratification. Pray over Phil. 4:12; Acts 20:34; II Tim. 4:13.

“In distresses...” “In tight places. Jammed in a corner (II Cor. 4:8).

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“In stripes...” (II Cor. 6:5): Read II Cor. 11:23-28. “In lashes,” blows, wounds (Luke 10:30; 12:48; Acts 16:23, 33). These are man-made testings. Paul bore the raised welts of terrible beatings. He felt the stinging lash of a pagan whip.

“In imprisonments...” These follow stripes, for having been beaten the victim was thrown into prison for confinement and further abuse. Only one by Luke (Acts 16:24).

“In tumults...” These were normal incidents of Paul’s daily life (Acts 13:50; 14:19; 16:22; 17:4, 5; 18:12; 19:29; 21:30). This was mostly mob violence incited by bigoted religious leaders!

“In labors...” Paul was a tentmaker, and toiled at his trade to supply his needs when church support was not given him. Real Christian service knows no hours and brings weariness to mind and body (I Cor. 4:12; II Cor. 11:28; I Thess. 2:9).

“In watchings...” Nights of sleeplessness caused by an agonized heart. A mind working overtime considering and planning can find no rest in sleep. I know. Do you?

“In fastings...” Self-denial and sacrifice. Willingly he endured hunger and thirst to spread the gospel. ANYTHING that hinders our work as an ambassador for Christ OUGHT TO BE GIVEN UP.

B. Characteristics of the worker (II Corinthians 6:6, 7).

“By pureness...” (II Cor. 6:6): The nine previous testings were what the worker found OUTSIDE. The nine characteristics of this section are what the worker found INSIDE. Pureness is the greatest personal credential of the worker for Christ. God desires and requires pureness, a holy and chaste life.

“By knowledge...” “The beginning of knowledge is the knowledge of ignorance,” according to an old Greek maxim. We must STUDY the Bible if we would KNOW THE BIBLE (II Tim. 2:15). There is no substitute for knowledge of God’s Word.

“By longsuffering...” This is long-suffering under ill treatment. It is the refusal to be provoked. It is courtesy under criticism.

“By kindness...” Kindness melts the ice of indifference and breaks the flinty heart. It puts others at ease, and shrinks from giving others pain.

“By the Holy Ghost...” He is the source of all graces. Showing His “FRUIT” (Gal. 5:22, 23, 25, 26) will bring influence and power to the worker of God.

“By love unfeigned...” This is “unpretended love.” This is the only love that is worth while (Rom. 12:9).

“By the word of truth...” (II Cor. 6:7): This is the word of the Scriptures. “The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17b) is our weapon of offense, but also the armor of defense!

“By the power of God...” This means God’s power in us (II Cor. 4:7). It is God’s power in heart, life, home and business.

“By the armor of righteousness...” “On the right hand” is the “sword of the Spirit,” our offensive weapon. “On the left” hand is the shield of faith, our defensive weapon. Read prayerfully Eph. 6:11-17. Protected by the shield of faith, let us vigorously use the “sword of the Spirit!”

C. Paradoxes of the worker (II Corinthians 6:8-10).

“By honor and dishonor...” (II Cor. 6:8): Paul now gives a series of contrasted situations, nine in number. From friends come “honor” and praise, while from others come dishonor and infamy. Some approve; others disapprove yet Paul kept right on working for God! So should we.

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“Evil report and good report...” Some may say wicked, unkind things about him. Paul would not retaliate. Some might over-praise him. He is not “puffed up” about it. Men may bandy your reputation about; they cannot touch your character.

“As deceivers, and yet true...” Here is the paradox of being branded as a deceiver, but vindicated as true. Evil men slandered him as being a “deceiver.” He was not. His life vindicated his sincerity and simplicity.

“As unknown, and yet well known...” (II Cor. 6:9): The worker may be obscure in the great, indifferent world, but well known in the church and to God (read II Cor. 3:2; 11:6).

“As dying, and, behold, we live...” They were actually exposed to death. At any time their afflictions and sufferings might prove fatal. They are “dying,” yet “behold” they “LIVE,” for Christ is ever giving them deliverance and new strength, and even when death comes it will issue for them in a LIFE OF ENDLESS GLORY!

“As chastened, and not killed...” Though many a blow fell upon Paul, his life was spared. “The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death” (Psa. 118:18).

“As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing...” (II Cor. 6:10): His sufferings caused him grief, yet Paul rejoiced in hope.

“As poor, yet making many rich...” They were “poor” in material things as the world counted gains, “yet making many rich,” with treasures of spiritual wealth. There are more kinds of wealth than the credit of money.

“Money may purchase the husk of many things, but not the kernel of anything. It can buy food, but not the appetite with which to eat that food. It can buy medicine, but not health. It can buy acquaintances, but not friends. It can buy servants, but not faithfulness. It can buy pleasure, but not happiness” (Ibsen).

You can make many rich without having a dollar to your credit. You can bestow the riches of salvation, peace, love and joy.

III. We Are Particular in Associations (II Corinthians 6:11-18)

A. The believer’s affection for believers (II Corinthians 6:11-13).

“O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged...” (II Cor. 6:11): Paul “addressed” the Christians at Corinth “frankly with wide-open hearts.” He made an earnest plea for the full and complete affection of the Corinthians. He asked for their love and good will. Doctrinal oneness must be followed by fraternal unity. We must not only believe the same things, but love in the same way.

The apostle gave his friends, who formed the majority of the Church at Corinth, material to use in reply to the false teachers who had questioned his honesty. He has set forth his principles of action. He closes the review of his ministry with an appeal for sympathy and affection. He is not content to have his friends convinced of his sincerity; he wishes to be sure of their devotion and love.

“Ye are not straitened in us...” (II Cor. 6:12): There is no restraint in me (my heart). My adversaries may have caused some of you to tighten up your affections. Paul’s heart was large enough to embrace them all. Paul as a loving father speaks to his children and asks that they open their hearts to him and give him free admission (verse 13).

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B. The believer's alliance with unbelievers (II Cor. 6:14-18).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers..." (II Cor. 6:14): This is the plea for SEPARATION. The figure is drawn from the prohibition of Deut. 22:10 and Lev. 19:19. In his plea for complete consecration, he reminds the Christians there are TWO SPHERES OF LIFE. The Christian is a "new creature" (II Cor. 5:17). He is "in Christ,"

The other sphere is OUT OF CHRIST. The Christian must not shuttle back and forth from the sphere of a Christian and the world. It is impossible. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30),

Paul literally says: "STOP becoming unequally yoked with unconverted heathen (unbelievers)." Marriage is included, of course. Other unions may be in mind (mph. 5:1-8). One cannot be half-Christian and half-pagan. Clean-cut SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD and unto God is required.

"For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" (II Cor. 6:14b): Five questions are asked to reveal how UNEQUAL the yoking of the world and the new life in Christ would be. Saints should choose Christian alliances and associations. How can "righteousness" and "unrighteousness" be yoked together? Can Christians "wink" at violations of laws of the land and laws of God?

"And what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14c): Contrasting the elements to which good and evil belong, Paul asks: Can there be "association between light and darkness?"

"And what concord hath Christ with Belial?" (II Cor. 6:15a): Paul graphically sums up the contrast between Christ and Belial (Satan), the heads of the contending forces of good and evil. There can be no concord between divine purity and personified pollution. See Matt. 12:24.

"Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (II Cor. 6:15b): As Christ has nothing in common with Satan, how can a believer in Christ have a close intimacy with one who is still under the dominion of the prince of this world?

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (II Cor. 6:16a): As God's temple has nothing in common with an idol temple, so the SAINTS of GOD ARE TO BE SEPARATED FROM IDOLATERS.

"For ye are the temple of the living God." The Christian himself is the sanctuary of the Lord. "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Lev. 26:12). God dwells among His people as the Shekinah dwelt between the cherubim. See Acts 7:48; 17:24; I Cor. 3:16; 6:19.

"Wherefore came out from among them... be ye separate." (II Cor. 6:17) This is quoted from Isa. 52:5 and Ezek. 20:33. Read Rev. 18:4. God called Israel to cleanse itself from pagan pollution. "Be ye separate" does not mean segregation. To live a SEPARATED LIFE does not mean that we have to segregate ourselves from the world. The Christian move among his fellow men in all the necessary and proper social, professional and commercial contracts but still retains his identity and integrity as a Christian. ONE CAN

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LIVE IN ONE SPHERE and still be LIVING BY THE OTHER SPHERE. One can walk in the world and still walk as a Christian.

“I will receive you... be a Father unto you.” (II Cor. 6:17d, 18) This is a free combination of the spirit of several Old Testament quotations, as Jer. 31:1, 9; Isa. 43:6. The two passages teach that it is the Divine will that God’s worshippers should be separate from the world; that if they are thus “separate” He will receive them, and will accept them as His own children. Compare Rom. 12:1, 2 and James 1:26.

Special Brief Study: The Unequal Yoke in Marriage

“The unequal yoking” covers the question of marriage between Christians and irreligious persons. The whole spirit of the Bible is against the practice.

Marriages of the “sons of God” with the “daughters of men” caused the sins that brought on the Flood (Gen. 6:1-7).

Alien marriages were forbidden to Israel (Exodus 34:16; Deut. 7:3, 4). This was the pit into which Samson fell (Judges 14:3). To this cause was due the fall of Solomon (I Kings 11:1-10).

Ezra made the Jews put away alien wives (Ezra 9:10).

In the discussion of the subject in I Corinthians 7, the whole implication is that intermarriage with unbelievers was out of the question. The Christian widow may remarry “whom she will; only in the Lord” (I Cor. 7:39).

QUESTIONS

1. In what way is “Separation in Scripture... twofold”?
2. How are all Christians related to each other in service (II Cor. 6:1)?
3. What does it mean to “receive... the grace of God in vain” (II Cor. 6:1)?
4. What has Isaiah said (Isa. 49:8; II Cor. 6:2)?
5. Why did Paul not want to give “offence in anything” (II Cor. 6:3)?
6. What is the object of the nine testings (II Cor. 6:4)?
7. Can you list and briefly define the nine testings of the worker for Christ (II Cor. 6:4-5)?
8. Are the characteristics of the worker outer or inner (II Cor. 6:6, 7)?
9. Can you enumerate the characteristics, and show what each does?
10. How many paradoxes are listed (II Cor. 6:8-10)?
11. Who gave “honour” to Paul (II Cor. 6:8)?
12. Who gave “dishonor” to Paul (II Cor. 6:8)?
13. What did Paul mean by “our heart is enlarged” (II Cor. 6:11)?
14. What was the command about an unequal yoke (II Cor. 6:14)?
15. From where is the figure of the unequal yoke drawn?
16. How many questions are asked to reveal how unequal the yoking of the world and the new life in Christ would be (II Cor. 6:14-16)?
17. Can you enumerate and explain the five questions?
18. What does God command (II Cor. 6:17; Isa. 52:5; Ezek. 20:33)?
19. If we obey God, what does He promise us (II Cor. 6:17d, 18)?
20. Should Christians marry irreligious persons (I Cor. 7:39)?

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Lesson 6

Page 1

II Corinthians 7

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 7:10

Memory Verse:

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (II Corinthians 7:10).

A TRUE PICTURE OF PAUL’S GREAT HEART

Paul sent Timothy to Corinth to correct sinful conditions there. “I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways that be in Christ.... Let no man despise him” (I Cor. 4:17; 16:10). Being Timid Timothy by nature, he was unsuited for the stern disciplinary measures required by the Corinthian church.

Then Paul sent Titus to Corinth. He was probably Paul’s best helper. He carried the letter referred to in II Cor. 2:3, “I wrote... unto you.” Study II Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 13; 12:18. Titus succeeded where Timothy failed. Nowhere is Paul’s great and loving heart seen more fully than in this chapter. Here we see

1. The Cleansed Life (II Corinthians 7:1)

“Having therefore these promises... “ (II Cor. 7:1) Those named in II Cor. 6:17, 18, a three-fold promise IF we. “COME OUT” and are “separate” and “touch not the unclean thing!” Goal demands that His people avoid “all fellowship with unrighteous people in their unrighteous practices.”

The chapter division should not have separated this verse, as it belongs properly to II Cor. 6:14-18. Paul closes his appeal with a precept that is

A. Negative (II Corinthians 7:1).

“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness... “ (II Cor. 7:1): Where are two kinds of cleansing. One is positional, the other is practical. Only the blood of Christ can “cleanse” or “wash away our sins (Acts 22:16). This is “inward” cleansing and is DONE BY THE GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST WHEN WE OBEY THE GOSPEL (Acts 2:38). Our practical cleansing is “outward.” We are charged to cleanse our actions, deeds and words. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12).

“Filthiness...” Sins of our body. Sins of the five physical senses. Sensual sins were sins of the body, such as those to which the Corinthians were addicted. Filthiness is something that soils. Whatever soils is wrong, as drunkenness, gluttony, and immorality (I Cor. 6:9-12; Prov. 23:31). “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that put the bottle to him, and makes him drunken also, that thou may look on his nakedness!” (Habakkuk 2:15). Does “filthiness of the flesh” include the vile tobacco habit, which definitely is linked as a cause of cancer (I Cor. 6:19, 20)?

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“Filthiness of the... spirit”: Pride, conceit, jealousy, unbelief, “hurt feelings” which keep us from serving Christ fully and faithfully must be put away if we are to be blessed of God. The “spirit” of man is defiled by such sins as those named in Gal. 5:20. Do not wait for God to do for you what He expects you to do for yourself. A Chinese proverb says: “Great souls have wills; feeble ones have only wishes.”

B. Positive (11 Corinthians 7:1b).

“Let us... perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Cor. 7:1b): Spiritually lazy people say holiness is something that God will DO FOR US. We learn in this verse that WE ARE to “PERFECT HOLINESS!” This is not merely negative goodness (cleansing), but aggressive and progressive (present tense of ‘epiteleo’) holiness, not a sudden attainment of complete holiness, but a continuous process (I Thess, 3:13; Rom. 1:4, 6). We are to do this “in the fear” and not BY FEAR OF GOD. It is something done by faith while we have a reverent respect for God.

II. The Converted Life (II Corinthians 7:2-4)

“Receive us...” (II Cor. 7:2): “Make room for me in your hearts” (Goodspeed). Some sought to spoil Paul’s fellowship with the church by lying about him. Talk about the square deal, the fair deal, and the new deal of the Great Society! Paul stated them all in this short, snappy sentence. He wishes no “tightness of heart” in them (II Cor. 6:12). Paul was had a right to be heard because he was living what he preached. He makes his plea to all, even the stubborn minority.

“We have wronged no man.” Every preacher ought to be able to say this, even as it is the goal of every Christian man, woman, and youth. “I am pure from the blood of all men” (Acts 20:26; II Cor. 4:2; I Thess. 2:3).

“We have corrupted no man.” “It may refer to money, or morals, or doctrine” (Plummer). He is answering the Judaizers at Corinth.

“We have defrauded no man.” That charge was made in Thessalonica (I Thess. 4:6). He got the best of no one in any evil way. “Not one of you has ever been wronged or ruined or cheated by us” is the way Phillips puts it.

“I speak this not to condemn you...” (II Cor. 7:3) I do not accuse you, Paul affirms, of making these charges against me. Yet the apostle knew that Judaizers and others had made them at Corinth.

“Ye are in our hearts...” You are in our hearts to share death and life. Paul loved them too much merely to condemn them, They were his children in the gospel. He was concerned about them. He wanted them to “separate” themselves from sin in and out of the church. “Whether we live or die you live in our hearts.”

“Great... is my glorying of you.” (II Cor. 7:4) Paul had confidence in the Corinthians that they would obey God’s word. It caused a regular flood of joy to him. He believed that they would discipline themselves (Matt. 16:24-25) to follow Christ ALL THE WAY. When we “die” to the practice of sin (Rom. 6:2, 11-13),

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we are ready to “LIVE UNTO GOD” in all good things. The gospel is essential to our souls and to society. “Christianity is not a cosmetic to adorn the spiritual externals of our society. It is the medicine which can cure the inner wrongs that ruin life.” Genuinely converted sinners are changed; they are “NEW CREATURES” (II Cor. 5:17).

III. The Chastened Life (II Corinthians 7:5-12)

A. Paul’s experience with Adversity (II Corinthians 7:5).

“For... our flesh had no hope” (II Cor. 7:5): Paul now returns to the incident mentioned in II Cor. 2:12 before the long digression on the glory of the ministry. This digression extends from II Cor. 2:14-7:4. He first came from Ephesus to Troas, and expected to meet Titus there with word from Corinth concerning the effect of his first letter. “Our flesh had no rest... I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother” (II Cor. 2:13).

Here is a common pattern of experience. We all have conflicts and concerns.

“Just as I am, Tho’ tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!” – Charlotte Elliott

Paul did not succumb to his fears. He experienced them, but they did not conquer him. Such adversity strengthens one.

B. The experience of the Corinthians with chastening (II Corinthians 7:6-12).

“Nevertheless God... comforted us by the coming of Titus” (II Cor, 7:6): Titus went to correct the open scandal of the man who was living with his stepmother (I Cor. 5:1-5). This sinner was probably an influential man who persisted in his sin, and led an open revolt against Paul, carrying many of the members with him. Under the influence of Paul’s letter, and the presence of Titus, the church as a whole was BROUGHT BACK TO THE TRUTH, resulting in the discipline of the sinner and his restoration (verse 7). This was the GOOD NEWS Titus brought Paul!

“For though I made you sorry with a letter... “ (II Cor. 7:8): He sternly rebuked their laxness. For a moment he was sorry he had written them. He was in a regretful mood at first. “I do not repent”, or “regret” as in the Revision. The word rendered “repent” in verse 8 is not the one rendered “repentance” in verses 9 and 10. Paul’s first letter had made the Corinthians sorry, and at one time he regretted sending it, because he feared it would not work the result he wished, but since it had, he did not regret that he sent it.

“Now I rejoice...” (II Cor. 7:9): Paul was glad he had sent the letter of stern rebuke, not because the Corinthians suffered pain, but because their pain resulted in repentance. Observe three things:

- (1) Regret is not repentance.
- (2) Sorrow is not repentance.
- (3) Godly sorrow (verse 10) works repentance.

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“After a godly manner.” In God’s way. “God’s way as opposed to man’s way and the devil’s way” (Plummer). It was not mere sorrow, but a change in their attitude that counted. It was God’s way and God’s will that the suffering should issue in repentance, not that the apostle should work them any harm.

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation...” (II Cor. 7:10): Godly sorrow results in repentance, and repentance results in salvation, and ‘this result is never to be regretted! Note the steps:

- (1) Godly sorrow.
- (2) Repentance as a result of godly sorrow.
- (3) Salvation secured by repentance.
- (4) This effect of repentance is never regretted.

“The sorrow of the world worketh death.” The kind of sorrow the world has in grief for “failure, not for sin” (Bernard). This is not godly sorrow, but remorse. Such remorse is seen in Cain’s lament (Gen. 4:9, 13), Esau’s tears (Heb. 12:16, 17), and the suicide of Judas (Matt. 27:3-10; Acts 1:16-19).

“Ye sorrowed after a godly sort...” (II Cor. 7:11): The Corinthians proved their repentance by their willingness to follow his instructions (II Cor. 2:9). What “I wrote” is seen in I Cor. 5:1-5.

Paul points out the good results of such “godly sorrow” in the case of the Corinthians. “For behold... what earnest care it wrought in you,” is contrast with former indifference. “What clearing of yourselves,” by showing that the offender has not been shielded or his offense condoned; “what indignation,” at the disgrace brought upon the church; “what fear” of consequences; “what longing” for the apostle’s forgiveness and for his return; “what zeal” to discipline the offender; “what avenging,” what severity in his punishment. In every one of these points the Corinthians had approved themselves, and had shown that they were purged from all complicity in the sin and no longer felt any guilt sympathy with the offender.

Paul “wrote unto you” (verse 12) not merely to secure the discipline of the offender, but to call forth an expression of the deep concern, the “earnest care” which the Corinthians felt for him, and “that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.”

Repentance Required Of ALL!

“All” must repent, or perish (Luke 13:3).

“ALL” are commanded to repent (Acts 17:30).

Repentance is “unto life” (Acts 11:18).

Heaven rejoices when “one sinner” repents (Luke 15:7).

People in hell want us to repent (Luke 16:27-30).

Repentance is not “godly sorrow” (II Cor. 7:10). Godly sorrow comes before and fruits in repentance.

Repentance is not reformation (Matt. 3:8). Reformation comes after repentance.

Repentance is a change of will or mind (Matt. 21:28, 29).

Men “everywhere” should repent because they fear the judgment (Acts 17:30, 31).

Sinners should repent because of the “goodness of God” (Rom. 2:4).

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Repentance is AFTER FAITH and BEFORE BAPTISM (Acts 2:38). It is “for the remission of sins, and...the gift of the Holy Ghost”!

Not only is repentance a command to ALL ALIEN SINNERS, but it is a command to the erring Christian. Whenever we sin, we must repent and “pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).

IV. The Comforted Life (II Corinthians 7:13-16)

“Therefore we were comforted in your comfort...” (II Cor. 7:13) An unpleasant situation had ended fortunately. Paul found comfort out of the comfort of his friends. Paul had invested prayer, agony, and much effort in them. His ministry was beginning to pay rich spiritual dividends.

“For if I have boasted any thing to him of you...” (II Cor. 7:14) Paul had assured Titus, who hesitated to go to Corinth after the failure of Timothy, that the Corinthians would be loyal, true, and ready to obey the second epistle. He had always spoken truth TO THEM. He had been truthful in speaking to Titus ABOUT THEM. He boasted of them to Titus. Titus found this opinion of them WAS TRUE! Confidence is something to be coveted by all. Let us all work, pray and live so as to gain the confidence of all good people. At first Paul came to the Corinthians “feeling far from strong; I was nervous and rather shaky” (I Cor. 2:3, Phillips). The Corinthians received Titus “with fear and trembling” (verse 15). Now “I am glad that I can feel perfect confidence in you” (verse 16, Goodspeed).

QUESTIONS

1. What fact made the Corinthians especially dear to Paul (I Cor. 4:17; 16:10)?
2. Why did Titus succeed in Corinth after ‘Timid’ Timothy failed (II Cor. 2:3, 13; 7:6, 13; 12:18)?
3. Can you outline our lesson for today?
4. What “promises” had God given to the Corinthians (II Cor. 7:1)?
5. From what were the Corinthians to be cleansed (II Cor. 7:1)?
6. Does “filthiness of the flesh” include the cancer-producing tobacco habit (I Cor. 6:19, 20)?
7. Can you name some “filthiness of the... spirit”?
8. Is holiness a sudden attainment, or a continuous process (II Cor. 7:1b; I Thess. 3:13; Rom. 1:4, 6).
9. Why were the Corinthians to receive Paul (II Cor. 7:2)?
10. What was Paul’s attitude when he received the report of Titus (II Cor. 7:4)?
11. What was Paul’s condition in Macedonia (II Cor. 7:5; 2:13)?
12. Why did Paul not regret writing a harsh letter (II Cor. 7:8)?
13. Why did Paul rejoice (II Cor. 7:9)? And what three things should we observe?
14. What does “godly sorrow” work (II Cor. 7:10)? What does the “sorrow of the world work”?
15. How did the Corinthians dear themselves (II Cor. 7:11)?
16. Why had Paul written to the people (II Cor. 7:12)?
17. Can you give several reasons why repentance is required of “all”?
18. Are repentance and baptism for the same thing (Acts 2:38)? What place does repentance have in the plan of salvation for an alien sinner (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12)?
19. What must a Christian do when he has sinned (Acts 8:22)?
20. How had Paul shown confidence in the Corinthians (II Cor. 7:13-16)?

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Lesson 7

Page 1

II Corinthians 8

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 8:5,9

Memory Verse:

“And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God... For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (II Corinthians 8:5,9).

FINANCING THE LORD’S WORK

The great classic passage on Christian giving is found in II Corinthians 8 and 9, Instructions about the offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem are clear, concrete, concise. All the principles which should control Christian giving for benevolent, missionary, and worldwide or local work are laid down as Holy Spirit given guide lines for all time.

If modern Christians followed these principles, there would never be need of special appeals, and all the treasuries of all churches would overflow.

Paul wrote II Corinthians from Philippi, probably in the fall of 57 A. D., on his third missionary journey. This important Roman city was in the northern part of Greece, called Macedonia. Here Titus had brought him encouraging news of the church of Corinth. As a part of his instruction, he “exhorts the Corinthians to proceed with the collection for the poor of the Jerusalem church” which they had pledged and started “a year ago” (verse 10).

Why Give?

Paul was eager for the success of this “collection for the saints” (I Cor. 16: 1).

1. The common grace of Christian charity would lead him to sympathize with persons in need.
2. Those in need were Jewish Christians, Paul’s kinsmen after the flesh, and his brethren in Christ.
3. The Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-35; Gal. 2:1-10) agreed that Paul should be recognized as the apostle to the Gentiles, and that he should “remember the poor,” by which was meant the “poor saints in Jerusalem.”
4. Such a gift from Gentile churches would prove, to any who were skeptical among the Jewish Christians, the reality and genuineness of the faith and conversion of the Gentiles.
5. Paul supremely desired to establish the union of Jew and Gentile in the “ONE BODY” (EPH. 4:4) of Christ. Christian giving is

I. A Grace of Life (II Corinthians 8:1-8)

A. It was under adversity (II Corinthians 8:1,2).

1. Abundant joy in great affliction (II Cor. 8:1).

“Moreover... the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia” (II Cor. 8:1): “Grace,” “core” or “gift” occurs seven times in the chapter (verses 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16, 19) and three times in chapter 9 (verses 8, 14, 15). God’s grace is fully seen in our Lord’s gift of Himself in our behalf (verse 9).

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God's grace did more than help them bear their burdens with a grim patience. The Christians rejoiced in the midst of great affliction.

Paul now introduces the great "collection for the saints" (I Cor. 16:1; Rom. 15:26). Read also Acts 11:29; 24:17. Jews in foreign lands had the custom of sending up to Jerusalem contributions for the temple treasury. Now Paul urges the contributions for God's spiritual temple, for the poor saints.

A famine in Palestine (Acts 11:29), loss of standing among their own people, followed by the troubles which were leading to the Jewish war, caused the Christians in Jerusalem to be in genuine need of assistance from their more fortunate brethren in all the churches of Asia Minor and Greece.

2. Rich liberality in "poverty down deep" (II Cor. 8:2).

"How that in a great trial of affliction..." (II Cor. 8:2): The language implies persecution (see Acts 17:6; I Thess. 2:14). This might have been an excuse for NOT GIVING, if the Macedonian Christians had sought one.

"Their deep poverty": Poverty down deep, down to the bottom. Their great joy in the gospel and their "deep poverty" combined so that they contributed with rich liberality.

Paul stirred up the Corinthians to a proper level of giving, by referring them to the sacrifices of the Macedonian Christians. We often think we are generous, liberal and sacrificial until we behold the giving of others. Think of the poor widow and her "two mites," and then think of YOUR RECORD OF GIVING this year (Luke 21:1-4), THINK!

An American businessman and lawyer, both Christians, were traveling in Korea. One day they saw in a field by the side of the road a young man pulling a rude plow, while the old man held the handles. The lawyer, amused, snapped a picture of the scene. "I suppose they're very poor," he said to the missionary who was interpreter and guide to the party. "Yes," was the quiet reply. "That is the family of Chi Boui. When the church building was being built they were eager to give something to it, but they had no money, so they sold their only ox and gave the money to the church. This spring they are pulling the plow themselves."

"That must have been a real sacrifice," said the two Americans after some silent moments.

"They did not call it that," said the missionary. "They thought it was fortunate that they had the ox to sell."

When they reached home, the lawyer showed the picture to his minister and said: "I want to DOUBLE MY PLEDGE TO THE CHURCH, Give me some PLOW WORK, please. I have never yet given anything to my church that cost me anything!" How about you, dear one?

B. It was spontaneous (II Corinthians 8:3, 4).

"For to their power... beyond their power" (II Cor. 8:3): Three civil wars had reduced the churches of Macedonia to extreme poverty. Persecution added to their affliction (II Thess. 1:4) but of their own initiative they gave more than they comfortably could afford. They insisted that Paul receive their "gift" or "grace" of "fellowship of the ministering to the saints" at Jerusalem (verse 4). Paul was reluctant to ask them for money because of their poverty. They demanded the right to share in the offering!

C. It was in self-surrender (II Corinthians 8:5).

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“And...first gave their own selves to the Lord” (II Cor. 8:5): Paul had not “hoped” or “expected” anything from the Macedonians. The secret of their giving is the fact that they first “gave their own selves to the Lord.” Naturally, they wanted to share the Lord’s work and have a part in the offering Paul was gathering for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Such giving is “by the will of God.” When members of this church give “their own selves” to the Lord, their money will not be withheld from the Lord’s treasury in the local church. And there will be NO EXCUSES for not giving heard anywhere!

D. It proved their love (II Corinthians 8:6-8).

“Insomuch that we desired Titus... finish in you the same grace also” (II Cor. 8:6): The generosity of the Macedonian Christians inspired Paul to exhort Titus to return to Corinth and see that all the Corinthian pledges of help were paid before the apostle returned (Acts 20:1-3). Intentions to give must be finished, or completed. The “grace” of giving is a gift from God, We all may cultivate this grace!

“Therefore... abound in this grace also” (II Cor. 8:7): Paul exhorts the Corinthians to add the grace of giving to their many gifts (I Cor. 4:7; 12:1-14:40). He does not command them to give, but uses the **EXAMPLE OF THE MACEDONIANS** as a “means of comparison” to **TEST THE LOVE OF THE CORINTHIANS BY IT** (verse 8). “A collection is a **TEST OF ONE’S LOVE FOR CHRIST**, not the only test, but a **REAL ONE!**” The grace of giving completes the graces of Christian character. It is love in its finest form!

II. The Example of Christ (II Corinthians 8:9-15).

A. Grace in giving (II Corinthians 8:9a).

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ... “ (II Cor. 8:9a): Giving is a grace. Christ supremely manifested it. Ours is not law giving, but **LOVE-GIVING**. We prove our love for Him by giving as God prospers us (vs. 8; I Cor. 16:2).

B. Example in giving (II Corinthians 8:9b).

“Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor...” (II Cor. 8:9b) Our Lord gave up all for us. He became poor that we might “be rich,” in heavenly riches. Christ parted with riches and took poverty; with glory and took humiliation; with bliss and took suffering, all for our sakes. The passage compares Christ’s pre-existent state with that he had on earth.

C. Pledging in giving (II Corinthians 8:10, 11).

“And herein I give my advice...” (II Cor. 8:10) Not a “commandment,” but “advice” (see verse 8). The Corinthians had been willing for many months to give. They had pledged to do so. “I think it would be a good thing for you, who were the first a year ago to think of helping, as well as the first to give, to **CARRY THROUGH** what you then intended to do” (Phillips). Be as quick to **PAY** as you are to **PLEDGE**. “Readiness to will” must be matched by “performance!” When heaven’s books are balanced, will you be proud of the way your pocketbook has shared or withheld the tithes and love-offerings on earth?

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D. Willingness in giving (II Corinthians 8:12).

“For... it is accepted according to that a man hath” (II Cor. 8:12) God does not expect us to give what we do not have. The “willing mind” of the Corinthians had been shown in the readiness “to will.” The willing mind is essential to the acceptance of the gift. If this willingness is present, then God accepts the gift and measures it according to a man’s means.

E. Equality in giving (II Corinthians 8:13-15).

“For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened...” (II Cor. 8:13): The Corinthians were well able to relieve the need of the Jewish Christians in Judea, Some day the circumstances might be reversed, and the Judean Christians would be called upon to help the Corinthians. Put the Golden Rule into practice with this in mind (Matt. 7:12). The principle of equality should be maintained.

“As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over...” (II Cor. 8:15): To illustrate the principle of equality in giving, Paul quotes from the experience of the children of Israel (Ex. 16:18). When the manna fell, whatever each individual gathered, there was found to be “an omer for every man” (Ex. 16:16). “An omer” is four (4) pints (See Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, page 891, Second Edition, 1963).

The equality of manna was carried out by some miraculous means, so that no one had more or less than he needed of the divine provision. The greedy Israelite found his extra manna would not keep. Let us as Christians be wise and diligent in gathering, but Let us be generous and wise distributors (Prov. 11:24).

III. A Careful Administrator (II Corinthians 8:16-24).

A. Giving and using (II Corinthians 8:16-20).

“But thanks be to God... Titus” (II Cor. 8:16): Titus was the trusted friend of Paul. He had met him in Macedonia with the good news from Corinth. Paul thanks God for having put into the heart of Titus the same deep interest in the matter of this contribution that he himself feels.

“For indeed he... of his own accord he went unto you” (II Cor. 8:17): Titus desired and chose the work. He needed no request from Paul to do it. He gladly accepted Paul’s suggestion.

“And we have sent him with the brother...” (II Cor. 8:18): “The brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches” is unknown. It is futile to guess who he was. His devoted service to the Christian faith had won for him the praise of all believers. The churches chose him to travel with Paul and lighten the burden of getting the collection to Jerusalem. It may have been Luke, or one of Macedonia brethren, Sopater, Aristarchus and Secundus (see Acts 20:4).

“Avoiding this, that no man should blame us...” (II Cor. 8:20): There were evil-minded persons who might charge that the apostle had used the gifts for his own advantage unless the messengers could report just how the funds were used. “The churches” chose the brother to travel with Paul. This appointment had Paul’s full consent, for he wished to make sure no one should have any ground for criticizing or suspecting his conduct in “this abundance which is administered by us.” He used every precaution in receiving and disbursing the funds entrusted to him.

Paul’s enemies were contemptible enough to intimate that his interest in the collection was not unselfish and that there was something suspicious about his zeal for the gathering of such large sums.

B. Giving and procuring (II Corinthians 8:21-23).

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“Providing for honest things...” (II Cor. 8:21) It is not enough for one’s financial accounts to be honorable as God sees them, but they should be so kept that men can understand them also. This is a timely warning.

“And we have sent with them our brother...” (II Cor. 8:22): Not Paul’s personal brother, but a brother in Christ, one whom Paul had tested and was willing to trust. It may have been Tychicus or Apollos, but we do not know. The men whom Paul chose were beyond reproach. Titus was his partner and “fellow-helper” in all that concerned the welfare of the Corinthian church. “The messengers of the churches” were specially chosen delegates of the churches. That should be enough to guarantee their standing and ability. These men were an honor to their Master. They are “the glory of Christ.”

C. Giving and loving (II Corinthians 8:24).

“Wherefore show... the proof of your love...” (II Cor. 8:24): The proof of love is in giving. The proof of loving is not in praying. Praying may be one of the most selfish engagements we keep. It can become a religious “give-me” exercise. The proof of loving God is not in worship. Worship may be for the sake of religious respectability. The “proof” of loving God is in GIVING ONE’S SELF TO GOD.

Love thrives on giving. It dies in withholding. The greatest example of love we have is in God. He “SO LOVED the world, that he GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON” (John 3:16).

Paul wanted the Corinthians to show the visiting messengers of the churches and his workers “the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.” An ill reputation would not only reflect upon the churches but upon Paul himself.

QUESTIONS

1. Where is the great classic on Christian giving found?
2. When was this divine instruction written? From where?
3. Why was Paul eager for the success of this “collection for the saints” (I Cor. 16:1)?
4. What group of churches are cited as an example in sacrificial giving (II Cor. 8:1)?
5. What three things are stated as to the condition of the Macedonian saints (II Cor. 8:2)?
6. How liberal were these poor Macedonian saints (II Cor. 8:3, 4)?
7. What was the secret of their abounding liberality (II Cor. 8:5; Rom. 12:1; I Cor. 6:19, 20)?
8. What did Paul “desire Titus” to do (II Cor. 8:6)?
9. Although the Corinthians “abounded in so many graces,” in what “grace” were they lacking (II Cor. 8:7)?
10. Is giving a proof of “the sincerity of your love” for Christ (II Cor. 8:8)?
11. How is Christ the supreme incentive to liberal giving (II Cor. 8:9; Luke 9:58; Phil. 2:5-8) P
12. What “advice” did Paul give to the Corinthians (II Cor. 8:10, 11)?
13. What is the standard by which God measures our gifts (II Cor. 8:12)?
14. What does Paul mean by “an equality” (II Cor. 8:13, 14; I Cor. 4:7)?
15. In the light of this rule is the church under obligation to provide for her lazy members (Eph. 4:28; II Thess. 3:10-12)?
16. What was the Old Testament illustration of “equality” (II Cor. 8:15; Exodus 16:17, 18)?
17. Why did Paul thank God for Titus (II Cor. 8:16, 17, 23)?
18. Who was “the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches” (II Cor. 8:18)?
19. What possible criticism did Paul fear from his enemies (II Cor. 8:19-21)?
20. How could the Corinthians, and YOU, show “the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf (II Cor. 8:24)?

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Lesson 8

Page 1

II Corinthians 9

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 9:6,7

Memory Verse:

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (II Corinthians 9:6, 7).

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES OF GIVING

In II Corinthians 8 and 9 we have the most complete instructions about Christian giving which the New Testament contains.

“Though it is an offering for charity, we presume the principles here stated should be the guide for churches in taking all their offerings, both those for self-support and those for missionary and benevolent enterprises.”

We who “PROVE GOD” (Malachi 3:8-10) will, like our Master, know “It is more blessed (happier) to give than receive” (Acts 20:35).

“The collection” (1 Cor. 16:1) is important, but the EDIFICATION OF BELIEVERS IS OF STILL GREATER CONCERN. Church giving for benevolence or any Christian cause must not be neglected or evaded. A church that does not give does not live! Consistent Christian giving will result when this great chapter on “Principles of Giving” is stressed again and again. Here we see the principle of

I. Readiness (II Corinthians 9:1-5)

“For as touching the ministering to the saints...” (II Cor. 9:1) The Corinthians “a year ago” (II Cor. 8:10) had pledged themselves to help the poor saints at Jerusalem. They had, as yet, not raised their pledge, although Paul had given them inspired instructions how it was to be done. “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (I Cor. 16:2).

“It is superfluous for me to write to you...” They were fully instructed. They had begun the work. It ought not to be necessary for Paul to write and remind the Corinthians to do their pledged duty – but he does write and explains why in verse 3.

“For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia...” (II Cor, 9:2): In II Corinthians 8:1-5 Paul boasts of the Macedonians to the Corinthians. Now he is provoking, stirring up, the Macedonians by telling them about the readiness of the Corinthians of Achaia, the southern part of Greece. “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24).

It is a mark of spiritual maturing in the “grace of giving” that we do not need the example of other heroic givers to “provoke” us to give. We should be in this regard like the little boy who wanted to find a part-time job. A prospective employer talked to him and said, “I need a boy like you. Would you be honest if I hired you?” Quick as a flash came the answer: “Mister, I’ll be honest whether you buy me or not”!

“Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you... in vain” (II Cor. 9:3): Paul had sent Titus, and “the brother”, and “with them our brother” (II Cor. 8:17, 18, 22) to Corinth so they would surely be prepared when the apostle came.

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Paul had certain things at stake in regard to the promised relief offering for the Judean Christians from the Corinthian Christians. His pride in the Corinthians was at stake. He had boasted in Macedonia, or northern Greece, of the liberality and readiness of the Corinthians. A year had passed. The Corinthian Christians had not completed the offering. Paul believed in FAITH AND WORKS. Our faith in God is not to be a substitute for works. "Faith is the cause and works are the effect." Paul says. "If any Macedonians should come with me to Corinth and find the collection not yet gathered, I would be ashamed for having represented you as better than you were. And you would be ashamed of having been held up as a model for the emulation of those who were, in fact, better than you" (verse 4). Some from Macedonia did come with Paul to Corinth (Acts 20:4).

"Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren..." (II Cor, 9:5): To avoid discrediting the Corinthians, Paul deemed it necessary to send three brethren to go on in advance and collect the promised bounty in good season. He wishes it to be a bounty, a real gift of love, and not something that may seem to have been extorted from them. Some offerings exhibit covetousness on the part of the giver by their very stinginess. When Christians give on the principle of readiness, they will be sensitive to the need of others, and prepare to meet that need.

II. The Harvest (II Corinthians 9:6)

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly..." (II Cor. 9:6): Our giving is a proof of our love (II Cor. 8:24). Giving is not a sacrifice, but rather a sowing. Are we not too prone to think of giving in terms of duty rather than in terms of bounty? We enrich ourselves when we give to others. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord: and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Prov. 19:17). Paul shows this by the law of nature as illustrated in the harvest. Every farmer knows "that poor sowing means a poor harvest, and generous sowing means a generous harvest." Christian giving is not a "scattering," it is a "sowing." It is not "just a contribution," it is AN INVESTMENT. God has promised to repay us "an hundred fold" in this present life for every thing we sacrifice for him (Mark 10:28-30).

The man who does not give as he should, is "robbing God" by withholding money which is God's (Malachi 3:8). God condemned the Israelites for offering a "sick sheep" instead of giving their best (Malachi 1:8). If we cast our bread upon the waters we shall certainly gather it up again. God is able to bestow every blessing both temporal and spiritual. The man who fears God is liberal in his remembrance of the poor and the Lord continually supplies him with means to that end. "Blessed is the man that... hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honor" (Psalm 112:9).

III. Free-Will (II Corinthians 9:7)

A. According to our purpose (II Corinthians 9:7a).

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart..." (II Cor. 9:7a): This is free-will giving; giving without compulsion, regulation, constraint or force of any kind – EXCEPT THE CONSTRAINT OF LOVE FOR GOD. Others may suggest what we should fairly give, but honestly before God WE MUST MAKE THE CHOICE and form our own "purpose" of WHAT WE THINK IS THE RIGHT AMOUNT. When we DECIDE, we PLEDGE or EXPRESS THE PURPOSE OF OUR HEART. If you decide on one dollar when you CAN and SHOULD GIVE TEN DOLLARS, then go back and EXAMINE YOUR LOVE FOR CHRIST in the light of His LOVE FOR YOU. Then if you are a genuine Christian you'll prove your love is real in the grace of giving (II Cor. 8:1, 8, 24)!

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B. According to our pleasure (II Corinthians 9:7b).

“Not grudgingly...” (II Cor. 9:7b): Christians are “not to give as out of sorrow,” nor “of necessity.” We are not to give under the compulsion of circumstances, or the fear of criticism, or the custom of society.

“For God loveth a cheerful giver”: A “hilarious giver.” That means a happy giver. Not a giver who says: “Dear me, they are always needing money; I guess I’ll have to give a little.” It is not the amount given which determines God’s approval, but the spirit of the one who gives!

An individual apologized to me because he was able to pledge only \$1,000.00 on our building fund. “I hope,” he said, “to make it \$3,000.00 before the three years are up.” God is pleased with such a spirit. God seeks our cooperation in the spirit of joy and love, rather than from compulsion and constraint.

Some Bible Examples of Giving

1. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20). We are of the priesthood of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:5-10; 7:1-17).
2. Jacob made a vow that all of his life he would give a tenth of everything he earned to the Lord (Genesis 28:20-22). He kept his vow. God prospered him.
3. The Israelites were very liberal in giving to build the tabernacle (Exodus 35:4-5; 36:5-7).
4. The wise men brought gifts to baby Jesus (Matt. 2:11).
5. Jesus commended the poor widow for giving all that she had (Mark 12:41-44).
6. The Jerusalem church was very liberal in giving (Acts 2:44,45; 4:32-37).

IV. Divine Grace (II Corinthians 9:8-10).

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you...” (II Cor. 9:8): God is able and willing to bestow all blessings, temporal and spiritual, upon us “so that you may always have sufficient both for yourselves and for giving away to other people.” The problem is not on the human side, but on the human side. With God there is a sufficient ability. He waits only for enterprising Christians who will dare to believe and act upon this challenging promise. By the law of faith the Christian can tap the resources of God and turn them into practical good!

“As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad...” (II Cor. 9:9) We cannot out-give God. He has the bigger shovel. So it was with the Old Testament believer. He found that charity was a sowing which met the approval of God and the blessing of God, but which also resulted in a fruitage which would abide (Psa. 112:9).

“Now he that ministereth seed to the sower...” (II Cor. 9:10): Under grace the Christian can expect a similar experience. This is a definite statement that those who give liberally may usually expect that their opportunities and their means for charity will be increased. They will be enriched on all occasions, so that they can be generous at all times. If the rule is not without exceptions, it is so general as to furnish encouragement in this exercise of this Christian grace of charity. The “cheerful giver” is always spiritually enriched and usually is given increasing ability to exercise this grace.

IV. Thanksgiving (II Corinthians 9:11-15).

“Being enriched in every thing...” (II Cor. 9:11): This explains how the fruits of righteousness are increased. As they are enriched it tends to “all bountifulness.” The one who gives reaps a harvest in his own life, but his charity evidently bears fruit in the lives of those whom he relieves.

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“Thanksgiving to God.” A great chorus of praise would be called forth by their liberality. It would result in “many thanksgivings unto God” (verse 12), in addition to “supplying the want of the saints.” Have you experienced these two things which result from bountiful giving?

“Whiles by the experiment... they glorify God” (II Cor. 9:13): The liberal spirit in the Corinthians made those in Judea “long after you” (verse 14). Such a gift would tend to open all minds of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and remove their prejudices. They would be filled with love for the Corinthian Christians, and “long” for them on account of the proof they had of God’s grace to you. They glorify God by prayer for you!

“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (II Cor. 9:15): This refers to the source and inspiration of all Christian benevolence, Jesus Christ. Christ is God’s gift to us (John 3:16), and the source of all Christian grace and benevolence. When we give, remember God’s GIFT TO US. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (II Cor. 8:9). Jesus became a pauper on earth that we might be rich in him, rich in all grace, here and hereafter! “And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Matt. 8:20).

God’s gift broke down the old enmity and bound together Jew and Gentile in love, so that Jewish Christians would pray, thank God for, and long for Gentile Christians like those at Corinth.

QUESTIONS

1. Where do we find the most complete instructions about Christian giving in the New Testament?
2. If we do not “Prove God,” will we ever know whether “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Mal. 3:8-10; Acts 20:35)?
3. Why was it “superfluous” for Paul to write to the Corinthians (II Cor. 9:1)?
4. What had the Corinthians done “a year ago” (II Cor. 8:10)?
5. How had the Corinthians encouraged the Macedonian saints to give liberally (II Cor. 9:2; Heb. 10:24)?
6. Why did Paul send the brethren to Corinth (II Cor. 9:3; II Cor. 8:17, 18, 22)?
7. Did some of the Macedonians come with Paul to Corinth (Acts 20:4)? Who were they?
8. What kind of offering did Paul want the Corinthians to make (II Cor. 9:5)?
9. What of those who “sow sparingly” (II Cor. 9:6)? “Bountifully”?
10. How is each man to give (II Cor. 9:7)?
11. What kind of giver does God love (II Cor. 9:7b)? Does God love you on this basis?
12. What is God able to do for us (II Cor. 9:8)?
13. What has God promised to do for those who sacrifice for His cause (II Cor. 9:9, 10)?
14. What did Abraham do (Genesis 14:18-20)? Of what priesthood are we Christians (Heb. 5:5-10; 7:1-17)?
15. What vow did Jacob make (Genesis 28:20-22)? Did he keep his vow? Did God prosper him?
16. Why did Jesus commend the poor widow (Mark 12:41-44)?
17. What is the effect of liberal giving upon others (II Cor. 9:11-14)?
18. What are the results for God (II Cor. 9:12-14)?
19. Who gave the greatest possible gift (II Cor. 9:15; John 3:16)?
20. What should characterize all Christian giving (II Cor. 8:2, 5, 12; 9:7)?

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Lesson 9

Page 1

II Corinthians 10

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 10:17, 18

Memory Verse:

“But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth” (II Corinthians 10:17, 18).

PAUL VINDICATES HIS APOSTLESHIP

Paul vindicates his authority as an apostle of Christ in II Corinthians 10-13. These chapters differ so greatly in tone and spirit from the chapters that precede that they are supposed by many to form a separate epistle. Some conclude that these four chapters constitute the “severe letter of rebuke written before this Second Epistle and referred to in its opening section.”

Contrast Accounted For

The contrast in tone, I believe, is sufficiently accounted for on the ground of the distinct purpose of this portion of the letter. Note the outline of II Corinthians:

- I. The Endurance of the Christian (II Corinthians 1-7).
- II. The Ministrations of the Christian (II Corinthians 8-9).
- III. The Commendations of the Christian (II Corinthians 10-13).

In the earlier chapters Paul was addressing the great body of believers whom he regarded as his friends, and was trying to remove from their minds certain suspicious which had been aroused as to his integrity and sincerity.

In the closing chapters, without directly addressing them, Paul is rebuking bitter enemies who have cruelly assailed him and are endeavoring to undermine his influence and to corrupt his gospel. These enemies seem to have come from the mother church at Jerusalem with letters, possibly spurious, from that church. Doubtless they were Judaizers who were attempting to combine the requirements of the Jewish law with the free grace of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their selfish, mercenary motives were wrongly influencing the Corinthian Church. Hence Paul delivered this stern rebuke which has commonly been called his “great invective.” To Paul, the life of the church at Corinth was at stake. As an apostle of Jesus Christ he is not willing to allow the work of his Master to be destroyed by false teachers who have been attempting to corrupt the church. Stern and passionate language, under such conditions, is not to be condemned as self-conscious and ill tempered.

I. The Christian’s Attitude (II Corinthians 10:1-6).

“Now I Paul myself beseech you...” (II Cor. 10:1) Paul associated himself with Timothy (II Cor. 1:1) and his fellow-laborers up to this point. Etc has spoken in the plural. Now he uses the singular, “Now I Paul.” “I... beseech you” is in striking contrast to the severe, ever bitter rebukes, by which his defense is

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characterized. However passionately he may attack his opponents, he never loses his self-control, his sanity, or his conscious-ness that he is a servant of Jesus Christ.

Paul appeals to the Corinthians “by the gentleness and sympathy of Christ Himself.” He intimates that these qualities should be imitated by all that profess to be Christ’s servants. These form Paul’s own rule of action. Jesus claimed meekness for himself (Matt. 11:29), felicitated the meek (Matt. 5:5) and exemplified it (Luke 23:34).

“I... who in presence am base among you... absent... bold.” This is the cruel sneer of his enemies that he quotes. This unkind charge was probably supported by the fact that Paul had shown himself to be mild and patient when with them. Later he wrote a stern letter (I Cor. 5:1-13). Such mildness and patience had been basely misconstrued as weakness and cowardice, due to a conscious lack of power and divine authority. The sneer stung Paul to the quick.

“I beseech you...” (II Cor. 10:2): Perhaps, “I beg” suits the new turn here. The example of humility in Christ makes Paul drop “from magisterial exhortation to earnest entreaty” (Plummer). He begs that, when he comes, he may not have to exercise that boldness which fears he will have to use in censuring some opponents. He desires that all may so act that he can be lowly and gentle when present.

“Some... think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.” Another sneering charge by his enemies that Paul was led by worldly motives.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh” (II Cor. 10:3): Paul retorts, “The truth is that, although of course we lead normal human lives, the battle we are fighting is on the spiritual level.” Here he is playing upon the word “flesh” and intimating its contrary uses. He lived IN A FLESHLY BODY, but he DID NOT WALK according to the standards of the flesh as his enemies charged. “Paul admits that he fights, but only the devil and his agents.” The apostle was the victim of injustice, ill treatment, and false report.

These petty critics at Corinth could find nothing wrong with Paul’s preaching, doctrine, or his moral conduct. They took up PURELY PERSONAL matters, matters of opinion. “They tried to reflect upon the legitimacy of his apostleship on the grounds of his physical presence.”

Paul did not want to change his method of dealing with them. He was capable of using “a rod” (I Cor. 4:21). He preferred to use “love” and “meekness.”

What was Paul like according to “the flesh?” The New Testament makes it clear that Paul did not have a commanding appearance like that of Barnabas (Acts 14:12-18). And he had a “thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me” (II Cor. 12:7).

“ACTS OF PAUL AND THELCA” was written in the middle of the 2nd century. It pictures Paul “a man of moderate stature, with curly hair, scanty crooked legs, with blue eyes and large knit brows, long nose; that that he was full of grace and pity of the Lord, sometimes having the appearance of a man, but sometimes looking like an angel.”

A FORGERY (4th century) in the name of LUCIAN describes Paul as “small in stature, bald-headed, bow-legged, stout ...with a slightly prominent nose, and full of grace,” as a “hook-nosed Galilean.”

Paul was not a weakling, but a forceful and dominating personality (Acts 17:6). He had received the gospel and was “debtor” to all men (Rom. 1:14-17). His life and service must be judged by his performance and not by his profession.

“For the weapons of our warfare...” (II Cor. 10:4) The weapons by which Paul is waging his spiritual warfare are not worldly and carnal, in contrast to those used by the Corinthian enemies. Their character is spiritual, or “mighty through God.” Their conquest is thrilling: “For the destruction of the enemy’s strongholds.”

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“Pulling down” is a military metaphor and as “casting down” (verse 5) may allude to the crow, a large military engine with a great claw to it, which was used to pull down the walls of castles, forts and strongholds.

“Casting down imaginations...” (II Cor. 10:5): Arthur S. Way renders verse 5: “I can batter down bulwarks of human reason, I can scale every crag-fortress that towers up, bidding defiance to the true knowledge of God. I can make each rebel purpose my prisoner-of-war, and bow it into submission to Messiah.” Christians conquer “more by love than by hate, more by faith than by flesh, more by prayer than by propaganda”!

“Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Like Paul we must submit all things to Christ. “Before we go anywhere, or do anything, or before we plan or think” we should be **SUBMISSIVE TO CHRIST**.

“And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience...” (II Cor. 10:6). Whatever disobedience might exist in the Corinthian church, Paul was quite ready to show his power. He was ready to rebuke and to overcome it. Paul delayed his coming to them that all who sincerely loved Christ might have opportunity to repent and **GET RIGHT WITH GOD AND WITH EACH OTHER**. Those who would not repent when he came would be dealt with. He would punish the disobedient, the rebellious remnant in the church. Paul wanted the whole church to obey his Spirit-revealed instructions!

II. The Christian’s Authority (II Corinthians 10:7-11).

“Do you look on things after the outward appearance?” (II Cor. 10:7): Paul warns the Corinthians against being misled by appearances and superficial judgments. Read I Samuel 16:7. They ought to look below the surface, and face the facts. Paul had not seen Christ in the flesh or walked a long time with him in his earthly ministry, but the Lord appeared to him and gave him a direct, official appointment (Acts 9:15). The twelve recognized his work (Acts 15:25), and the program of work met their approval (Gal. 2:9). If his enemies claimed to be “Christ’s” on this, or any ground, Paul had equal claims: “Even so are we Christ’s.”

“For though I should boast... of our authority” (II Cor. 10:8): Our Lord committed the gospel to Paul by direct revelation (Gal. 1:11, 12). This authority and power was entrusted to him to save men, not to destroy them.

“That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters” (II Cor. 10:9): “Yet I don’t want you to think of me merely as the man who writes you terrifying letters.”

“For his letters, say they, are weighty... his bodily presence is weak” (II Cor. 10:10): His enemies charged that Paul was brave from a distance and cowardly in person. He terrified, they said, by empty threats!

“Let such an one think this...” (II Cor. 10:11) To the sneer of verse 10, Paul makes reply that anyone who talks in this way may rest assured that when Paul arrives he will express himself quite as forcibly **BY ACTION** as he **DOES BY LETTER WHEN ABSENT!** If you think I am weak in bodily presence, “wait until I get there, and see.” Paul must have smiled as he wrote these words, a sort of grim humor. But the Corinthians would find out that he knew how to use the “rod” of God’s Word if they did not repent!

III. The Christian's Approval (II Corinthians 10:12-18).

“For we dare not make ourselves of the number...” (II Cor. 10:12): It is very foolish to compare or contrast ourselves with others. God has given to every man some gift. George Whitefield said: “Other men may preach the gospel better than I can, but no man can preach a better gospel.”

The Judaizers set themselves up as the STANDARDS OF ORTHODOXY from Jerusalem. “Measuring themselves by themselves” is keenest sarcasm. Setting themselves up as the standards of orthodoxy these Judaizers always measure up to the standard while Paul falls short. Mutual admiration societies, even in religious circles, do not indicate a very high order of intelligence. Such men are “without understanding.”

“But we will not boast of things without our measure...” (II Cor. 10:13) Or beyond our measure. A measure is a rule to walk by. Paul's measuring-rod extends to Corinth. He will confine himself to the limits of the province which God marked out for him, a province which includes Corinth and his converts in that city (verses 14, 15). Other apostles were sent to the circumcision, the Jews. He and Barnabas were sent to the uncircumcision, the Gentiles (Gal. 2:9). When he came to Europe the Spirit of God sent him (Acts 16:9-10).

“To preach the gospel... not to boast in another man's line” (II Cor. 10:16): Paul had founded the church at Corinth (Acts 18:1-18). It was Paul's uniform course to preach where no one before him had preached the gospel. He expresses the hope that this success at Corinth and thy support of the church will enable him to carry the gospel beyond them where no man had preached.

Modernists, destructive critics and Judaizers, then and now, NEVER BREAK NEW GROUND. They always camp in the clearing where other men have made the way. Like petty parasites they suck the life out of the saints and faithful men like Paul!

“But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (II Cor. 10:17): Paul quotes from Jer. 9:23, 24. See also Prov. 27:2. This gives the true rule of boasting. Let the Lord be our boast, for we are nothing. Paul ascribes his power to God (verse 5). His work, vast as it was, was far less than God demanded of him (verse 13).

“For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth” (II Cor. 10:18): He whom the Lord “commendeth” is the one who has approval, not he who commends himself. The Lord has shown his approval of Paul, not of the false teachers, by the work the Lord accomplished through Paul in the church at Corinth!

“I am satisfied, I am satisfied,
I am satisfied with Jesus,
But the question comes to me,
As I think of Calvary,
Is my Master satisfied with me?”

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QUESTIONS

1. Where does Paul vindicate his authority as an apostle?
2. How may we account for the contrast in tone of II Corinthians 10-13 with the first nine chapters?
3. What has Paul's stern rebuke been called?
4. Who had joined with Paul in the two previous sections of this letter (II Cor. 1:1)?
5. Why did Paul now speak in the singular (II Cor. 10:1)?
6. On what basis did Paul appeal to the Corinthians (II Cor. 10:1)?
7. What criticisms had been offered against Paul (II Cor. 10:2, 9, 10; 12:11, 12; 13:3)?
8. What was the spiritual condition of these saints when Paul concluded this second epistle (II Cor. 11:19, 20; 12:15, 20; 13:2, 3)?
9. What was Paul like according to "the flesh" (II Cor. 10:2, 10)? How is he described in the "ACTS OF PAUL AND THELCA" and by the forgery of Lucian?
10. What would the weapons of Christ "cast down" (II Cor. 3-5)?
11. What was the teaching of Christ capable of doing (II Cor. 10:6)?
12. Of what fact did Paul remind the Corinthians in verse 7?
13. Why had authority been given to Paul (II Cor. 10:8)?
14. What inconsistency did Paul's enemies charge against him (II Cor. 10:9-11)?
15. What inconsistency did Paul charge against his enemies (II Cor. 10:12)?
16. What did Paul say he would not dare to do (II Cor. 10:12)?
17. Where did Paul say he would like to preach the gospel (II Cor. 10:16)?
18. In Paul's day and ours, what is the uniform practice of Judaizers, modernists and destructive critics? Can you cite some examples?
19. What is the true rule of boasting (II Cor. 10:17; Jer. 9:23, 24)? Why (I Cor. 6:19, 20)?
20. Who provides the rule by which every man is ultimately approved or disapproved (II Cor. 10:18; I Cor. 3:10, 12-15; 9:24-27; II Cor. 5:10)?

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Lesson 10

Page 1

II Corinthians 11

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 11:2

Memory Verse:

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you-to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”. (II Corinthians 11:2).

ENFORCED BOASTING ON PAUL’S PART

No faithful worker can endure keener pain than that caused by seeing the fruits of his labors destroyed. This is particularly true when one is working with souls. Nothing can be more distressing than to learn that affection is being alienated, faith undermined, and beliefs corrupted.

In chapters 1 - 9 Paul is addressing the Loyal Majority of the church at Corinth. In chapters 10-13 he addresses the Disloyal Majority. He hates the necessity of boasting, but Judaizing critics had forced him into it.

“Whom The Lord Commendeth”

Paul did not care whether anybody approved his work, SO LONG AS GOD APPROVED IT (II Cor. 10:17, 18). He was doing the work the Lord marked out for him. “I am Jesus... But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:15-18).

There was no shame about Paul, although his enemies made him the target of much abuse and evil criticism.

I. Sincerity and Service (II Corinthians 11:1-15)

A. The motives of service (II Corinthians 11:1-6).

“Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly...” (II Cor. 11:1) False teachers had come to Corinth after Paul left. They set about to discredit Paul and his work. The success of the Corinthian church is a demonstration and proof of Paul’s apostolic service, and a sign of divine approval.

This claim on Paul’s part may sound like boasting. He admits that it is a form of “folly.” He apologizes to his readers for a course that seems absurd, but he insists that he adopt it because of his love for them. “Folly” is “mindlessness,” “stupidity,” or by implication “ignorance,” or “egotism.” “Bear with me,” Paul is saying, “in a little egotism, a little mindlessness.” He sets little value on what he is compelled by his enemies to do – YET HE DOES IT for the sake of his message, Master and the messenger’s influence.

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“For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy...” (II Cor. 11:2): He is jealous with a godly jealousy, that is, with a jealousy after the pattern of the jealousy of God, which is always the jealousy of wounded love.

“I the Lord they God am a jealous God” (Ex. 20:5). God wants his people to be TRUE TO HIM. God cannot permit his people to bow down to other idols and false gods, God does not want his dear ones to drift away and follow impure things.

“For I have espoused you to one husband.” Paul had espoused them to Christ, the Bridegroom, of whom the church is the bride (Rev. 21:2). Paul was jealous that the Corinthian Christians BE TRUE TO CHRIST to whom the apostle had presented them “as a chaste virgin.”

“But I fear... as the serpent beguiled Eve” (II Cor. 11:3): This is Paul’s only mention of the serpent in Eden (Gen. 3:1-7). Paul was afraid that as the serpent led Eve into sin by his crafty wickedness, SO THESE FALSE TEACHERS WERE CORRUPTING the church at Corinth from “the simplicity” of doctrine and purity of life which they owed to Christ, their espoused husband. The serpent beguiled or fooled Eve by slandered God, by telling her GOD DID NOT MEAN WHAT HE SAID. He was a liar “from the beginning,” as Jesus said (John 8:44). Sounds modern, too! The devil fooled Eve with a half-truth.

“A lie that is all of a lie can be met with and fought outright; But a lie that is partly the truth is a harder matter to fight.” – Tennyson

“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus... gospel” (II Cor. 11:4): Not necessarily a different Jesus, but any other “Jesus” is a rival and so wrong. That would deny the identity. If these false teachers had come bringing one BETTER THAN THE CHRIST PAUL PREACHED, “ye might well bear with him.” But they professed to preach the same Jesus Paul preached. The Corinthians “had sold their apostle and had received nothing in exchange for him.”

“For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” (II Cor. 11:5): These Judaizers set themselves up to be “super apostles,” the “extra-super apostles” (Farrar), “a term he would never have applied to the twelve” (McGarvey). Paul is not referring to the pillar apostles of Gal. 2:9.

Paul says he is not behind these “precious apostles of yours,” these “pre-eminent apostles” a stroke of sarcasm.

“But though I be rude in speech... “ (II Cor. 11:6); Paul admits that he is not a professional orator (II Cor. 10:10), but denies that he is unskilled in knowledge. He has made his mastery of the things of Christ plain among all men. He knew his subject (I Cor. 1:17; 2:4). “The gospel. I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:11, 12).

B. The rewards of service (II Corinthians 11:7-11).

“Have I committed an offense... because I preached to you the gospel of God freely?” (II Cor. 11:7): This amounts to sarcasm to ask if he did a sin in preaching the gospel FREE OF EXPENSE TO THE CORINTHIANS. Paul preached at Corinth for eighteen months and would not let them give him a cent (Acts 18:1-11). He supported himself partly there by tent-making (Acts 18:3).

Paul HAD THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE MONEY FROM THE CORINTHIANS for his services to them, but he DID NOT EXERCISE HIS RIGHT. “Even so hath the Lord ORDAINED that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (I Cor. 9:14). When Paul went to pagan Corinth he did not want them to say he was coming there Just FOR THEIR MONEY, so he preached “the gospel of Christ without charge” (I Cor. 9:18).

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“I robbed other churches... to do you service” (II Cor, 11:8): He accepted support from “other churches” to enable him to preach in Corinth. When necessity arose, Paul made tents rather than ask the Corinthians for help. The Macedonians “supplied” his need “once and again” (Phil. 4:15, 16; Acts 18:5).

When dire need arose, his enemies slandered him and hoped to “drive him to receive wages that they might reduce his influence in this respect to the level of their own.” Paul was independent. He disappointed the false teachers and stuck to his rule (verses 9-10).

“Wherefore? Because I love you not?” (II Cor. 11:11): God knew Paul loved the Corinthians. He knew God understands his motives, whether the Corinthians do or not.

C. The counterfeits of service (II Corinthians 11:12-15).

“But what I do... cut off occasion from them” (II Cor. 11:12): While at first it seemed wise to avoid arousing the suspicion of “preaching for money” among the Corinthians, yet now his purpose is different. He has in mind not the loyal majority of Christians at Corinth, but the false teachers who are slandering him and misleading the church. He wishes to cut the ground from under the men who desire a pretext for claiming that they work under the same conditions as he, both he and they receiving support of the church! He wanted to force the false teachers by his example to “be found even as we” – to maintain themselves, that is, support themselves as he supported himself by tent making!

“For such are false apostles...” (II Cor. 11:13) Paul now takes the hide off his enemies. These men are not real, but “false apostles,” “deceitful workers,” pretending to be Christ’s apostles.

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed...” (II Cor. 11:14): The prince of darkness puts on the garb of light and sets the fashion for his followers in the masquerade to deceive the saints. “Like master like man” Read II Cor. 2:11; Gal. 1:8. This terrible portrayal reveals the depth of Paul’s feelings about the conduct of the Judaizing leaders in Corinth. In Gal. 2:4 he terms those in Jerusalem “false brethren... who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage”!

One of Satan’s chief tricks is to take the shape of “an angel of light” and deceive the true children of God.

“Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers...” (II Cor. 11:15): Jesus terms false shepherds thieves and robbers (John 10:1-21). It is a tragedy to see men in the livery of heaven serve the devil. The gravest wounds of the church do not come from without, but from agents of Satan within the fellowship of the church!

II. Sincerity and Suffering (II Corinthians 11:16-33)

A. Equal on the flesh level (II Corinthians 11:16-22)

“I say again, let no man think me a fool...” (II Cor. 11:16): Is it ever right to boast? No, if by boasting it means a proud rehearsal of personal possessions or attainments, made with a selfish view to securing popularity and praise. However, there may be times when one is impelled to recite his sufferings and sorrows and peculiar privileges to magnify the mercy and grace of God shown toward him that the claims of enemies may be silenced and that the name of Christ may be glorified. Compelled to boast, Paul asks that “no man think me a fool.”

“That which I speak... not after the Lord” (II Cor. 11:17): He had appealed to the example of Christ in II Cor. 10:1, “the meekness and gentleness of Christ,” Paul’s conduct here, he admits, is not in keeping

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with that, However, circumstances force him on. He “will glory also” (verse 18) in infirmities and a glorifying of the grace of God.

“For ye suffer fools gladly... “ (II Cor. 11:19): It is a part of their superior “wisdom” to tolerate fools (I Cor. 4:10). This is sarcasm that cut to the bone. “You won’t tolerate my love and service,” Paul twits them, “but you tolerate tyranny, extortion, craftiness, arrogance, violence, and insult” (Plummer).

“If a man smite you on the face” (verse 20): This is the climax of insult. It may refer to an actual case of violence.

“I speak as concerning reproach...” (II Cor. 11:21): “Intense irony!” “They more than tolerate those who trample on them while they criticize as ‘weak’ one who shows them great consideration” (Plummer). After these prolonged explanations Paul “changes his tone from irony to direct and masterful assertion” (Bernard).

“I am bold also”: Real courage. He next states grounds that he might have for boasting.

“Are they Hebrews? so am I...” (II Cor. 11:22): “So am I” is his triumphant refrain with each challenge. Were they of pure “Hebrew” stock? So was Paul, “of the tribe of Benjamin” (Phil. 3:5).

“Israelites”: He was of the seed of Jacob, and the heir to the promises to Israel.

“The seed of Abraham”: Paul was not only of the fleshly, but also of the spiritual seed of Abraham.

B. Superior in suffering (II Corinthians 11:23-30).

“Are they ministers of Christ? So am I...” (II Cor. 11:23): Such open boasting is out of accord with Paul’s spirit and habit. He claims superiority now to these “super apostles.”

This passage forms a summary of Paul’s career as an apostle. It reveals a small fragment of his experiences as recorded by Luke in the book of Acts. Luke was not writing a biography of Paul, but a history of the founding of the Christian Church. The story is here told with tantalizing brevity. Do you not wish we had an enlarged picture of the experiences here scantily sketched?

“In labors more abundant”: Read again his missionary journeys as Luke records them.

“In stripes above measure”: See verses 24, 25.

“In prisons more frequent”: Clement of Rome says that Paul was imprisoned seven times. We know of Philippi, Jerusalem, Caesarea, and twice in Rome. Philippi was the only one before II Corinthians was written. Had he been in prison in Ephesus? Some think so.

“In deaths oft”: Often he was in peril of death. See I Cor. 15:30-32; II Cor. 1:9f; 4:11,

“Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.” (II Cor. 11:24) “Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed” (Deut. 25:3). It is said that if the executioner exceeded the stripes allowed by the law, the executioner himself would be scourged. Only thirty-nine were inflicted for fear of a miscount!

“Thrice was I beaten with rods” (II Cor. 11:25): This was Roman (Gentile) punishment. It was forbidden to Roman citizens by the Lex Porcia, but Paul endured it in Philippi (Acts 16:23, 37), the only one of the three named in Acts.

“Once was I stoned.” At Lystra (Acts 14:5-19).

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“Thrice I suffered shipwreck...” These wrecks were in addition to the one suffered on his way to Rome (Acts 27:15-44).

“A night and a day I have been in the deep.” Probably floating on the wreckage. The memory of it survives like a nightmare.

“In journeyings often...” (II Cor. 11:26) In this connection Paul mentions eight different kinds of danger which his journeys involved. “In perils of waters... robbers... mine own countrymen... the heathen ...city... wilderness... sea... among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” (verse 27).

These are all pictures. Paul was giving the Corinthians his apostolic credentials, the credentials of his authority, the proof, in comparison with others. These show the authority of his teaching, the authority of the truth, the authority of that simplicity and purity, to which they were called, when he betrothed them to Christ, espoused them to Christ, to one husband. All these are his credentials.

“Besides those things that are without... the care of all the churches” (II Cor. 11:28): Paul’s physical sufferings and labors were not all. These were constant care and anxiety for the churches. The ‘episcopos’ is an overseer. All the churches he had planted, and the churches others had planted were his anxious concern day by day. Perhaps this was the same anxiety that he had concerning the Corinthians, fear lest they should be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is in Christ.

“Who is weak, and I am not weak?” (II Cor. 11:29) Paul’s sympathy for the churches was so great that if they suffered he suffered with them! Paul had the shepherd heart. When a brother “is offended” or stumbles, Paul is set on fire with grief.

“If I must need glory...” (II Cor. 11:30): If he is compelled to boast, Paul’s boast will be of his own infirmities and sufferings for Christ, such as he has just narrated.

C. The witness (II Corinthians 11:31-33).

“The God and Father... knoweth that I lie not” (II Cor. 11:31): The list seems so absurd and foolish that Paul takes solemn oath about (II Cor. 1:23). God knows every word is true!

“In Damascus the governor under Aretas...” (II Cor. 11:32): Damascus was founded some 2200 years before Christ by Uz, a grandson of Shem (Josephus, Ant, I, vi, 4). “The world began at Damascus, and the world will end there” was the boast of this ancient and modern focal point between the Christian and the Mohammedan world.

During New Testament days Damascus was an important center ruled by Arabia and Aretas, fourth of the name, King of the Nabatheans at Petra (II Mace. 5:8). There is an absence of Roman coins in Damascus from 34-62 A. D. Plummer suggests that Caligula to mark his dislike for Antipas gave Damascus to Aretas, the father-in-law of Herod Antipas. Herod incurred the hatred of Aretas by sending his daughter back to her father and by taking Herodias for a wife.

“Kept the city... with a garrison”: It was war times. “The Jews took counsel to kill him” (Acts 9:24). There is no conflict as they cooperated with the guard set by Aretas at their request.

“And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall...” (II Cor. 11:33) Houses in this Oriental walled city are built against the walls with windows looking out over them. From such a window Paul was let down and thus escaped his enemies. “This was a humiliating experience for Paul in this oldest city of the world whither he had started as a conqueror over the despised Christians.”

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QUESTIONS

1. Did Paul like to boast (II Cor. 11:1)? Why did he do it?
2. Whose approval did Paul covet (II Cor. 10:17, 18)?
3. Is it right to have “a godly jealousy” toward one’s church, or mate (II Cor. 11:2; Ex. 20:5)?
4. To what earthly relationship did Paul compare the relationship of believers to Christ (II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:2)?
5. How does Satan attempt to alienate believers from Christ (II Cor. 11:3-4; Gen. 3:1-7)?
6. What claim does Paul make in II Cor. 11:5, and who were the “very chiefest apostles”?
7. In what was Paul “rude” (II Cor. 11:6), and what is the meaning of his statement (II Cor. 10:10)? From whom had he received his “know-ledge” (I Cor. 1:17; 2:4; Gal. 1:11, 12)?
8. How had Paul preached the Gospel at Corinth (II Cor. 11:7; Acts 18:1-11)?
9. What is the meaning of “robbed other churches” (II Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:15, 16)? Who ordained how preachers were to live (I Cor. 9:18)?
10. What did Paul’s enemies try to force Paul to do at Corinth (II Cor. 11:9-10)?
11. What did Paul say about those men who opposed him (II Cor. 11:12-15)?
12. Can you name three appearances assumed by Satan (II Cor. 11:3, 14; I Pet, 5:8)? By what clever ruse does Satan and “his ministers” deceive God’s children (II Cor. 11:15)? What did Jesus call such “false shepherds” (John 10:1-21)?
13. Is it ever right to boast (II Cor. 11:16)?
14. Although some Corinthians couldn’t tolerate Paul, what had they done (II Cor. 11:19-21; I Cor. 4:10)?
15. Can you define “Hebrew”, “Israelites,” and “seed of Abraham” (II Cor. 11:22)?
16. How many times had Paul been in jail (II Cor. 11:23)?
17. Why was Paul beaten with “forty stripes save one” (II Cor. 11:24; Deut. 25:3)?
18. In his “journeyings,” how many kinds of “perils” did Paul face (II Cor. 11:26-27)?
19. Who is the witness to Paul’s “glorying” (II Cor. 11:30-31)?
20. How did Paul escape from Damascus (II Cor. 11:32-33)?

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Lesson 11

Page 1

II Corinthians 12

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 12:9

Memory Verse:

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (II Corinthians 12:9).

PAUL’S THORN IN THE FLESH

Experience counts! If you want a job, the employer’s first question is: “What experience have you had?” Remember what experiences Paul suffered (II Cor. 11:23-33)? He did it “for Christ’s sake” (II Cor. 12:10). The apostle affirms, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Tim. 3:12). Most of us are living decently enough, BUT NOT GODLY ENOUGH TO “SUFFER PERSECUTION” for Christ! To take the “cross” way (Gal. 6:14) is to spurn the world, and to do that will get the hatred of the world for you every time. Jesus said, “The world cannot hate you; but me it hates,” he told “the Jews who sought to kill him,” “because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil” (John 7:7). Testify against the world with all your power and see what happens! Note Paul’s experience of

I. Privilege (II Corinthians 12:1-6)

“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory...” (II Cor. 12:1): Do the Judaizers boast of religious experiences? Paul could boast, too. They “forced his hand”; he must go on with the glorying already begun in II Corinthians 10-11, foolish as it is, though it is not expedient.

“I will come to visions and revelations.” Paul had repeated visions of Christ. Struck to the ground by the Shekinah glory of God while on the road to Damascus to persecute Christians Saul asked: “Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I AM JESUS whom thou persecute; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:3-5).

“And a VISION APPEARED to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us” (Acts 16:9).

“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city” (Acts 18:9-10).

“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, EVEN WHILE I PRAYED IN THE TEMPLE, I WAS IN A TRANCE. I saw him saying unto me, MAKE HASTE, and GET THEE QUICKLY OUT OF JERUSALEM: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me” (Acts 22:17-21). Read also Acts 27:23f.

Paul claimed to speak by DIVINE and DIRECT REVELATION. “For I RECEIVED OF THE LORD that which also I delivered unto you...” (I Cor. 11:23-34).

Of the gospel he said, “For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, BUT BY THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST” (Gal. 1:12). Read also I Cor. 15:3 and Eph. 3:3.

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“I knew a man... “ (II Cor. 12:2): “I know” is correct. He knows the man and could name him, since the man was himself (see verse 7). Paul refers to himself in this indirect way as if it were some other personality. He humbly drew the veil aside to reveal one of the most sacred moments of his whole life.

“In Christ...” It was a Christian experience. It was not an occult experience with the services of a medium. There was NO DARKNESS or HYPNOSIS. Paul did not seek the experience. Being “IN CHRIST” or a Christian, God granted him this experience. Today the occult stands for spiritism, astrology, and other arts of divination – all of them UNSCIENTIFIC AND UNSCRIPTURAL. Occultism of our day is PROOF OF AN UNSEEN WORLD THAT IS SATAN-DOMINATED (Eph. 6:12-13).

Paul reached out and touched the unseen world where the LIVING CHRIST IS PRESENT: A world of LIGHT, LIFE, and LOVE. The limitation of flash prevents us from reaching this world now.

“Fourteen years ago... “: Doubtless this refers to the stoning of Lystra (Acts 14:19), Paul’s body was outside Lystra. The person who was Paul was “caught up”: The being “caught up” was not his conversion, for that was many years earlier. Nor could it be the trance in the temple (Acts 22:17) for that was too late.

“Whether in the body... out of the body, I cannot tell”: Whether disembodied or not, Paul declines to pass on his precise condition in this trance. We had best leave it as he has told it. A person could then be caught up, see and hear, “with” or “without” the body. Hence, Paul says the human spirit is not material.

“Caught up to the third heaven”: The secret place of the Almighty. Jewish thought called the AIR the “first” heaven. “The region of the sun, moon and stars was the second heaven,” and beyond that God’s abode, the third heaven. That unseen world IS AS REAL AS THIS SEEN WORLD! Paul was in a REAL PIXIE.

“How that he was caught up into paradise...” (II Cor. 12:4): Paradise is found three times in the New Testament (Luke 23:43; Rev. 2:7). It is a Persian word written in Greek, and means “a royal garden.” It is a place of beauty, of material reality. Paul’s “spirit” was in this place of beauty, the garden of God. His body was “dead” at Lystra where Timothy and others were weeping for him (II Tim. 1:4). For the Christian, death is not a conclusion; it is a TRANSITION INTO GOD’S PRESENCE. This experience of Paul proves a PERSON DOES NOT REQUIRE A BODY TO BE CONSCIOUS (see II Cor. 5:6).

“And heard unspeakable words...not lawful for a man to utter.” What he saw was beyond description. “He could not describe his paradise-experience in his earth-language, There was no common ground for either experience or expression.” Paul could have gloried in this paradise experience, but he chose not to glory in his experience, “but in mine infirmities” (verses 5, 6):

Note that the scene of Paul’s experience changes. He goes from the clouds to the clods, from praise to pain, from the glory-side to the gory-side, from the throne to the thorn.

II. Pain (II Corinthians 12:7-10)

A. The “thorn in the flesh” (II Corinthians 12:7a).

“And lest I should be exalted above measure... there was given to me a thorn in the flesh.” (II Cor. 12:7) This verse shows that verse 2 refers to himself. “Thorn” means a “palisade” or “pointed stake used for impaling victims.” A metaphor used by Paul to describe his pain. Did you ever sit on a thorn? How did you react? Paul’s thorn was a reality. It was suffering WITH A POINT! What was the “thorn”? Some have held it was malaria, eye-trouble, epilepsy, insomnia, migraine or sick headache. It is a blessing to us that we do not know the particular affliction that beset Paul. Each of us has some “thorn” or splinter in the flesh. Galatians 4:14-15 gives us a clue to the identity of this physical thorn of Paul. “And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then

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the blessedness ye spake of? For I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye WOULD HAVE PLUCKED OUT YOUR OWN EYES, AND HAVE GIVEN THEM TO ME!" Why "EYES," unless that was his particular need?

"His eye trouble may have been ophthalmia which is inflammation of the eyeball, or trachoma which produces a granulation of the eyelids... caused constant pain, discomfort and disability."

B. The pain's source (11 Corinthians 12:7b).

"The messenger of Satan": Satan, not God, is the source of evil and suffering, which are allowed to touch us in the natural course of human life BY THE PERMISSIVE WILL OF GOD. "Messenger" or angel of Satan – the affliction is personified.

C. The purpose of pain (II Corinthians 12:7c).

"To buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." Spiritual pride is the deadliest of all prides – social, place, fashion, and class. Paul's pain was to PREVENT HIM FROM YIELDING TO SPIRITUAL PRIDE. This messenger of Satan kept slapping Paul in the face. It was God's will. Paul accepted it as such.

"Above measure": An expression that means "too much." It implies that there is a legitimate measure of exaltation for us to enjoy. Christian experience is not a system of either physical or spiritual asceticism. It does not require the ABUSE or flagellation OF THE FLESH FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPIRIT. Exalted feelings have a safe limit, but there is such a thing as being exalted "above measure." At this point spiritual pleasure becomes spiritual pride and emotionalism becomes fanaticism.

D. Paul's desire (II Corinthians 12:8).

"For this thing I besought the Lord thrice..." (II Cor. 12:8): Paul prayed for his healing. It was the natural reaction to pain to desire its relief. Prayer helps us find out WHAT GOD'S WILL FOR US IS.

1. Paul asked in prayer.
2. Paul asked in faith.
3. Paul asked with persistence: "I besought the Lord thrice."

This is the perfect proportion of persistence. Paul prayed thrice, God made known His will to him, and Paul STOPPED PRAYING FOR THE THORN TO BE REMOVED!

E. God's Answer (II Corinthians 12:9).

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee..." (II Cor. 12:9): God answered Paul, NOT BY REMOVING THE THORN, but by GIVING HIM GRACE TO REAR THE THORN! "And he hath said" does not mean merely, "He made reply." The tense of the verb indicates that the reply was a continuous answer, one to be accepted for Paul's whole life, and so for all the hours of agony and the desperate cries of every suffering soul. The answer was this: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

God could just as easily give one answer as the other, but Paul NEEDED the discipline, power and perfection which suffering, under God, may bring. In some kinds of clocks, the weights KEEP THE CLOCK GOING. Railroads use a device known as a "derail." It lies on the track for the purpose of throwing off the wheels of the locomotive. Its intention is not to cause a wreck, but to PROTECT OTHER TRAINS. God has derailing devices. When we go against His will, He has means of derailing us. Stops are as necessary for our well being as the starts. Chastening is not just punishment; it is to REFINE AND IMPROVE US (Heb. 12:5-12).

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F. Paul's attitude (II Corinthians 12:9b-10).

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities..." (II Cor. 12:9b) Paul glories in the fact that his infirmities, in God's purpose, was the medium of SOMETHING GREATER, Paul did not "enjoy his sickness," of course. He glories in God's grace. He had the right attitude toward the "thorn," Attitude is important. It kept Paul sweet when plunged from privilege to pain!

"Wherefore I toke pleasure in infirmities..." (II Cor. 12:10) Paul concludes that if his necessary sufferings and hardships are making Christ better known, and are thus furthering the purpose of his life, he can not only endure them but REJOICE IN THEM. He has learned in the school of suffering that the times of greatest weakness and utter dependence upon Christ are those in which His presence is most fully realized and service for Him is most effective.

Paul is not courting martyrdom, but he does not fear it or anything that is "for Christ's sake!"

III. Practice (II Corinthians 12:11-21)

A. The answer to accusation (II Corinthians 12:11-12).

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me..." (II Cor. 12:11) Paul was a God-chosen apostle. His ministry was fruitful at Corinth (verse 12). The Corinthians ought to be commending Paul, instead of forcing him to defend himself by "boasting."

B. The blessing of helping (II Corinthians 12:13-18).

"For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except..." (II Cor. 12:13) The church at Corinth possessed every spiritual blessing as other churches established by Paul EXCEPT THAT HE DID NOT ACCEPT MONEY FROM THEM FOR HIS SERVICES. He had the right to receive money from them for his support (I Cor. 9:11, 14, 18). Stingy churches don't deserve and generally don't keep good preachers (Gal. 6:6-8). Paul asked the Corinthians to "FORGIVE THIS WRONG!" Christians who, like sponges, soak up every blessing which the sacrifice and service of others make possible WILL ANSWER TO GOD for their covetousness, which is idolatry (Eph. 5:5; I Cor. 6:9, 10). It is wrong not to support gospel preaching.

1. The intention (II Cor. 12:14, 15).

"Behold the third time I am ready to come to you..." (II Cor. 12:14) Paul reminds them that this will be his third visit to them, On his first visit he founded the church and brought it to a position of great strength. Of his second visit we have no record in Acts. It is supposed to have been brief and painful. This second epistle was written to the Corinthians for his coming, so that he would be spared a repetition of his former distress, and would find the church ready to receive him with gladness and affection. He reminded them of the love that he had always borne toward them (verse 15). Always he had sought "not yours, BUT YOU!"

2. The backward look (II Cor. 12:16-18).

"But be it so, I did not burden you..." (II Cor. 12:16): His enemies charged that even if Paul did not "burden" them by accepting a salary from them, there was "guile" about it and in some other way he would secure their substance. Neither he (verse 17), nor Titus, nor the "brother" sent with him made "a gain of" them (verse 18). All his dealings with them had been in devotion, self-forgetfulness and love! Was there any reason for doubting him, or of questioning the fact that he was a genuine apostle of Christ?

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C. The purpose of his writing (II Corinthians 12:19-21).

1. Their false view (II Cor. 12:19a).

“Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you?” (II Cor. 12:19a) Lie is not just apologizing, but is in deadly earnest, as they will find out when lie comes. His passionate defense of his apostolic authority is concluded with a series of solemn warnings.

2. The truth (II Cor. 12:19b).

“We speak before God in Christ...” (II Cor. 12:19b) The apostle is not defending himself before a human bar of justice. He “speaks before God in Christ.” He says what will “edify” or build them up.

3. His fear (II Cor. 12:20-21).

“For I fear, lest, when I come...” (II Cor. 12:20) With graphic pen Paul describes eight unholy things which had been going on against him during his long absence. Unless there is repentance (verse 21), Paul will find it necessary to demonstrate his apostolic authority by exercising severe discipline. He hopes that such a course will not be necessary.

QUESTIONS

1. If you are looking for a job, usually what is the employer’s first question?
2. Are we living godly enough to “suffer persecution” (II Tim. 3:12; Gal. 6:14; John 7:7)?
3. Why was it “not expedient” for Paul “to glory” (II Cor. 12:1)?
4. What key “visions and revelations” proved Paul’s divine call (Acts 9:3-5; 16:9; 18:9-10; 22:17-21; 27:23f; I Cor. 11:23-34; Gal. 1:12)?
5. Since Paul “knows” the man, who was he (II Cor. 12:1, 7)?
6. Is it possible for one to live out of the body (II Cor. 12:2; II Tim. 1:4)?
7. What is the “third heaven” (II Cor. 12:2)? Is it real?
8. How many times is “paradise” used in the New Testament (Luke 23:43; II Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7)? Can you define “paradise”?
9. What did the man tell when he returned? (II Cor. 12:4)? In what does he glory (II Cor. 12:5, 6)?
10. How did God prevent Paul from becoming proud and self-sufficient over this vision (II Cor. 12:7)?
11. What is the “thorn in the flesh” commonly thought to be (II Cor. 12:7)? Why (Gal. 4:14-15)?
12. How many times did Paul pray the Lord to remove this “infirmity” or “thorn” (II Cor. 12:8)?
13. What did God do for Paul (II Cor. 12:9)?
14. After God made clear to Paul His will, in what did the apostle “glory” and “take pleasure” (II Cor. 12:9b-12)?
15. What was wrought of God through Paul in Corinth (II Cor. 12:12)?
16. What had Paul done at Corinth for which he asked forgiveness (II Cor. 12:13)? What has God “ordained” for the minister (I Cor. 9:11,14,18)?
17. What was Paul always seeking at Corinth (II Cor. 12:14-15)?
18. What action on Paul’s and his helper’s part proved there was no “craftiness” or “guile” in them (II Cor. 12:16-18)?
19. With what purpose did Paul “do all things” at Corinth (II Cor. 12:19)?
20. What did Paul fear “when I come” to Corinth (II Cor. 12:20, 21)? What eight unholy things are mentioned?

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Lesson 12

Page 1

II Corinthians 13

Memory Verse: II Corinthians 13:11

Memory Verse:

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (II Corinthians 13:11).

SOME PLAIN TALK TO THE CORINTHIANS

Only the Christian life meets all foes with triumph. The Christian life begins with a new birth (John 3:3, 5), and the “new creature” (II Cor. 5:17) although faced with age-old disputes, distresses, diseases and disasters will be “MORE THAN CONQUEROR” (Rom. 8:37) THROUGH Jesus CHRIST!

Paul wrote this letter in the summer of 57 A. D. He was a Christian. He met and mastered every kind of foe (II Cor. 11:23-33). He did it not as a philosopher, scientist or religionist, BUT AS A CHRISTIAN.

Christ is “WITH US”

Jesus Christ is “closer than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.”

One day the telephone of the rector of President F. D. Roosevelt rang, and an eager voice said, “Tell me, do you expect the President to be in Church this Sunday?”

“That,” said the rector, “I cannot promise. But we EXPECT GOD TO BE THERE, and we fancy that will be INCENTIVE ENOUGH for a reasonably large attendance.”

Our Lord commanded: “GO... LO, I am WITH YOU always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:19-20).

A NEW BASIS OF LIFE

This new basis of life gives a NEW MEANING of COMFORT (II Cor. 1:3, 4); INFLUENCE (II Cor. 2:15); the CHRISTIAN LIFE (II Cor. 3:18); AFFLICTION (II Cor. 4:17); DEATH (II Cor. 5:1); SERVICE (II Cor. 6:3-5); HOLINESS (II Cor. 7:1); INCARNATION (II Cor. 8:9); STEWARD-SHIP (II Cor. 9:7); WARFARE (II Cor. 10:4); CHASTENING (II Cor. 11:30); SICKNESS (II Cor. 12:7-9); PERSONAL HONESTY (II Cor. 13:5).

Paul plainly talks to the Corinthian Christians in his farewell remarks.

I. The Urgency of Correction (II Corinthians 13:1-4)

“This is the third time I am closing to you...” (II Cor. 13:1) This was “either the third that he had planned to come or that he had been twice. The warning is made by quoting Deut. 19:15” (Robertson). Paul wrote this letter in the summer of 57 A. D. He got to Corinth in the fall, spent the winter there, and the following Spring departed for Jerusalem.

“In the mouth of two or three witnesses...” Every case of disorderly conduct will be taken care of, but the trials will be strictly legal. Two or three witnesses will establish a charge. “At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established” (Deut. 19:15).

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“I told you... I will not spare” (II Cor. 13:2): “I call God for a record upon my soul, that to SPARE YOU I came not as yet unto Corinth” (II Cor. 1:23). He could not put off his visit much longer. He would come to them and face to face deal with those who would not repent as he had commanded through the Holy Spirit. He wanted them to repent before he arrived. He would exert the full force of his authority as an apostle if they did not.

How much better it would have been for the Corinthians to have dealt with their problem WHEN THEY AROSE. Wasted years and vain regrets would have been saved. Do not wait until God must use stern measures of correction. It is best not to wait until the “third time.” Take care of it the first time it happens.

“Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me...” (II Cor. 13:3) Since some denied his apostleship, he will give them “PROOF” when he comes. “It will not spare.” He will show that Christ speaks “in me.”

“For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth...” (II Cor. 13:4) In the eyes of the world, Christ’s death on the cross “is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (I Cor. 1:18). Christ “emptied himself” (Phil. 2:7), voluntarily choosing the cross. To the worldly wise and strong the cross is “weakness.” The world sees “foolishness”; under God’s power it is true wisdom. Who remembers sentences from Seneca or portions from Plato except the professors in those fields of study? Yet millions around the world “hide” (Psa. 119:11) God’s Word in their minds and find it “a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). Paul’s union with Christ was real. As Christ was raised from death to life “by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4) by the power of God, so it shall be with us. His life is reproduced in us. Those who suffer and die with him shall live with him through the Divine power.

II. The Need of Self-examination (II Corinthians 13:5-10)

A. The purpose (II Corinthians 13:5a).

“Examine yourselves...” (II Cor. 13:5a) The Corinthians were demanding proofs of Paul’s power. “You who are so eager to put me to the test as to whether I am united with Christ... TEST YOUR OWN SELVES to see whether you are in possession of that faith which should unite you with Christ.” It is healthy to TEST OURSELVES SINCERELY as to whether we are TRUE or NOT. This is not a morbid and unhealthy self-examination, but one that will legitimately examine and measure one’s faith. “Do not dig up in UNBELIEF what you have planted in FAITH.”

B. The process (II Corinthians 13:5b).

“Prove your own selves.” (II Cor. 13:5b) This means to test. Test your experiences, not your feelings. The Bible has many tests such as LOVE FOR OUR BRETHREN (I John 3:14); FAITH (I John 5:4); GOOD WORKS (Matt. 7:21; James 1:27); BRIDLING ONE’S TONGUE (James 1:26); FAITHFULNESS (Acts 2:42; John 14:15, 21-24). Do you pass such a simple test, brother and sister in Christ?

It was a much more vital matter for the Corinthians to “prove your own selves” than trying to PROVE PAUL A HERETIC!

C. The result (II Corinthians 13:5c).

“Know ye not your own selves... Jesus Christ is in you...” (II Cor. 13:5c) Paul assures the Corinthians that Christ does indeed dwell in them unless they are “reprobate,” or false Christians. We can

know right now whether we are redeemed or “reprobate,” whether we are saved or lost, whether we are true or false. “I have written... that ye may know” (I John 5:13; 4:13). Do you know? “Examine yourselves,” not another!

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Two boys went into a dental office. One boldly said: “I have a tooth to be pulled. You need NOT GIVE ME ANY anaesthetic, JUST YANK IT OUT.”

“All right, young man,” said the dentist, “where’s your tooth?”

The boy turned to his companion and said, “Willie, show him YOUR TOOTH!”

“Reprobates”: “Reprobate” means that which fails to stand the test, “not approved” of God. “Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them” (Jer. 6:30).

“But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.” (II Cor. 13:6) If the Corinthians give themselves such a testing, it will give them full knowledge that Paul is not “reprobate”! The best way for vacillating Christians to stop it is to draw close to Christ!

“Now I pray to God that ye do not evil...” (II Cor. 13:7) Paul wishes them to do no wrong. He has no desire to exercise his apostolic authority and “appear approved.” He would much prefer seeing them do “the noble thing,” even if it should make him appear “disapproved” after all that he has said.

“For we can do nothing against the truth...” (II Cor. 13:8): Paul means in the long run. We can hinder and hold down the truth by evil deeds, but in the end the truth wins (Rom. 1:18).

“For we are glad...we wish, even your perfection.” (II Cor. 13:9) The apostle is not only willing to have no opportunity of displaying his power in inflicting discipline, but he delights in such a condition, for it means that the Corinthians “are strong” in their spiritual life and in their moral steadfastness. He is no Jonah who lamented when Ninevah repented!

“Therefore, I write... lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me...” (II Cor. 13:10) The specific purpose of this epistle is to secure the repentance of the Corinthians and to avoid the necessity of inflicting discipline. God entrusted him with apostolic power for the edification or building up of the Corinthians, not for their “destruction.”

A minister tells how on one occasion in New Guinea, where twenty years before the heathen were wrapped in darkness, a faithful witness had brought the gospel and won many to Christ. On this day the minister sat beside an elder of the native church. He recognized in this elder the son of a man who had eaten the missionary father of the son sitting there. The son of the martyred missionary and the son of the man who had killed him were BOTH REMEMBERING “the Lord’s death” in the communion service. (I Cor. 11:26) Do you know of any power other than the GOSPEL OF CHRIST that can bind hearts together like this (Rom. 1:16, 17).

III. The Benediction of Farewell (II Corinthians 13:11-14)

A. Final counsel (II Corinthians 13:11).

1. Be perfected.

“Finally, brethren, farewell” (II Cor. 13:11): This is the “last word.” In some respects it is the most important word. There is something sad about this “finally.”

“Farewell” is not equivalent to “Good-bye,” but rather to “rejoice.”

“Be perfect.” Or, press on to perfection. This is a continuous growth in grace that will lead them on to increasing maturity in Christ (Eph. 4:1; Matt. 5:48).

2. Be comforted.

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“Be of good comfort.” It is comfort in sorrow, but includes good cheer and encouragement. Show heart interest in another’s progress. It is helpful encouragement instead of the hindrance of our criticism. Too many times we stifle instead of stimulating others because of a too critical attitude. Read II Cor. 1:6; 7:8-13; I Thess. 4:18.

3. Be united.

“Be of one mind.” Be united in Christ (John 17:21). Christians have been compared to burning coals. Scattered apart they are easily extinguished. When the burn close together the heat of one preserves the heat of another. Together Christians strengthen each other! To fall away from the fellowship of the church is to die spiritually (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-32).

“Live in peace.” The result of being of the “same mind” is the ability to “live in peace.” But there is an even more blessed consequence: “The God of love and peace shall be with you.”

B. Final salute (II Corinthians 13:12-13).

“Greet one another with an holy kiss.” (II Cor. 13:12) In the Jewish synagogues the sexes were separated. Men kissed men and the women kissed women. This apparently became the Christian custom also. It is still observed in the Coptic and the Russian churches. Pagan charges caused Christians to drop the custom. Our handshake is our usual form of greeting, and must be HOLY, too,

In England in 1250 Archbishop Walter of York introduced a “pax-board” which was first kissed by the clergy and then passed around. Think of the germ theory of disease and that kissing tablet!

C. Final prayer (II Corinthians 13:13-14).

“All the saints salute you.” (II Cor. 13:13) The apostle graciously added the salute from “all the saints.” Although his rebukes had been severe, he here assures his readers that all his fellow Christians recognize the standing of the Corinthian church as composed of those who belong to Christ and are being sanctified in him.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...” (II Cor. 13:14) The whole passage closes with the benediction, and the most complete of them all. Here Father, Son and Holy Ghost are addressed as one in this comprehensive fervent petition. The unmerited favor of Christ, the boundless love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit are invoked upon all the members of the turbulent, restless Corinthian church.

It appears from II Thess. 3:17 that Paul wrote the greeting or benediction with “mine own hand.” We know from Romans 15:19 that Paul went round about unto Illyricum before, probably, he came to Corinth. When he did arrive (Acts 20:1-3), the troubles from the Judaizers had disappeared. Probably the leaders left after the coming of Titus and the brethren with this Epistle. The reading of it in the church would make a stir of no small proportions. But it did the work!

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QUESTIONS

1. Who only can meet all foes of life and triumph (John 3:3, 5; II Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:37; Matt. 28:19-20)?
2. Can you enumerate what the new basis of life in Christ gives in the way of NEW MEANING to the Christian (II Cor. 1:3, 4; 2:15; 3:18; 4:17; 5:1; 6:3-5; 7:1; 8:9; 9:7; 10:4; 11:30; 12:7-9; 13:5)?
3. How many times had Paul dealt with the Corinthians about their sinfulness (II Cor. 13:1)?
4. “At the mouth” of how many witnesses “shall the matter be established” (II Cor. 13:1; Deut. 19:15)?
5. What does Paul say he will “not” do when he comes next time (II Cor. 13:4)?
6. How does Christ live (II Cor. 13:4)?
7. In what way is the DEATH, BURIAL and RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ pictured in our lives (Romans 6:3-5)?
8. We are to examine whom (II Cor. 13:5)?
9. If Jesus Christ is NOT IN YOU, what are you (II Cor. 13:5)?
10. If the Corinthians had be “examining themselves,” what would they have concluded concerning Paul (II Cor. 13:7)?
11. What does Paul say the Corinthians should do (II Cor. 13:7)?
12. Can truth ultimately be overcome (II Cor. 13:8; Rom. 8:2S)?
13. What did Paul “wish” for the Corinthians (II Cor. 13:9)?
14. Why did Paul use such sharpness in writing these people (II Cor. 13:10)?
15. Do you think you could sit around the Lord’s Table next to the man whose father had murdered your father and truly worship our Lord Jesus Christ?
16. Can you define “farewell” as used by Paul (II Cor. 13:11)?
17. What does it mean to be “perfect” (II Cor. 13:11)?
18. What was the customary method of greeting at that time (II Cor. 13:12)? What is our modern equivalent?
19. What blessings were pronounced upon the Corinthians (II Cor. 13:14)?
20. What three sources of blessings are invoked (II Cor. 13:14)?

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Lesson 13
Galatians 1

Page 1
Memory Verse: Galatians 1:8

Memory Verse:

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8).

PAUL’S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TRUE GOSPEL

“The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians” has been called “Paul’s Crucifixion Epistle,” and “Paul’s Explosive Epistle.” Every sentence of it is a thunderbolt.

Martin Luther said of Galatians: “This is my epistle; I am wedded to it.”

Galatia

The very name of “Galatia” is of interest. All schoolboys know that “All Gaul” was “divided into three parts,” but not every student of the Bible knows that Gallic tribes fought their way eastward through Europe 297-278 BC. They crossed the Hellespont, pillaged, plundered and ravaged Asia Minor. Finally they settled in the northern central plateau in a region which was designated Galatia, or “the country of the Gauls.” The section to which the Galatians were finally confined, and which constituted Galatia proper, was a rough oval extending some two hundred miles east and west and some one hundred miles from north to south.

In central Asia Minor, the Roman province of Galatia in the days of Paul’s first missionary tour included Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 13-14).

Rome conquered the Gauls in 189 B. C.

Julius Caesar (102 or 100-44 B. C.) says of them: “The infirmity of the Gauls is that they are fickle in their resolves and fond of change, and not to be trusted.

Though a part of the Celtic race, which includes the French, Welsh, Irish, and Scotch, they were FRENCHMEN.

Date Written

Paul founded the “churches of Galatia” (Gal. 1:2) about 45-48 A.D. Traditional date of Galatians: About 57 A. D., at the close of his Third Missionary Journey while he was in Ephesus, or Macedonia, or Corinth, shortly before he wrote the epistle to the Romans.

Analyzed

The 149 verses of the epistle may be divided into three sections:

I. Personal (Galatians 1-2): Paul’s gospel and authority are from God.

- II. Polemical (Galatians 3-4): Justification is by FAITH IN CHRIST, and not by the old law.
- III. Practical (Galatians 5-6): Exhortations to steadfastness and faithful-ness to Christian duty.

YEAR 6 - LESSON 13 - PAGE 2

I. The Apostolic Greeting (Galatians 1:1-5)

“Paul, an apostle... by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.” (Gal. 1:1) Verses 1 and 2 form the keynote of the epistle. The Judaizers were a sect of Jewish Christians not willing to accept the teaching of the Apostles on the question of Acts 15:1). They slipped into the churches established by Paul and **INSISTED THAT GENTILES IN ORDER TO BE CHRISTIAN MUST BE CIRCUMCISED AND KEEP THE Jewish LAW**. They were determined to stamp Christ with the Jewish trademark!

This group of false workers said Paul was **NOT A GENUINE APOSTLE**. Paul in verse 1 shows his authority as an apostle **CAME FROM Jesus Christ and God the Father DIRECTLY**. The **RESURRECTION OF JESUS** was an essential element in the proof of his apostleship (Acts 9, 22, 26), for “God the Father... raised him (Jesus) from the dead!”

“And all the brethren that are with me...” (Gal. 1:2) Those with him are probably listed in Acts 20:4 and 21:16. The word “**ALL**” indicates that a number were with him. They approved all he wrote. “Brethren” may include those in the church from which he wrote.

“Unto the churches of Galatia.” This circular letter was to all the churches in the province, both South Galatia and North Galatia “if he really labored there” (Robertson). Paul had gathered groups of believers as he preached the gospel of the grace of God throughout the province. Note the absence of personal salutations.

“Grace be to you, and peace...” (Gal. 1:3) “Grace” was a salutation common among the Greeks. “Peace” was a salutation of the Hebrews. Paul used them with a Christian significance that denotes all God’s mercy toward the undeserving sinner.

“Christ, who gave himself for our sins...” (Gal. 1:4) Paul in the opening sentences fully sets forth the **ATONING WORK OF OUR LORD Jesus CHRIST**. It was **NOT MOSES**, but Christ who died “for our sins.”

“Deliver us from this present evil world.” “This strikes the keynote of the epistle. The gospel is a rescue, an emancipation from a state of bond-age” (Lightfoot). “This present evil world” is where sin and death reign. Christ gives us moral and spiritual deliverance now. We are not taken out of the world, **BUT ARE KEPT FROM THE EVIL THAT IS IN THE WORLD** (John 17:15-16). This is Christ’s purpose in saving us through His gospel (Rom. 1:16-17).

“God... To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Gal. 1:5) This doxology is an indirect rebuke to those who were exalting Moses to share the glory of Christ. For like doxologies see Rom. 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; Eph. 3:21; I Tim. 1:17.

II. The Apostolic Anathema (Galatians 1:6-9)

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed...” (Gal. 1:6): Paul in opening his letters usually follows his salutation with a thanksgiving. Here the thanksgiving is absent. Its place is filled with a severe rebuke. While the salutation closed with a doxology, in this rebuke Paul invokes a curse.

The apostle “marveled” that the Galatian Christians are turning away from his teaching so soon after their conversion, or so soon after his second visit to Galatia, or he may mean so soon after the arrival of the false teachers. He is astonished at the ease with which the Galatians had yielded to the Judaizers. The fickle Galatians were changing their beliefs **HASTILY and WITHOUT DUE CONSIDERATION**.

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“Removed... unto another gospel.” There is ONLY ONE GOSPEL – the GOOD NEWS “that Christ DIED FOR OUR SINS according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he ROSE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES: And that he was SEEN of Cephas...” (I Cor. 15:1-4). Strange that anyone who has ONCE KNOWN THE GOSPEL should DENY IT and TURN from the TRUE to the FALSE GOSPEL! Counterfeit gospels are POWERLESS TO SAVE US FROM SIN, I marvel that so many today are so silly and so gullible to the “moderns” among us as the Galatians were to ancient charlatans.

“There be some that trouble you... would pervert the gospel of Christ.” (Gal. 1:7) These troublers were insisting on FLESHLY CEREMONIES (Gal. 3:1, 3), on the OBSERVANCE OF DAYS (Gal. 4:10), on CIRCUMCISION (Gal. 5:2), and on a NET LEGALISM (Gal. 5:4).

This “PERVERSION” of the one, true gospel was the work of Satan and his FOLLOWERS (see II Cor. 11:4, 13-15). Paul does not even name these ENEMIES OF THE GOSPEL, thus showing his contempt for them. To “pervert” is to make unholy, ineffectual.

“But though we, or an angel from heaven...” (Gal. 1:8) NO ONE, NOT EVEN AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN, CAN CHANGE THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD Jesus CHRIST. Paul on his last visit warned the Galatians against Judaizers who would try to destroy the simple gospel (Acts 18:23).

He who desires to CHANGE THE GOSPEL IS AN ENEMY OF CHRIST and RESTS UNDER THE CURSE OF GOD (Matt. 7:22, 23)

In Salt Lake City, Utah, some told me, “An angel came to Joseph Smith and gave him the book of Mormon.” IF AN ANGEL CAME, he came from the pit of Satan. God didn’t send an angel to change the gospel. God will curse those who try to change the gospel.

“As we have said before... IF any man preaches any other gospel... let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:9) The term “anathema” meant originally “devoted to God.” As an animal, for example, was “set aside” as a sacrifice, doomed to death. So the special sense of the word conic to be “a curse,” a “thing devoted to destruction.” This is the sense of anathema through the New Testament; namely, “accursed.” “Let the curse of God be upon him” is the strongest possible form of condemnation. This Curse is on anyone who proclaims a gospel contrary to that which Paul preached – and which we today preach!

III. The Apostle’s Authority Declared (Galatians 1:10-12)

“For do I now persuade men... please men?” (Gal. 1:10) Paul shows that if he succeeded in pleasing unsaved, unchristian men, he could not at the same be true to Christ. Of course, loyal Christians will love loyal Christians and COMMEND and BE PLEASED WITH THEM. Those who like the Judaizers will OPPOSE CHRIST and HIS GOSPEL, and those who preach that gospel. Get it settled that Christ is YOUR MASTER. You and I as Christians have ONLY ONE MASTER TO PLEASE AND SERVE! Like Paul, we are NOT TIMESERVERS! WE are “servants” or “SLAVES” of Christ.

“But I certify you... the gospel which was preached by me,” affirms Paul, “is not after man.” Paul did not get the gospel from the apostles at Jerusalem, or from a faculty of some seminary. He DID NOT INVENT IT, for man could not INVENT or DEVISE THE GOSPEL.

“But by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Gal. 1:12) On the road to Damascus our Lord Jesus Christ “appeared unto” Saul “to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16f). This was a direct, divine revelation of the Lord to Saul! He had other visions of Christ, and in I Cor. 11:23 he expressly says concerning the origin of

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the Lord's Supper, "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you..." "The Lord REVEALED HIS WILL TO PAUL!"

IV. His Authority Demonstrated (Galatians 1:13-24)

A. Experiences before his conversion (Galatians 1:13-14).

"For ye have heard of my conversation..." (Gal. 1:13) Or "manner of life" while he was still a Jew. He was Saul the persecutor (Acts 7:58-8:3). He never got over this experience of voting to stone Stephen and of putting men and women to death because they were Christians (I Tim. 1:11-16). He "wasted" or sacked the church. He tried to destroy it completely.

"And profited in the Jews' religion..." (Gal. 1:14) He advanced in it. He blazed a way, or went ahead. Paul was a brilliant pupil under Gamaliel (Phil. 3:4-6). He was in the lead of the persecution also. Paul modestly claims that he went "above" or beyond his fellow students in his progress in Judaism.

"Traditions of my fathers": Not only the Law of Moses, but also the TRADITIONS HANDED DOWN which were taught so carefully. Read Matt. 15:2; Mark 7:3, 13. Our Lord condemned these Jewish traditions. Paul now taught the Christian tradition (II Thess. 2:15). "Fathers" were his spiritual fathers, or those who taught him.

B. Earlier years of Paul's preaching (Galatians 1:15-24)

"But when it pleased God, who... called me by his grace." (Gal. 1:15) Paul had not doubt about God's purpose in him (I Thess. 2:8). Before his birth God had his plans for him and called him. God "separated" Paul "from my mother's womb" as God called John the Baptist, Isaiah (Isa. 49:1), and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5). It took Paul a long time to discover this purpose of God for him.

"Nothing could be more cruel or absurd than to style Paul an epileptic, and to endeavor thus to explain the transformation which occurred on his visit to Damascus. Paul was converted by a real appearance of Christ, and it was to this Christ that he owed his changed life and the content of his gospel" (Charles R. Erdman). To preach this gospel "in all the world" he "broke every hindering tie, and strained every faculty of mind and body for upwards of thirty years."

"To reveal his Son in me..." (Gal. 1:16) It was one thing to CALL HIM, as was done on the way to Damascus. It was another thing to REVEAL CHRIST TO HIM. This was NEEDFUL that he should be a WITNESS OF THE RESURRECTION "to the heathen," or Gentiles.

"I conferred not with flesh and blood." The burden of his message, the essence of this divine gospel did not come from Paul's INNER CONSCIOUSNESS. It was NO DREAM, no PHILOSOPHY OF HIS OWN, nor did he secure it from the apostles in Jerusalem (verse 17a). The Jerusalem apostles were genuine apostles, but so is Paul. His call did not come from them nor did he receive confirmation by them.

"But I went into Arabia..." (Gal. 1:17) This visit to Arabia has to come between the two visits to Damascus which are not distinguished in Acts 9:22f. In Acts 9:23 does speak of "many days," and so we must place the visit to Arabia between verses 22 and 23 of Acts 9. Arabia was a large peninsula, consisting of Arabia Petraea, including Petra and peninsula of Sinai, the Syrian desert, between the Jordan Valley and the Euphrates; Arabia Felix, the south; bounded east, south, and west by the Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean and Red Sea; and north by the Fertile Crescent.

"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem..." (Gal. 1:18) Not all the three years were spent in Arabia. "Three years" means one full year, and parts of two other years; a round number to cover the period from his departure from Jerusalem for Damascus to his return to Jerusalem.

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“To see Peter... abode with him fifteen days.” (Gal. 1:18) The purpose of Paul in going to Jerusalem was to get acquainted with Peter. He probably had never met Peter before. He spent two weeks visiting with Peter and “James the Lord’s brother” (verse 19), leaders in the Jerusalem church. The entire group of Apostles was NOT WITH PAUL on this visit. If Paul was converted in A. D. 37, this visit was between 38 and 40 A. D.

“This James the Lord’s brother.” (Gal. 1:19) This is the half-brother of Jesus, not James the brother of John the apostle. He is named in Acts 12:17; 15:13; 22:18. He was not one of the Twelve, but rose to great dignity and influence in the Jerusalem church. He is called an “apostle.” Paul is showing his independence of and equality with the twelve in answer to the attacks of the Judaizers.

“Now... before God, I lie not.” (Gal. 1:20) So important does Paul deem the point that he takes solemn oath about it. The reality of the DIVINE SOURCE OF HIS GOSPEL WARRANTS Paul in making so serious an appeal.

“Afterwards I came... regions of Syria and Cilicia.” (Gal. 1:21) This statement agrees with the record in Acts 9:30. The churches of Judea did not know Paul personally. They “were only hearing from time to time” about Paul’s conversion and they kept on “glorifying God” for the work Paul was doing (verses 22-24). That Paul was busy planting churches in Syria and Cilicia at this time we conclude from the fact that we FIND CHURCHES IN EXISTENCE SOON AFTER (Acts 15:41).

QUESTIONS

1. What has this letter been called? What did Martin Luther say of it?
2. By whose authority was Paul “an apostle” (Gal. 1:1)?
3. To whom was this epistle addressed (Gal. 1:2)? Where did the Galatians originate? What did Julius Caesar say of them?
4. Through whom were the “churches of Galatia” founded (Gal. 1:2, 8; Acts 16:6; 18:23; I Cor. 16:1)?
5. With what great doctrine did Paul greet them (Gal. 1:4)?
6. Over what did Paul “marvel” (Gal. 1:6)? What gospel had Paul preached to them (Gal. 1:6-9; Rom, 1:1, 9, 16; Acts 20:24; I Cor. 15:1-4)?
7. Were these troublemakers denying that the gospel of Christ had any value (Gal. 1:7; Acts 15:1, 5)?
8. What is God’s sentence on those who change the gospel (Gal. 1:8-9)? Why (Acts 4:12)?
9. Whom did Paul seek to please (Gal. 1:10)?
10. What did Paul “certify” about his gospel (Gal. 1:11)?
11. Did Paul “discover” or “develop” the gospel (Gal. 1:11, 12)?
12. How did Paul’s past life make it impossible for him to originate the gospel (Gal. 1:13, 14)?
13. Why, and in what had Paul “profited” above “my equals” (Gal. 1:14)?
14. Who “called” Paul to be an apostle (Gal. 1:15)?
15. Why did God call Paul (Gal. 1:16)?
16. Where was Paul when he received the revelation of the gospel (Gal. 1:17)?
17. How long before he went up to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18)?
18. How did Paul show that he did not receive the gospel from Peter or the church at Jerusalem (Gal. 1:17, 18)?
19. How did he show that it was not received from the other apostles, or the other churches of Judea (Gal. 1:19-22)?
20. Did the churches of Judea believe Paul originated the gospel (Gal. 1:23, 24)