

2 Corinthians

Chapter 12: 11-13 & Chapter 13

Paul was an ambassador of Christ (12:2)

- If an a man claimed to be sent by Christ what would he need to do to prove so? If he told you that Jesus, born a lowly Jew, resented by His own people and crucified by their influence, now is risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, and is offering you eternal life, what would you require of this man if you were a first century Christian?
- EVIDENCE!! Signs, wonders, miracles.
- We do not know what specific signs, wonders and miracles were presented by Paul to the Corinthians, but we do have records of Paul raising the dead, healing the sick and lame, and casting out demons.

When did Paul visit Corinth a 2nd time? (12:14)

- Paul's first visit - Acts 18
- Paul's second visit?
- Unrecorded - but referred to in 2 Corinthians 2:1

What was the purpose of Paul's parent analogy? (12:14-15)

- ...for children are not responsible to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.
- Paul considered the Corinthians his children - 1Co 4:14 I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.
- Paul wanted to draw attention to the fact that he WASN'T burdensome to the Corinthians and in fact did not take ANY support from them, but instead gave of himself fully to give them the gospel.
- The false apostles spun that around to make it sound like Paul knew he wasn't worthy of support.

Paul was a crafty apostle? (12:16-17)

- ...crafty fellow that I am, I took you by deceit. 2 Corinthians 12:16b
- A charge leveled against Paul by the false apostles that had no basis in fact.
- Paul spent himself, taking nothing from the Corinthians - not even support.
- Paul did give the Corinthians a charge to help the destitute saints in Jerusalem, which he had been talking about in the 16th chapter of the first book.

Who did Paul send to Corinth to take collection to Jerusalem? (12:17-18)

- I urged Titus to go, and I sent the brother with him. 2 For 12:18a
- Who was the brother sent along with Titus?
- When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; - 1 Corinthians 16:3
- Paul made sure they sent someone THEY approved so there could be not accusation of pilfering by himself or Titus.
- Did Paul not conduct himself in the same spirit? Walk in the same steps?

What was Paul's sole purpose? (Vs 19-21)

- Edification! 2 Cor 12:19
- Paul wanted them to be found in faithfulness in Christ. But he warns them that if they didn't "straighten up" he may be found by them to be "not what you wish". 12:20b
- What does he mean by "not what you wish"?
- Paul may not be the tender, gentle person they knew, but the parent yielding the "rod of discipline", as an apostle of Christ with authority to deal with bad behavior. 1 Cor 4:21, Acts 13:6-12

Paul tells the Corinthians there will be an accounting (13:1-3)

- What law is Paul referring to?
- Capital punishment - Deuteronomy 17:6
- Who else uses that law and applies it to a lesser crime? (Hint: Matthew 18:15-17)
- Christ - He applies this law to ANY sin against you by a brother - not just capital punishment.
- Christ who was weak in the flesh but mighty in death and resurrection.

Christ was WEAK???

- Christ's flesh succumbed to death. In that one thing, He was like us in that it was possible to kill the Son of God.
- But through the power of God, Christ was resurrected, and ascended to the right hand of the Father.
- Paul compares our weakness to Christ's showing that when we are weak, we are strong.
- If we rely on our **physical strength** we are **weak**. Our **weakness** should compel us to depend on the Lord, so that when we are **weak**, it becomes **strength through Christ**.

What challenge does Paul give? (13:5-6)

- Test to see if they are in the faith. Are you ACTING, BEHAVING, and LIVING like a child of God.
- This set of verse conflict with the denominational idea “once saved always saved” - why would a test be needed if one couldn't lose ones favor in Christ?
- Paul reminds the Corinthians and us NOT TO GIVE UP!

How did Paul “appear” unapproved?

- This was the accusation of the false apostles — they accused Paul of not following through on his promises and of being weak.
- Paul was less worried about looking bad and more worried about the Corinthians bad choices - choices of bad behavior and choices that led them to disbelieve the one true gospel.
- Paul reinforces that regardless of what the false apostles were saying, Paul and his companions were on the side of truth and truthful for their edification.

Was Paul weak?

- Yes. With sarcasm.
- How strong were some of the Corinthians? Were they led astray? But they still claim strength?
- Paul wants them to understand that he is weak, in that he is of the flesh like Christ, but that it is more important to him that the Corinthians are strong!
- Paul doesn't care if the false apostles think him weak, but he wants the Corinthians to REMAIN strong — to not be led astray. Paul is glad to spend and to be spent for them. (12:15)
- Paul has the authority to disciple but he doesn't want to use it if he doesn't have to.

Let's go backwards a bit...

- Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 2 Cor 5:20
- Who is the we in this statement? Was Paul talking about all Christians?
- Can we be ambassadors for Christ? (Can we represent God AND stand in the place of Christ?) Do we have the proper credentials to PROVE it? Have we been appointed to do so? Have we been sent?
- Can we teach Christ?
- Yet here still, Paul pleads for the Corinthians to be reconciled to God.

Final notes...

- What was Paul's wish for the Corinthians?
- Be made complete! Not perfect. None of us are. But whole.
- Be comforted! Not lacking suffering, but finding comfort in Christ when suffering.
- Live in peace! Though in an environment of confrontation, find peace in your soul in Christ.
- Holy Kiss? Is that the universal Christian greeting?
- The trinity! The **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ, the **love** of God, and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit