

## II Corinthians 1 November 20, 2025

In contrast to the Apostle Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, which was primarily a letter of correction, his second epistle sets forth the life of a New Testament priest in sacrifice and service on behalf of the saints. Paul's great inward affection and care of all the churches is shown forth in this epistle. Although Paul's great love for the saints cost him a life of sacrifice and suffering, he reminds us in this epistle that, if we but continue to gaze upon the things unseen, all our afflictions work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. We must focus on Christ and His word. This chapter could be called the anointed priest offering himself and that is exactly what Paul did. It would do pastors and leaders of the Church today to follow this pattern that Paul wrote in this book. II Corinthians correspond the book of Leviticus in the Old Testament. The rules for the New Testament priest are presented here; as the guidelines for Old Testament priests are found in Leviticus. It is about the anointed priest offering himself and that is exactly what Paul did. He was the anointed priest offering himself unto the Lord. 2Co 1:1 Paul, an **Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God**, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, **with all the saints** which are in all Achaia:

We have seen over and over that the Paul was not an Apostle of men, he was an Apostle of Christ; he was called by Christ; he was empowered by Christ; he was directed by Christ. He was not a self-directed or a self-made apostle. Paul did not choose this place for himself and he did not go out and take it and try to establish some following, but this is by the will of God. Then Timothy our brother is also associated with Paul and very much in order because Timothy is going to be Paul's successor. Paul was an apostle **by the will of God**. Even if the Corinthian Christians held him in low regard, it did not diminish his standing as an apostle before God. With all the saints: It is remarkable that Paul freely calls the Corinthian Christians saints, considering their many problems. This is correct because a saint is anyone who is born again and has accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. Also, all the saints who are in all Achaia shows us that Paul intended his letters to be shared among the churches. They weren't just for the Christians in the city of Corinth but for all the Christians in the region who might read the letters. Grace and peace: These are familiar greetings of Paul (used in all 13 of his New Testament letters), but they are never used insincerely.

2Co 1:2 Grace be to you and peace **from God our Father**, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; From God our Father: This reminds us that we are children of God. We are sons of God, because of Jesus who went to the cross in our stead for our redemption. Really listen to this next part: Corinth means satiated; or satisfied or filled; or over-satisfaction: It can also imply being so full or satisfied in the natural that the desire is gone. For example, someone might be satiated with success in themselves. It means that the Corinthians really had more than enough. They had gotten to the place where they were rather complacent or another way of looking at this is self-righteousness. That is a very undesirable condition. When a person has been so successful in the natural and they get to the place where they are so satisfied and built up in themselves that they really have no need anybody or anything. It is really a recipe for failure. Paul wrote to them trying to bring them out of this condition. Paul also writes to all the saints which are in all Achaia. Achaia means wailing or lament or mourn because of pain. So II Corinthians is written to those who are suffering pain and we find that Paul is actually leading the charge in that matter.

Anyone who really submits himself to the Lord is going to spend some time in Achaia, and will be introduced to the wailing and pain that goes on. 2Co 1:2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether it would be the Corinthians in their babyhood condition or whether it would be these in Achaia that were wailing and weeping and mourning and all of that; grace is still the answer. It is only grace that can bring us out of that infantile condition. And it is only grace that can comfort and prosper us if we are in Achaia. And peace is a direct result of divine grace. 2Co 1:3 Blessed be God, even the **Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort**; Note: He is The God of all comfort. God is a comfort to all that are tested and lamenting or sorrowful. Paul had experienced the God of all grace and mercy in his own life and the God of all comfort. God had comforted Paul and He will comfort us. In this chapter, we see the burnt offering. It shows those who are poured out even unto death for the Gospel's sake. Again, this chapter could be called the anointed priest offering himself and that is exactly what Paul did. He was the anointed priest offering himself unto the Lord. The Father of mercies.

He is the God of all grace and mercy and comfort. We really do need the comfort of the Lord on every level of tribulations. Father of mercies and God of all comfort: Paul opens this letter by praising the God who gives so much mercy and comfort to the apostle and all believers. We get the feeling that Paul knows the mercy and comfort of God on a first-hand basis. The words all comfort in this passage come from the ancient Greek word paraklesis. The idea behind this word for comfort in the New Testament is always more than soothing sympathy. It has the idea of strengthening, of helping, of making one strong. There is another word for comfort (fortis), which also means brave. Here was Paul as a man, who never knew but what he might be dead the next day, for his enemies were many, and cruel, and mighty; and yet he spent a great part of his time in praising and blessing God. Paul considers the Father a comforter. We also know that the Holy Spirit is our comforter (John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7) and that God the Son is our comforter as well (1 John 2:1, Hebrews 2:18, Luke 2:25). God, in the Trinity in every aspect is full of comfort, strength, and help for us. Paul was the one in need of such comfort and we are too as we see what good our sufferings work in the lives of others.

2Co 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, **that** we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. The little word "that" after the word tribulation in v4 is so very important because we have seen before that God really wastes nothing when it comes to our lives. Even when we think of those things as bad, adverse or things we don't like, God still does not waste them. Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. He comforts us in all our tribulation, but God doesn't intend for it to stop there. It is marvelous to be comforted and built up and soothed in our painful condition, but God never did intend for it to stop there. It is "that" we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble. We can give the comfort that God gave to us in our own experience by what the Lord has done in our lives. We know we can't say to some, I know just how you feel, especially if we haven't gone through what they are going through. I believe that God leads us through some very adverse circumstances in order that we may be able to identify with and comfort others. He leads us through these trying circumstances in order to be vessels of comfort. Then he says, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

We pass along the same attitude and the same spirit that God has imparted to us. When we have been there in those trials, we are able to convey the spirit of comfort to them that we would not otherwise be able to convey. 2Co 1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. If we suffer with Christ, He also becomes our Consolation or comfort or our support. We must learn this is our lives. There are many things that we go through that can be considered the sufferings of Christ and it is not just the pastor or the preacher in preaching the gospel that suffers. Job wasn't preaching or ministering to anyone in an official capacity and yet he was suffering with Christ. **Suffering with Christ means that we endure the things that He brings our way.** It doesn't matter what it is. If God leads us through certain doors and we are willing to follow and we are willing to endure those things; that is suffering with Christ. We suffer for the reason He did because we surrender our lives unto the will of God. Then he says so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. We may suffer with Christ but along with that suffering there still comes the consolation or he comfort and support from Him. God doesn't just lead us into a difficulty and then leave us high and dry.

There is the consolation that comes from the same hand that allowed the difficulty. How do we receive this consolation or comfort today? There is something extremely comforting in the sacred Scriptures, and in the word of God. Blessed be God, we have consolation in His word, we have joy in the Holy Ghost. We find it nowhere else. We can rake through this dunghill-world and not find peace and comfort. But we have discovered the jewels in His word. Here, in this Bible, is the blessed Jesus where we the sons of God, have found comfort and joy. Now we can truly say, As our afflictions abound, so our consolations also abound by Christ. There are four things that we must give our attention to: the first is the sufferings to be expected. The sufferings of Christ abound in us; secondly, the difference to be noticed they are the sufferings of Christ; thirdly, a proportion to be experienced as the sufferings of Christ abound, so our consolations abound; and fourthly, the person to be honored. So our consolation aboundeth by CHRIST. 2Co 1:6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. Paul says whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation, but how can this be?

Because Paul was willing to preach the gospel to endure hardship and all of these things, in order to give the message to these Corinthians and to us. That became a consolation or comfort to them. Somebody has to pay the price for preaching this gospel. We are not talking about money here. Paul had many things that he went through in order to preach the message. He says even our affliction is for your consolation because it actually ministers to you. Because of the direct result of that we are able to minister the Gospel to you. And also notice it contributes to your salvation or your deliverance. And it is because of the gospel. It is God's word that brings deliverance to the people. So Paul says this affliction that we endure is for your consolation and salvation. Notice it is effectual or capable or powerful or it is wrought or shaped in enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. What he is saying here is that the same suffering that we endure, then you are going to endure. If we receive the message of this Gospel, at the expense of someone else in their sufferings and what they have gone through in order to preach this message of the gospel; if we receive that and then we pass it on to others, we are going to go through the same afflictions in order to pass it on and that is exactly what God intended.

So it is effectual or it is wrought in enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer or whether we be comforted. Paul says yes, we have endured the affliction. But if we are comforted, we also get the benefit of that. So it doesn't make any difference whether we are afflicted or whether we are comforted, there is still consolation (comfort) which comes forth both for us and for those who receive the message. The sufferings of Christ abound in us: Paul had a life filled with suffering. He described some of these sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28: stripes... prisons... beatings... stonings... shipwrecked... perils of waters... robbers... in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Yet, Paul knew that all his sufferings were really the sufferings of Christ. So our consolation also abounds through Christ: Because Paul's sufferings were the sufferings of Christ, Jesus was not distant from Paul in his trials and He is not distant from us in our trials. He is right here, identifying with Paul and comforting him and us. There is saying; the hotter the day, the greater the dew at night; so the hotter the time of trouble, the greater the dews of refreshing grace from God.

We can count on it: when sufferings abound, consolation also abounds. Jesus is there to bring comfort if we will receive it. Of course, this assumes we are not suffering as an evildoer. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. (1 Peter 4:15-16). 2Co 1:7 And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. We may think that Paul had to reach and grasp at straws when he looked out at the Corinthians and saw their condition. They just didn't seem to respond to the message that he preached to them. He still says, our hope of you is steadfast, and the only way he could do that is to have his hope in the Lord. And that is the way we go on today. We must have our hope in the Lord even though we don't see changes coming forth in some people and even though we have been praying for them for a long time or believing God for a long time. We still must have that same hope that the Lord is going to do something and that there is going to be a change. God is for His people. So, our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings; God brings these sufferings and they are for a purpose. Paul is praying and hoping that they are going to be beneficial.

Knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. Paul knew by experience; if you suffer with Christ; there is also the consolation and comfort that is coming forth. That is what he wanted these people to experience exactly the same thing. Then he goes into a little detail of what he is talking about. Preaching the gospel will cost. There are times when God has to actually working a message in a person before they are even able to convey or to pass it on. Here is what it cost Paul in V8. 2Co 1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: This pressure came from Satan himself. Today we are feeling such a resistance to the gospel. I think it is going to get worse because Satan knows his time is short even when many Christians don't. So there is the pressure that is being applied. Paul says here, we were pressed out of measure, above strength: It means that he went beyond his own power. We in our own physical abilities and our emotional state are not able to endure these things.

That word pressed actually means depressed or crushed and that is the way that Paul felt at this time. And he said it was above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: We thought our lives were over. Remember: Ro 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Paul knew by experience; if you suffer with Christ; there is also the consolation or comfort that is coming forth that he wanted these people to experience exactly the same thing. Then he goes into a little detail of what he is talking about. It is as we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. Paul was placed in such extreme circumstances and we are too. It is to trust God rather than himself or anyone else. 2Co 1:9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: It means that Satan would have taken their lives if he could have gotten away with it. Now this is the same thing we have seen in the book of Job. Just as God taught Job the resurrection power of Christ, so also, He taught Paul the resurrection power of Christ. We come to that place where we realize it is no longer I that live but it is Christ that liveth in me.

This is something that God wants every Christian to know and the path that He has for us to take may differ one from another, but they do exactly the same thing. It is teaching us that our life is hid with Christ in God. We are doubly secure. Christ must become our literal life. Col 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is **hid with Christ in God**. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. 2Co 1:10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; Notice in this verse, past, present, and future. In the past He delivered us from so great of death and He did that the day we were born again. We were delivered the moment we believed; that is past, done and complete. Then; and He doth deliver; that is present. God is still delivering us day after day and that is in a literal way. Then in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; that is future. God is yet to deliver us not only in this life, but He will deliver us to glory and into the glorified body. We are delivered spirit, soul, and then we will one day get our glorified body. This is our total deliverance - spirit, soul, and body.

2Co 1:11 Ye also helping together **by prayer** for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf. We help others by prayer. We must take this burden of prayer and this ministry very seriously. This gift could have been any number of things. It could have been material needs that they had or maybe the spiritual burden, but no matter what the gift was, it came because of the people who prayed. Then he says, thanks may be given by many on our behalf. This also is a very important ministry of prayer. It is so important that we do not become so focused on asking that we forget to give thanks unto the Lord whenever He also brings this gift upon these various ones that we have been praying for. 2Co 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in **simplicity** and godly **sincerity**, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. There can be no greater testimony in the life of a Christian than his good conscience before men and before God. Paul was talking about his own conscience and we must also have this in our own conscience before the Lord. The word simplicity means genuine or without pretense. We must be that way absolutely honest before the Lord. Not putting any facade or anything that is not real.

Then godly sincerity and that word sincerity means to be pure to the light, judged by sunlight. It is not hard to interpret the sunlight of God's word and that is exactly where we must have the spotlight shining in our lives if we are going to be filled with this godly sincerity. Then next is not with fleshly wisdom. This is something that we have to learn day by day to use godly wisdom rather than fleshly or man's wisdom. But it is by the grace of God and this another thing that we need in our testimony and that is that we are living by the grace of God and not by the standards of men or the ways of men or the pressures of men but by the grace of God. Paul says, we have had our conversation (or manner of life) in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. Paul is saying we are to live a godly life before the world, but our greater responsibility is to live a godly life before Christians. We find in scripture that God always puts the priority where it should be. 2Co 1:13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; Paul did not have a secret agenda and he didn't blow things out of proportion. We reported the things that are true and we have not inflated anything or said anything that is not true.

**2Co 1:14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part,** that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. This is something that Paul deals with throughout both of these epistles to the Corinthians. They only **acknowledged him in part**. I don't think that the Corinthians ever really fully accepted the Apostle Paul, his ministry or his message, or his Apostleship. They supported others with their money and things that came down to them, but they were very reluctant to fully accept the message and the heart of the Apostle Paul. And today, most of the Church does not acknowledge the Gospel of the Apostle Paul. These Corinthians really didn't commit themselves unto the message of Paul even though he founded this assembly.

2Co 1:15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; Paul was rejoicing in these people even though they were far from perfect. Paul wanted to come to them and he rejoiced to come to them, so he was going to come with that confidence, that he was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit or blessing. That simply means he was ready to preach more truth to them. Paul was constantly trying to get them to lay hold of more of the glorious message that he had preached to them. He wanted to give them a second benefit or a second grace as the margin says.

2Co 1:16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea. The Macedonia saints are the Philippian saints and they were a real sharp contrast to the Corinthians. The Macedonians were really built up in the faith. They were not rich like the Corinthians, but they were so much more giving and much more spiritual and more solid than the Corinthians were. So Paul said I am going to come by Corinth to Macedonia and then on the return trip I am also going to come by. He was doing that once again in order that they would be built up in the faith. He wanted to give them just as much truth as he possibly could. Paul also gave them the opportunity to contribute to the ministry as he came to them. 2Co 1:17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? This is another of those verses where it seems like that Paul is answering some criticism that had been leveled against him. There are those that didn't think Paul was serious about the

matter. They criticized Paul; thinking Paul was just back and forth. He doesn't really tell you what he means. 2Co 1:18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

Paul is saying I did not preach an "iffy" gospel out of the flesh. There are those who are not preaching the correct Gospel. They don't commit themselves to preaching the true gospel. But Paul did not do that. If we preach the true gospel we will step on someone else's toes if they are walking after the flesh. If people are walking after the flesh, it is a guarantee that we will step on their toes. Paul says this is not the message that we preach. Paul preached a positive gospel wherein were no doubts about God's faithfulness to His promises. 2Co 1:19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. Paul says, I preach a solid gospel to you. It was not an if, and or but, it was a positive message. He preached in such a manner that there was no doubt what he meant. It was the pure gospel. 2Co 1:20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Paul is not enlarging on the judgment of God or the judgment of the flesh, although that certainly is in the gospel that he preached. He enlarged on all the promises of God. He is talking about these wonderful promises that God has made especially for the new man. And they are unto the glory of God by us.

2Co 1:21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath **anointed** us, is God; 22 Who hath also **sealed us**, and **given the earnest of the Spirit** in our hearts. The message that Paul preached will do four major points. #1 He establishes us with you in Christ. It is God who establishes us. Jesus talked about the house built on the Rock opposed to the one built upon sand. What is He is talking about? It is the contrast between that which is stable and that which is not. God is not only talking in salvation that our lives be built on the solid rock, but He wants it in our actual experience to where we are established. That can only be done by Paul's message. #2 He has anointed us and God anoints us also. It means that He pours out the power of The Holy Spirit on us that we might understand the word of God and indeed also walk in it. #3 Who hath also sealed us. That word sealed means to stamp for security or preservation or protection, and that is exactly what God has done. He has stamped you and I for preservation or protection and indeed for security for His own; He has sealed us. #4 He has given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

The earnest is just the foretaste of future blessings. It can also describe the sincere, deep, and serious commitment a person has towards marriage, conveyed through words like (fervent, constant) or (diligent, eager). In the context of marriage, it could represent a betrothal gift or pledge of a future union. Earnest is also a historical practice of the groom providing a pledge or a first installment of value to the bride during the betrothal stage. Ro 16:25 Now to him that is of power to **stablish you according to my gospel**, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began. It is the Paul's gospel of grace, the word of God that will establish us. 2Co 1:23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. He says I am glad that I did not come Corinth before now and the reason was because he did not want to come to them in great correction as he would have had to have done. He did not lord it over them nor did he try to whip these believers into line. 2Co 1:24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. Paul did not want a people who just walked right or in the faith

when he was there. No one should have that kind of dominion over another person's faith. It is by faith that we stand not by anyone else but by God.

## **II Corinthians 2 December 4, 2025**

The Title of this chapter would be the priest, the sweet savor of God. Notice that in 2Co 2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:  
2Co 2:1 But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. Why? He would have had to probably come with an attitude of correction. Paul is human just like us and he did this himself. Paul did not want to come to them bearing this great burden that he talks about in this chapter. He wanted to make sure when he came to them that he was rejoicing in the Lord and his attention and concerns were upon the things of God. Some among them criticized Paul because he changed his travel plans and did not come when he planned to. They used this change of plans to say of Paul, He is unreliable and untrustworthy. We don't need to listen to him at all. But Paul explains there were many reasons why he did not come as planned, one of them being he was trying to spare the Corinthians He states in 2 Corinthians 1:23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. 2Co 2:2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? This is a complicated way of saying if I have caused you grief (you Corinthians), you are the only ones that are going to be able to make me glad.

What Paul is talking about in chapter 2 is the sequel to 1Corinthians 5. This was the incestuous man of 1Co 5:1-5 that had to be dis-fellowshipped. This is where Paul had to not only judge this incestuous man, but the Corinthians were wrong in their attitude. Paul says they should have been grieving and yet they were not. The instructions in 1Cor 5 is not just to put away the incestuous man, but it is for the Corinthian's to adjust their own attitude which was wrong. So here he says if I make you sorry, who is he that can make me glad, except the one that had been made sorry by me. You Corinthians are the only ones that are going to be able to make my heart rejoice. The way they would do that is by following the instruction and the exhortation that Paul had given to them. 2Co 2:3 And **I wrote this same unto you**, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. If Paul had come to Corinth, and if they had not repented of their attitude; and if they had not been willing to do what he asked them to do on the basis of the gospel; then he would have been very unhappy and filled with sorrow. Notice further, having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all.

Paul wisely understood that considering all the circumstances, a letter was better than a personal visit. A letter could show Paul's heart, yet not give as much opportunity for the deterioration of their relationship. It would give them room to repent and get right with God and Paul. Where is this letter that Paul mentions? We don't know! Not every letter that Paul wrote was inspired Scripture for all God's people in all ages. We can trust that what Paul wrote in the missing letter was perfect for the Corinthian Christians at that time, but not perfect for us; otherwise, God would have preserved it. We shouldn't think that everything Paul or the other Bible writers wrote was necessarily Scripture. Paul says I really have a confidence that you Corinthians want to make me joyful. You really do consider how I feel about the matter. How I feel about the matter is how the Lord feels about it. Paul said he came in the same spirit of Christ as we find there in

1Cor 5. He was hopeful that they had enough respect for him and feelings for him that they would care whether he was joyful or whether he was sorrowful in this matter.

2Co 2:4 For out of **much affliction and anguish of heart** I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. Paul did not enjoy confronting the Corinthian Christians. It was hard for him to do, and he did it with many tears. His goal was not that they should be grieved, but instead that the Corinthian Christians would know the love which he had so abundantly for them. It would take some maturity for the Corinthian Christians to receive Paul's correction this way. It is easy for us to think a person offering correction is our enemy and sometimes is against us. But usually others bring correction because they love us, as Paul loved the Corinthian Christians. His goal was not to grieve them, but to love them. Much affliction and anguish of heart; This is also an indication of great love; rather than vengeance and punishment. Any pastor who has to address a situation like Paul did in 1Cor 5, it is to be out of much affliction. You can't address this light heartedly. It wasn't to grieve the man in 1Cor 5, but it was because of the love that he had for him. He loved them so much that he could not allow them to continue with the attitude they had and continue with this man the way they were doing. Paul wanted them to show the love of Christ to this man. I Corinthians 5:1 was a symbol of the wrong headship over the Church.

1Co 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. It was due to not holding Christ as the one rightful Head; An unheard-of sin broke out. It was that one should have his father's wife. That is, a man assumed a headship, a lordship that was not at all his. Of course that caused envy, strife and factions. Paul displays real pastoral wisdom and compassion. He refers to this specific person among the Corinthians, but he does not name the man. Certainly, this man is happy his name was not recorded in God's eternal word. So, what happens today? In our day some meetings are like a bunch of turkeys where one has a bleeding injury and all the other turkeys peck at it instead of offering help. I have heard some say, that so and so has left the meeting or has been kicked out and all they can say is; "good riddance" he was trouble any way. We are glad that outcast is out of here. That even comes from some pulpits. That is not the heart of the Lord Jesus or the Apostle Paul. We must look unto Jesus only, depending upon Him alone. He has the true heart of love. This insures safety against coveting and its attendant evils in the natural.

But this outbreak of sin where a man assumed the wrong headship is a figure of a deeper, more heinous, spiritual fornication in Christendom today. We can compare this with John's description of the great harlot and her daughters of Rev. 17, 18. 2Co 2:5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. He was talking about grief for himself, then it is just in part. He wasn't consumed by this; I am not going allow my life to be dictated by it. Then he says, that I may not overcharge you all. Moffat's translation says, I am not going to overstate the case. Paul wasn't going to hound them about it, he was just going to give them this instruction and that was it. 2Co 2:6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. The punishment that was inflicted on many is once again in 1Cor 5 and that was they were to turn this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh and Paul calls it here a punishment and that was exactly what it was for. He wanted to bring this man to repentance. Evidently it had that affect. But in our day, when we hear of such dis-fellowshipping,

they do it for the rest of your life and that was never the intention of the Apostle Paul, and it was never the intention of God. It was that his spirit might be saved for the Day of The Lord.

2Co 2:7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. It was because of the love of God that Paul had. He wanted this man to repent and be restored. Since the man responded to the correction and repented, it was time for love and healing. We find the peace offering set forth in this chapter. The peace offering is a fellowship offering. Here we see the guilty restored to fellowship because of Divine Love. They needed to reaffirm their love to him. If you are going to dis-fellowship a person then he has to have his flesh destroyed by Satan and God did agree and there was a purpose in that. If that does not happen, perhaps you disfellowshipped that person for the wrong reason. The purpose was not just for the benefit of this man. Paul tells us in V7 that he had something else in mind when he did this. 2Co 2:7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Paul did not want Satan to take advantage of these Corinthians or us if we refuse to forgive this offender. When the offender is made to feel the love of God, while his sin is punished, he himself is loved.

The focus was not his suffering but his good, he is more likely to be brought to repentance. 1Pe 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity (love) among yourselves: for (love) charity shall cover the multitude of sins. 2Co 2:7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, (This is for the benefit of the offender. We must forgive that person for us, not for them) and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Paul brings out the benefits for the offender) #1 contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and #2 comfort him. If you are going to comfort someone, means you are going to have to have some fellowship with them. Paul says you need to comfort him. Why? Lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. #3 - 2Co 2:8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. That means we are not just to tolerate him. To confirm him means you really do accept and embrace him. Lest he, the repentant man, be swallowed up over much sorrow, and that they may prove their own love, lest Satan take advantage of them.

Paul knew this was of special concern because Satan looks to take advantage of our mistakes, as a church and as individuals. Satan loves to take advantage: He is a wily merchant selling his goods to whoever will. 2Co 2:9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; This is the place that everyone of us must take with people who have offended us. What is Jesus' attitude toward them? It is an attitude of love. If a person sins, is He ready to receive them again? 2Co 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. The person who does not have a forgiving heart is fertile ground for the devil. When we are ignorant of Satan's strategies, he is able to take things from us that belong to us in Jesus, things like peace, joy, fellowship, a sense of forgiveness, and victory. Though multitudes of saints would refuse to fellowship with one who takes his father's wife. Yet they think it is proper to assume headship of

the Body of Christ by dictating their own doctrine which is not of the Christ and His Gospel. It is not proper to assume the headship of Christ. That belongs to Jesus Christ alone.

2Co 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was **opened unto me of the Lord**. Why is this here? It is the Gospel that Paul focused on. It becomes very important for us because he makes a statement in these next few verses where he could severely be criticized. Sometimes in our lives we are criticized in such a manner. Notice Paul says the door to preach the gospel was open unto me of the Lord. Are we not looking for God's opportunity? The Lord opened the door. Note the door was also opened to us. Re 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee **an open door**, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. This open door is the opportunity presented to us as a gift of grace from Jesus Christ. He has given us the ability to minister and spread this Gospel, even in the face of opposition. We must step through the door and take advantage of the opportunities of God's grace which He has provided, to preach this truth and not compromise.

A door was opened to me by the Lord: Paul was interested in ministering where God opened doors. The only way our work for God will be blessed is when it is directed by God. Where we see a door... opened, we can have faith that God will bless the ministry. Where the Lord gives light, there is some work to be done; where he sends forth his labourers, there will be a harvest. 2Co 2:13 I had no **rest in my spirit**, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. Even though there was an open door, Paul felt he could not do all that he needed to if he did not have Titus there. Paul did not regard himself as a one-man show; he knew he needed other people with him and beside him. Notice that Paul was as much human as anyone else. And you and I can discover our own human weaknesses also. Paul needed Titus at this time and Titus was not there. So what did Paul do? He went to Macedonia. He went to a place where people already loved him and had received the gospel. Even though a great door of opportunity had been open to Paul, he needed to be recharged himself. There are times when we as ministers of God need to be recharged.

So we don't find that God reprimanded Paul for doing this. We don't know what he went through before doing this, but we get the idea that he was very exhausted, and he needed to be recharged or supported by those that loved him. He needed a man like Titus. And when Titus was not there, he took his leave and went into Macedonia. 2Co 2:14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. Paul had not given up the ministry. This triumphant spirit was probably a direct result of going to be with these Macedonian saints to be recharged. He always causeth us to triumph in Christ, even in other saints. That is why he went to Macedonia. God can make us a savor or the sweetness of His knowledge by us in every place. Thanks be to God who always leads us: Paul dealt with criticism from the Corinthian Christians, who said he was unreliable and fickle because of his travel plans. He had explained himself and his reasons for not arriving when he had previously planned. More than anything, he wanted the Corinthian Christians to know he is following Jesus Christ as his General. More than any plan he may declare to the Corinthian Christians, Paul's plan is to follow Jesus Christ. Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth

us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. Picture Paul, the aged, the man who had been beaten five times with forty stripes save one.

He who had been dragged forth for dead, the man of great sufferings, who had passed through whole seas of persecution. He says; Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ! To triumph when shiprecked, to triumph when scourged, to triumph in the stocks, to triumph under the stones, to triumph amidst the taunts of the world, to triumph when he was driven from the city and shook off the dust from his feet to triumph at all times in Christ Jesus! Today so many ministers of our modern times just enjoy the world's applause. Their aim is just to have people admire them. But for one like Paul, so trampled on, so tried, so distressed, to say thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ. We are to follow Paul as he followed Christ. Here is a man who had true faith in God and truly pressed towards the mark for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Paul sees Christ marching in triumph throughout the whole world, and he sees himself in that conquering train. It is a triumph which, Paul is certain, nothing can stop it. And, Paul sees himself as sharing in the triumph of Jesus, the Captain of the Lord's Army, and Paul is one of the Lord's chief officers! And guess what? We are too.

Paul said: Php 3:14 **I press toward the mark** for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. What are some of the things that Paul had to press in order to get to the mark? Here are some of the things he had to press through. Php 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. So, Paul sees himself as sharing in the triumph of Jesus, the Captain of the Lord's Army, and Paul is one of the Lord's chief officers! And we are too. How? 1Co 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. Ro 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. So, back to:

2Co 2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: Notice the distinction. We are first a savour of Christ unto God and this is what we want to be. What Paul is saying here is whether we minister to the unbeliever or the believer, we are still a sweet savour unto God despite or because of their reaction. This fragrance is like the knowledge of God, which people can smell as the triumphal parade comes by. No sense remains in the memory like a scent. There is nothing we remember more strongly than pleasant smells, except perhaps unpleasant smells. The Apostle Paul wanted his life to be a sweet perfume, floating in the air. This reminds me, and above all it reminds God, of Christ. A sweet savour of Christ! It does not consist so much in what we do, but in our attitude of doing it; not so much in our words or deeds, as in an indefinable sweetness, tenderness, courtesy, unselfishness, and desire to please others to their edification. It is the breath and fragrance of a life hidden with Christ in God, and deriving its aroma from fellowship with Christ. This is produced as we take in

the word of God. That is the wonderful fragrance God smells in us; Christ my Lord! So, we wrap the habits of our soul in the sweet lavender of our Lord's character. This life of victory unto God depends on their acceptance or rejection of the Gospel message.

A sweet savour unto God of Christ. God can make us a savour or the sweetness of His knowledge by us in every place. We are still a sweet savour unto God because we preach this Gospel message. Then to the one we are the savour of death unto death; that is to the unbeliever. It is to the one that will not accept the gospel that we are preaching. We are still a sweet savour unto God because we preach that message. Even though they do not respond in the way that we would like, yet we are still a sweet savour unto God. 2Co 2:16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? But notice here, to the one we are the savour of death unto death. The word of God is absolutely not neutral. God's word is going to have an effect. When we give out the word of God it is going to have some kind of effect. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; the one that has rejected the gospel death is the result. But then there is the other side; and to the other the savour of life unto life. When a person believes in the scripture and the person accepts the message that we preach of the truth, then it is a sweet smell of life unto life. Then, who is sufficient for these things?

He answers that in: 2Co 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; 2Co 2:17 For we are not as many, **which corrupt the word of God**: but **as of sincerity**, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. **The word corrupt literally means to retail**. Sincerity describes something which can bear the test of being held up to the light of the sun and looked at with the sun shining through it. When the sun shines in brilliance. It will moisten the wax, it will harden clay; when it pours down floods of light on the tropic, it causes vegetation to extremely grow. In sunlight the richest and choicest fruits ripen, and flowers bloom. But note also that the worst reptiles and the most venomous snakes are also brought forth. So, it is with the gospel. Although it is the very sun of righteousness to the world, and although it is God's best gift, nothing can be comparable to the Gospel for the benefit which it pours forth upon our hearts! But to the world who doesn't know Christ, it is the savour of death unto death. The gospel is not to blame for this; it is not the fault of God's truth; it is the fault of those who do not receive it. It is the savour of life unto life to everyone that hears its sound within a heart that is open to its reception.

It is only death unto death to the man who hates the truth, despises it. Paul spoke and we must speak in the sight of God in Christ: We must always be aware that our first audience in ministry is God Himself. Every word Paul spoke; he spoke in the sight of God. We are no different. There are those today who are making merchandise of the gospel. They do it in words, song, writings, doctrines of error; and in so many ways. But as for ourselves, we must never corrupt the gospel. We must declare the whole council of God. But as of sincerity; sincerity means judged by Son Light. We are judged by God's word. But as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ or of Christ. This is where we must measure our lives. Paul is speaking here of those who would minister. We must measure our lives by this criteria. That we are doing it in the sight of God and indeed in sincerity and we must make sure that we are speaking of Christ. Jesus is to be the subject of our message. 1Co 9:18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, **I may make the gospel of Christ without charge**, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

The title of this chapter is for the priest or the minister of the Gospel. The minister is not to focus on success. He is responsible and accountable for what he preaches. If we preach God's word, and no one gets saved, Jesus will still say, Well done, thou good and faithful Servant!

## **II Corinthians 3 December 11, 2025**

The first verse is a lead in from the previous verse; 2Co 2:17 For we are not as many, **which corrupt the word of God**: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. 2Co 3:1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? This goes on so much today where you have to have the proper credentials and letters and so on. This is what organization is about today. Paul did not go in for such organization. Paul says do we really need some letters from others to show who we are? But notice what he says: 2Co 3:2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: First of all the letter is the epistle. Your life is the letter; no one wrote it. Paul says, epistle written in our hearts; there was such an like-mindedness or an like-mindedness with Paul and these people. You are written in our hearts. It was a very personal thing. It was not just coming in and preaching the gospel and then taking an offering. We find that Paul was very close to these people. But then you are also known and read of all men. This is true of every one of us. People read our lives.

Paul was telling these people that they need make sure their lives are following the Lord because many out there don't read the scripture, but they read our lives. When the world reads the epistle of our lives, they should see Christ. 2Co 3:3 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. There are different things to notice in this verse. #1. You are declared to be the epistle of Christ. That means we are that letter or epistle and we belong to Christ. It is Christ's writing; it is Christ's epistle; it is not our own. It is not something that we can take glory and credit for. #2 You are ministered by us. God is writing that epistle today, by those who are preaching the gospel. This is what writes this epistle. #3 It is not written with ink but it is written by the Spirit of the living God; it is by the power of the Holy Ghost which takes this message and writes it upon our hearts. **Ministered by us** means Paul's letter of recommendation was written with a "pen" and the "pen" was Paul using the Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit. He "wrote into" the lives of the people he served by the Gospel. Written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God: Paul's letter of recommendation was written with "ink," and the "ink" was the Holy Spirit. It is the word of God that is written on our hearts.

Then not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. That is a reference to when God gave the Ten Commandments. If you remember these were first stones God Himself carved out and God wrote on them. Remember when Moses came down from the mountain, Israel was dancing around the golden calf. Moses took those stones and he broke them at the foot of the mountain. Then God told him later, Moses you go out and hew two more tables of stones and I will write on them. **There is such a correlation with what we are to do in our own lives. It is you and I that must bring the blank tables of the heart unto the Lord.** Only we can present them before the Lord for Him to write upon them. That is what we have here; it is not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. They are not stone but fleshy tables of the heart. This is what God is engraving on in our lives today. We do not want to have hard hearts of stone, but we do want to

have our hearts empty of self. These are tables that God is able to engrave. When He engraves our hearts, it means remains there and it withstands all of the winds and all of the weather for all time. It is not like an ink that would eventually disappear over time. God engraves this and it is an eternal work and it is not something that is going to wash away.

2Co 3:4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: \*\*\* What trust is that? It is the trust that God is going to engrave those tables and write His word upon the tables of our hearts. 2Co 3:5 **Not that we are sufficient of ourselves** to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Paul knew he couldn't do the writing. He knew he couldn't write on his own heart; he couldn't write on anyone else's heart. He couldn't take the responsibility or the credit for making the changes in the lives of people. It cannot be done. Our sufficiency must be of God. **Not that we are sufficient of ourselves:** Paul doesn't consider himself sufficient for the great task of changing lives for Jesus. Only Jesus change hearts, but Paul's Gospel was the pen that Christ uses. Paul's and our sufficiency is of God; we can enjoy this truth. The only way for us to keep full is to put our pitcher under the perpetual flow of boundless grace. Then, it will always be full to the brim. 2Co 3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; **not of the letter**, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. We too are ministers of the New Testament or the new covenant. Then notice this wonderful part; not of the letter (or the law). God is not going to write the word of God upon our heart with the law.

It is going to be by the Spirit and indeed of divine grace. So not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. The law only gives death not life. The proof of our ministry is the changed lives of those who hear this Gospel message. The letter is the law in its outward sense, written on tablets of stone. The letter of the law came by the old covenant. It was good in itself, but it gave us no power to serve God, and it did not change our heart. It simply told us what to do. Paul can say the letter kills because the law, exposing our guilt, "kills" us before God. The law thoroughly and completely establishes our guilt. The indwelling Spirit becomes for us a law written on our hearts. He fills us to guide us and be our "law." It isn't that the Holy Spirit replaces the written law, but completes and fulfills the work of the written law in our hearts. The Spirit gives life, and with this spiritual life, we can live out our lives to God. Under the new covenant or in the New Testament, God has written His law in our hearts. God did this by the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. The statement written not with ink is the writing which is in the actions and lives of the people.

It is not written with ink but it is written by the Spirit of the living God; it is by the power of the Holy Ghost which takes this Gospel message and writes it upon our hearts. It is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit to make us ministers. He will make us ministers of the new covenant of divine grace. 2Co 3:7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: The law is the ministration of death. In the Old Testament over and over again, the law is associated with death. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious. The law was glorious. We can compare this with Ex 34:29 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. We find when the law was given, there was a charged

atmosphere of divine glory. The giving of the law was absolutely glorious. So Paul says, if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses. So here again, this is another expression when the law was given, it speaks of Mt. Sinai almost erupting when the people were so afraid.

Even Moses did fear and exceedingly quake and all of these things, but remember when Moses came down from the mountain, after having received the law, then his face glowed and the people were terrified of him. So Moses put a veil over his face while he spoke to the people. So Paul tells us here that Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away. What Paul is talking about here is the glory on Moses face her was typical of the glory of the law. But this glory was going to be done away. The glory of the law was done away in Christ. We can compare that with Heb 8:13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. Then compare it with Ro 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Christ is the end of the law. The ministry of death: Was it wrong to call the old covenant the ministry of death? No, because that is what the law does to us: It slays us as guilty sinners before God. It isn't that the problem was with the law, but with us: The sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. (Romans 7:5)

There was glory associated with the giving of the law and the old covenant. At that time, Mount Sinai was surrounded with smoke; there were earthquakes, thunder, lightning, a trumpet blast from heaven, and the voice of God Himself (Exodus 19:16-20:1). Most of all, the glory of the old covenant was shown in the face of Moses and the glory of his countenance. 2Co 3:8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? What Paul is saying in these next few verses is that the glory of the law, yes it passed away, but the reason it passed away is because God brought in a greater glory. He didn't just remove that glory and that was the end of it and leave man in a void, No! He replaced the glory of the law with the glory of Christ. The Gospel came not into the world as the law, with thunder, lightning, and earthquakes. It was ushered in by angels, foretelling the birth and office of John the Baptist, and of Christ; by the great sign of the virgin's conceiving and bringing forth a Son; by a voice from heaven, proclaiming Christ the Father's only begotten Son, in whom he was well pleased. That is how the Gospel came to us! 2Co 3:9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. The ministration of condemnation is simply the law.

Paul says if you think there was glory surrounding the law, there is much much more glory surrounding the Lord Jesus Christ. This is who we want to have our eyes upon today. It is Christ! 2Co 3:10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. The law was made glorious, but it had no glory in this respect. By the reason of the glory that excels. What he is saying is that the glory of Christ so far supersedes the glory of the law that there is no comparison. It is as though the law had no glory at all in comparison to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2Co 3:11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. The law was done away with and it was glorious. But there is much more glory in that which remains. He is pointing out the fact that the law was only for a time. It was just temporal. It was going to pass away and it did pass away. The glory that Christ brought in with Him is absolutely eternal and it will remain forever and ever.

Though Israel hoped that the law would be their spiritual light, was a veil and darkness unto them. The Law blinded them. The Jew has such a veil over his face that he cannot see Christ. 2Co 3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

The Jews do not have the full understanding of Christ. Even though Jesus is throughout the Old Testament, one who is engaged in the law cannot see Him. We wonder how in the world that any Jew could read Isaiah 53 and not see Jesus. But Jesus is all the way through the Old Testament, Genesis through Malachi. Then also Psalm 22 which is a picture of the cross and what has happened to Christ. The law was done away by Christ's death. He fulfilled all its demands. Christ was the end of the law. Refer to: Ro 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 2Co 3:12 Seeing then that we have such hope, **we use great plainness of speech**: Paul used great boldness or plainness of speech declaring this wonderful of the grace of God. We should have the same boldness with this message nor apologizing for it. Therefore, since we have such hope: Since our hope is in a more glorious covenant, we can have a more glorious hope. The old covenant restricted and separated men from God; the new covenant brings us to God and enables us to come boldly to Him.

2Co 3:13 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: Paul is talking about this reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the end of the law. The law itself was like a veil where that it actually obscured Christ. Even to this day it still does. The law is actually a veil over the glory that God wants to reveal. If the children of Israel could have looked to the end of the law, they would have seen Christ, but they only saw the veil. They saw only the law which concealed that glory. Paul was with opened face. His ministry was to point us to the glory of Christ through the message of divine grace and not to the law. Moffat translates the law as abolished; he says the last raise of a fading glory. They could not look to the end of that which was abolished which was the end of the law. When it was abolished, and when that glory was gone, it was Christ who was there and they couldn't see to the end of that. So they continue to look at the veil. Jews are not the only ones with a veil on their heart. Gentiles also have "veils" that separate them from seeing Jesus and His work clearly. Jesus is more than able to take those veils away if they should just yield.

2Co 3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil; they do not have the full understanding of Christ. 2Co 3:15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Even today in our day when Moses is read or the law is read, the veil is still upon their hearts. And they cannot see the glory of Jesus who is indeed the end of the law. 2Co 3:16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. The "it" that he is talking about is the heart. It shall turn. When the heart shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. That will happen when Israel as a nation looks upon Christ in the millennium. They will look upon Him whom they have pierced and then the veil will be taken away at that time. A nation (Israel) shall be born again in one day. 2Co 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. There are three references to the Spirit of the Lord in our chapter; v6 and v8 tell us of

the spirit of life and the spirit of glory; and v17 tells us it is a spirit of liberty. All of them are fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. What Paul is saying is when Moses went into God's presence, he had the liberty to take off the veil. The presence of the Lord gave him this liberty. We believers have the Holy Spirit, who is the Lord.

We live in the Spirit's presence because we are under the new covenant. So, just as Moses had the liberty to relate to God without the veil in the presence of the Lord, so we have liberty because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. We should also consider what Paul is not saying. He is not giving a license to any Pentecostal or Charismatic excess because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. We have great liberty in our relationship with God through what Jesus did and through what the Holy Spirit is doing, but we never have the liberty to change what the Spirit says in the word of God. That is a perversion of true liberty, not a Spirit-led liberty. Paul really has in mind the liberty of coming into the presence of God. He is building on what he wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:12: We use great boldness of speech. Boldness is a word that belongs with liberty. Because of the great work of the Holy Spirit in us through the new covenant, we have a bold, liberated relationship with God. We have been liberated from the yoke of the law, from sin, death, hell; but the liberty, is a liberty from that blindness and hardness which is upon men's hearts. Then there is further liberty when we have received the Holy Spirit.

2Co 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Paul is telling us that we can look into the full glory of Jesus and we do not have the veil, for it has been removed. We can see Christ here clearly. The glass or a mirror is the word of God. This is somewhat of a strange mirror and James brings this out also. When we look into a mirror in the natural it shows us a reflection of who we are and the imperfections and the blemishes and all of those things. But notice this particular glass or mirror that Paul is talking about. We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord. When we look into this glass, we are not beholding our own reflection, we are beholding the glory of the Lord. We are beholding His image. But notice as we behold that image, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. As we look into this perfect law of liberty and as we look into this glass or this mirror, we see the glory of Christ and it transforms us. We are changed into the same image from glory to glory. Compare with Ro 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Paul tells us that God's purpose is to change us or be conformed to the image of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are changed into the same image from glory to glory. It does not happen all at once. It is a progressive process. But what does it require? The deeper we look into this glass; the deeper we look into this perfect law of liberty, which is the law of divine grace; this is how we are changed from glory to glory. We begin to see glories there, that we did not know before. As we see those glories, we let the Lord transform us into that same image of Christ. Then notice, it is even by the Spirit of the Lord. It is God's Spirit that makes these changes in our lives. We cannot create them ourselves nor can we create them in the lives of other people. But the spirit of the Lord can change us into that same image of Christ from glory to glory. **We all** with unveiled face: Paul invites every Christian to a special, glorious intimacy with God. This is a relationship and transforming power that is not the property of just a few privileged Christians. It can belong to all, to everyone who has an unveiled face. How do we get an unveiled face?

When one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away (2 Corinthians 3:16). If we will turn to the Lord, He will take away the veil and we can be one of the “we all.” Beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord: We can see the glory of the Lord, but we cannot see His glory perfectly. A mirror in the ancient world did not give nearly as good a reflection as our mirrors do today.

As we behold the glory of God, we will be transformed. God will change our lives and change us from the inside out. Everyone wants to know, “How can I change?” The best and most enduring change comes into our life when we are transformed by time spent with the Lord. There are other ways people think they can change, such as guilt, willpower, or coercion, but none of these methods bring real change. It isn’t as deep or lasts as long as the transformation that comes by the Spirit of God as we spend time in the presence of the Lord. Heb 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. That boldness is with an open face. That open face comes more and more each day as we spend time in the presence of God and that veil is removed from the heart. 2Co 3:16 Nevertheless when it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. The “it” that he is talking about is the heart. It shall turn. When the heart shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

The word beholding means more than a casual look; it means to make a careful study. We all have something to behold, something to study. We can be transformed by the glory of the Lord, but only if we will carefully study it. When we spend time beholding the glory of the God of love, grace, peace, and righteousness, we will see a transforming growth in love, grace, peace, and righteousness in our own lives. How is it that we can know someone? It is by really spending time with them. When we spend our time with the Lord, we are being transformed into the same image. However, it also depends on what we “see” when we look into “God’s mirror.” God’s mirror is not a mirror that shows us what we are as much as it shows us what we will become. What we will become is based on what God is to us and of who God is. Not everyone sees the truth when they look into the mirror.

When we behold God in the mirror of His truth and in His word, we will be transformed into His image. This is God’s great design in our salvation, for whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). In many the image of God, has been defaced by sin. But it may be repaired within us. The progress of this restoration is continuous through our whole life, because it is little by little that God causes His glory to shine forth in us. This is done as we continue to seek the Lord and as we know Him more and more each day. Lu 11:9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Let’s just keep asking; keep seeking; and keep knocking. The Lord is waiting with open arms. Jesus is also knocking at our door. Re 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Jesus loves us so much! How could we not come unto Him for every detail in our lives.

We are being transformed: This work of transformation is a process. We are being transformed; the work isn’t complete yet, and no one should expect it to be complete in themselves or in others. No one comes away from one incredible time with the Lord perfectly transformed. But it is line upon line; precept upon precept; here a little and there a little. It all adds up till one day

Jesus will come to our door and say; Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (Mt 25:23). Could it tonight that the Lord calls us home!

## **II Corinthians 4 December 18, 2025**

2Co 4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not. He is talking about the ministry of the new covenant. It is the message of divine grace that God has revealed to Paul and imparted unto us. We also have received grace and mercy in order that we too might accomplish the ministry that God has given to us. We faint not and the word faint means weak hearted. The word has the meaning of not only a lack of courage but of bad behavior and evil conduct. We do not become weak hearted because we have received such mercy and grace. We are able to continue on and indeed our hearts are not going to be weak or faint. What gave the Apostle Paul courage to continue his ministry, in the face of such discouragements as confronted him? It was Divine Grace. Paul preached his Gospel boldly. When Paul considered the greatness of his calling, it gave him the heart to face all his difficulties. We can have that boldness of heart as we consider how great a calling God gives us in Jesus Christ. Note what Paul says in the next verse after he says of the grace ministry given to him and to us.

2Co 4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in **craftiness**, nor handling the word of God **deceitfully**; but by **manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God**. Paul tells us if a person giving out a message does not speak in God's name or out of the Gospel then he should hold his tongue. If the message is not the Lord's Gospel truth, then that person has no message. If heaven has given us the Gospel message, speak it out; as we ought to speak as one who is called to be the mouth of God. Paul could never be accused of hiding the truth in dishonesty or preaching for personal gain. Paul said we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty. He did not go in under any false pretense to preach the gospel. We must preach it in all honesty and not try to catch people in a trap or to get them just to follow us. Paul tells us here that it is so vitally important to preach the message of truth, but it is also so important to preach it in the right manner and with the right attitude. He said, we have not used craftiness or trickery on you or tried to deceive you. We can compare that to 2Co 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

Paul preached his gospel honestly. The word translated deceitfully is a verb only found here in the New Testament, meaning "to dilute or adulterate." Paul didn't preach a concealed gospel. He says (renouncing the hidden things of shame) nor did he corrupt the gospel; where he says (craftiness... deceitfully). He did not mix the message with human inventiveness or watering it down to accommodate his audience. Paul preached an honest gospel. Many preachers fail on this exact point. They add to it things of human ingenuity and wisdom. Often, those who add these corrupting or diluting things to the gospel think they will make the gospel more effective or give it a greater hearing. They are doing what Paul insisted he would never do. He would never handle the word of God deceitfully. That is what it is to add to the word God; it is to handle it deceitfully. There are certain men that tell us that they must adapt truth to the people so they will understand it more clearly. This means that they murder the truth. It is a new popular lie that

takes the place of the truth. **Craftiness** speaks of a cunning readiness to adopt any device which is trickery from the enemy. This is anything but truth. It is not Divine grace which Paul brought out in the first verse of our chapter. These words are so clear for today. Paul preached the plain truth of the Gospel. Further Paul said in V2; commending ourselves to every man's conscience:

Paul preached a gospel of integrity. Anyone could look at Paul's gospel and ministry, then judge it by his or her own conscience and see that it was full of integrity. Some men attacked Paul's Gospel with empty words. That is what they do when they invent things outside of the Truth. There were some that attacked Paul with actions as well. Nevertheless, Paul knew both his ministry and his message found approval in the conscience of every man. It was the message received by God as well. Paul preached his gospel before God. It was important for Paul to know every man's conscience would approve his manner of ministry, but it was far more important to know that what he did was right in the sight of God. There is a higher scrutiny than that of the human conscience: It is to God that every minister of the gospel is ultimately and eternally answerable. Later in this chapter, Paul will reflect again on his sufferings. In these first two verses, he makes it clear that he did not suffer because he has been an unfaithful minister of the gospel. It was easy for Paul's enemies to claim, "he suffers so much because God is punishing him for his unfaithfulness," but that wasn't true at all. He and we must preach the word in sincerity. We must be right out in front giving people the message; not walking in craftiness; we are not handling the word of God deceitfully.

The word deceitfully means to ensnare and we can contrast that with sincerity. We are to be genuine and right out in the open by displaying the truth. Paul says we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Paul is saying that we are going to win others by the testimony of our own lives. Epistles read of all men. We must walk in truth. We must walk in the reality of the message that He has revealed to us, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 2Co 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: The god of this world Satan is responsible for blinding the people of this world. When a person refuses to believe the gospel, this is when he is fertile ground to be blinded by the devil. If men reject the light, the only alternative is darkness. People, even Christians think that they can get by shoving God's word and God's light out of the way in lieu of their own ideas or their own logic. Unbelief, and rejection of the truth or failure to take the truth of this Gospel makes wide open targets to be blinded by the devil. 2Co 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

If we turn this around: hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. When we believe, it will be impossible for the devil to blind us. The secret is to believe the message that God has given and then we are not going to be blinded. Paul calls the message here the light of the glorious gospel. It is all about Jesus. 2Co 4:4 ...lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. The gospel is all about Jesus. The Gospel is not rules and regulations and decrees and laws and bylaws and restrictions. The Gospel is Christ. It is not just so that I look at my crown, but it is to look upon the Lord Jesus. We must present the message as being a person of Jesus Christ! We can compare this with Joh 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? This is Jesus the

expression of God. If you have seen me, you have seen the Father and the Jews were absolutely incensed by such a statement. Many preachers today want to build a great name for themselves, yet what does Paul declare? We preach not ourselves but Christ. Some preachers today think it is what they say or their testimony that saves people, or how many people they led to salvation this week, but it is not true, it is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus that saves people.

Note the place that Paul took as a servant's heart. 2Co 4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. It is not our testimony that is going to save people. It is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. Our testimony is not so important, but it is the word of God that is important that we give unto men. Paul says; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. Not everyone who opens a Bible and starts talking, is preaching Christ Jesus the Lord. Many preachers actually preach themselves instead of Jesus. If the focus is on stories of themselves or of life experiences of the preacher, he may be preaching himself. It is not wrong to use an example of the testimony of life, but the focus must be on Jesus Christ. Often, people love it when the preacher preaches himself. It puts the preacher on a pedestal. It is also tempting for the preacher because he sees how people respond when he focuses the message on himself. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that the preacher himself can't bring you to God and save soul; only Jesus can. So preach Jesus! It's not wrong to use a story from life's experience. It is all a matter of proportion. If week after week too much of self is in the sermon, it is wrong. We must preach Christ!

This is where every believer must take on a servant's heart. Yes, our relationship must be as sons of God. A servant is one who is taking a lesser place than what God intended for him to have. And he will have a lesser place in glory also. But Paul is talking about is a servant's heart. It is the attitude! When Paul presented himself, this is how he did it. Not as a lord, not as a master, but simply as a bondservant for Jesus' sake. It was also important that Paul also considered himself a bondservant of the Corinthian Christians for Jesus' sake. If it were for his own sake or for the sake of the Corinthian Christians themselves, it wouldn't last or it would turn fleshly pretty easily. Paul always served others for Jesus' sake. He did it primarily to please Jesus, not to please man. Paul didn't stand in the pulpit or before an audience to preach himself. He wasn't important and he wasn't the focus. Jesus was the focus, so Paul could strongly say, we do not preach ourselves. Instead, the focus must be on Christ Jesus the Lord to give us the light: God gives us the light of the knowledge of God, and we have the responsibility to give out this light. He "shined it in" so that we could "shine it out" instead of "shining it on" as some Christians seem to do. 2Co 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

This is a reference to Genesis where God said let there be light and there was light. Now Paul puts this on the spiritual side here. He does exactly the same thing in our hearts. When a person comes to Him and repents of sins, God commands light to shine into his heart and it is an eternal light that is never going to be extinguished. It is to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This is another reference to Christ Himself and notice it is in the face of the Lord Jesus. **That word face simply means countenance. When that analogy is used in the scripture, it speaks of being in full fellowship.** In other words when two people get together, the best way to communicate with one another is to look each other right in the eye. We look full into the face of Christ; this where we get the fullness of the light. This comes over a

period of time. We don't get this all at once. We don't look full into the face of Jesus the minute that we believe and come to Him. This is what God wants to do. He wants the light to shine on us and it is in the face of the Lord Jesus. We get more light as we have fellowship with the Lord Jesus. The more of the fellowship that we have with Christ, the more we look full into His face, and more light is cast upon us.

It is when the Gospel reaches us is how God loves to find each heart. It is the light of the Gospel. 2Co 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. The treasure that he is talking about is that light of V6 in the midst of darkness. Then he tells us why we have this treasure in earthen vessels. It is that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. God has designed redemption so that men are not going to be able to glory in themselves. They can only glory in the Lord. Refer to 1Co 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. Also refer to Col 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: So what is the purpose why we possess this treasure in our earthen vessel? It is that the power may be of God and not of us. It is this treasure or light in these earthen vessels which means they are very temporal and very fragile and very weak. When we have that treasure in an earthen vessel, we can't attribute any goodness to the vessel itself. God did it on purpose that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. So this is why God holds us in such weaken state or such a dependent condition so that the power may be of God and not of us. This is exactly the reason why many people do not want to yield to the Lord or accept Christ.

They do not want to accept and go in the way of weakness. But this is the way that God has chosen. He has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. He put the wonderful invaluable treasure in an earthen vessel that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. This is the greatness treasure of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the glory of God made evident through this Gospel. It is the very light of God and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, reflected in the face of Jesus Christ. This is the greatest treasure in all creation! It is the weak way! God has put such a great treasure into clay pots. Who is worthy to be a "container" for God's light and glory? The smartest person isn't smart enough, the purest person isn't pure enough, the most spiritual person isn't spiritual enough, and the most talented person isn't talented enough and the strongest person isn't strong enough. We are all just clay pots holding an unspeakably great treasure. Earthen vessels were common in every home in those days. They were not very durable compared to metal, and they were useless if broken. They were cheap and of little intrinsic value. God chose to put His light and glory in the everyday dishes, not in fine China.

We almost always are drawn to the thing that has the best packaging, but the best gifts often have the most unlikely packaging. God did not see a need to package Jesus in material riches of the earth when He came at first. Jesus was not embarrassed to live as an earthen vessel. God is not embarrassed to use clay pots like us. Why did God choose risky, earthen vessels instead of safe, glamorous ones? Because "perfect" vessels are safe but bring glory to themselves. Earthen vessels are risky but can bring profound glory to God. In the story of Gideon, it was the breaking of vessels that made the light shine forth and bring victory to God's people (Judges 7:20). In the rest of the chapter, Paul will show how God "breaks" His clay pots so that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. Paul tells us in these next few verses what we experience in

these earthen vessels and this is really common to all men. We have the treasure in there, but the outside of this vessel gets bombarded tremendously before it is all said and done. 2Co 4:8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; There are four experiences we suffer in the natural, which emphasize the weakness of our earthen vessel? (#1 experience) We are troubled or pressed on every side.

Satan will attack us more and more just by being in this world. But then we are not distressed. We are pressed which tells us of our life in this body, but not distressed; that can be attributed to the treasure on the inside. So we have one as opposed to the other. We may be pressed on every side as to our lives here in this body, but we are not distressed or the word should rather be crushed. The reason for that once again is because of the treasure. Jesus will not allow us to bear more than we are able. (#2 experience) Then another one we are perplexed. This word perplexed is translated; at a loss mentally. We are at a loss mentally over and over again, but notice the answer with the treasure on the inside, not in despair. The margin translates that not altogether without help or means. That is because of the treasure and the God of that treasure. It is the treasure or the light in these earthen vessels. 2Co 4:9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; (#3 experience) Once again the body being beaten down and persecuted, but not forsaken or abandoned because we have this treasure in earthen vessels and God is going to defend that treasure. (#4 experience) Then cast down, but not destroyed or killed. Williams translates this; knocked down but never knocked out.

Refer to Pr 24:16 For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief. It is because of that treasure on the inside that we are enabled to go on. Pressed on every side speaks to us of the idea of "hunted." Paul was a wanted, hunted man because of what he was for Jesus. In Acts 23:12, men conspired together to not eat or drink until they had murdered Paul. Paul knew what it was like to be hunted. Ac 23:12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. Paul's life was hard, and it was hard because of his passionate devotion to Jesus Christ and His gospel. Note the triumph of Jesus in Paul's life: not crushed... not in despair... not forsaken... not destroyed. Paul knew the power and victory of Jesus in his life because he was continually in situations where only the power and victory of Jesus could meet his need. We remember everything Paul's suffering. He probably suffered more than anyone other than Christ. This was not theory to Paul but real-life experience. The effect of the trials on us, is that we are strengthened by the treasure within. It is by the life of Christ made manifest in this mortal body. It is because we have this treasure in earthen vessels and God is going to defend that treasure.

2Co 4:8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 2Co 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. We must have the attitude of being surrendered even unto death as was Jesus, and often experience the same satanic opposition and attempted destruction. As Paul said: (We are made conformable to Christ's death in Philippians 3:10) Paul is talking about dying daily. Paul is not talking about the old man dying. He is talking about being in danger daily from the oppression of the enemy. The devil would have killed him daily if he had gotten the opportunity. The same attitude and attributes and commitments to Jesus which stirred up the enemy to kill Him should

also be in us. It is that same treasure. It is so that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. When our own strength is gone, we can go through things that no mere human could endure, but this treasure sustains us and this is what Paul is talking about here. This is when the life of the Lord Jesus is made manifest in these mortal bodies. Paul, like us today; we want the life of Jesus evident in us.

Paul knew this could only happen if he also carried about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. There are some aspects of God's great work in our lives that only happen through trials and suffering. By writing always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, Paul meant that he felt as if the death of Jesus was being spiritually worked inside of him. He is saying that the death of Jesus was not only a historical fact, it also was a spiritual reality in his life. In Philippians 3:10, Paul speaks about the glory of knowing Jesus: that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. Many long to know the power of His resurrection but want nothing to do with the fellowship of His sufferings or being conformed to His death. However, there are certain fragrances God can only release through a broken vial, so Paul rejoiced in knowing both the suffering and the glory. He knew the two were connected. Always delivered to death... death is working in us, but life in you is even greater. Paul knew the spiritual riches that he brought to the Corinthian Christians came in part through the death-like suffering he endured in ministry. God made Paul more effective in ministry through his suffering.

When our own strength is gone, we can go through things that no mere human could endure, but this treasure sustains us and this is what Paul is talking about here. This is when the life of the Lord Jesus is made manifest in these mortal bodies. 2Co 4:11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. This means that the devil regardless of where we are, seeks to snuff out our lives in order that he might gain the victory. But it is God who sustains us. God is the one who intervenes for us. God preserves us over and over again when the enemy would try to wipe us out. Then, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. It is as though Christ is living His life again in us. His life is reproduced in us. **Our lives are not an imitation of Christ.**

**Our lives are a reproduction of Christ. He is reproducing Jesus in us to the degree that we will allow Him to do it.** 2Co 4:12 So then death worketh in us, but life works in us. This is Paul's conclusion. It is because we are poured out and we are given so wholly to the Gospel in order to preach this message. Then life is a result of that Gospel which is revealed and produced in us. The unshakable foundation is the resurrection of Jesus which Paul's faith was resting on. It is on the hope of a resurrection. It is believing this Gospel and the message for ourselves. 2Co 4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Here is the spirit of faith that we are to have in our lives. Paul quotes from the Psalms in Ps 116:10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: We also believe and therefore speak. This is a principal that we also need in our lives. I believe in the Gospel first for our own lives. We must believe the message in our own selves and then speak. This is a pattern I follow we believed and therefore we speak. It is as we really believe the message that we are able to speak it with conviction that it is indeed reality to us; then we can bring it across to someone else. 2Co 4:14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. This one of the things

that Paul believed and now he speaks it. He speaks the message that he believes. It is that which has become a conviction; that which has become reality to him, he believed it and now he speaks it. He knew and believed that the Lord Jesus was raised up and He is going to raise up us also. We are confident and persuaded of that. 2Co 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

All of these sufferings, difficulties, and the adversities that Paul went through are there for your sakes. It was to give glory to God. The grace that was given to the Apostle Paul in the midst of all these adversities; this abundant grace and the deliverance that God brought, might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. They began to rejoice because what God had done in the life of Paul. 2Co 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a **far more exceeding** and eternal weight of glory; Paul is speaking of this in terms of eternity. What a statement from Paul, a man who suffered such tremendous things as we read in 2Cor 11 and then he says, which are but for a moment. These light afflictions and adversities worketh for us; we have to look upon them as our servants. They are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; they are but for a moment, but they work a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; **Far more exceeding means a throwing beyond into a throwing beyond. If you throw it out there just as far as you possibly can and then into another throwing beyond. It tells of the extreme extension in so far as the work that God is doing. This means we can't even comprehend the wealth or the vast of glory that he is talking about which is eternal.**

He did not lose one thing for it was a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The grace that was given to the Apostle Paul in the midst of all these adversities was His strength. Strengthened in the inward man in 2Co 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. The Outward man is this old body and the inward man or the treasure that God put in these vessels is renewed day by day. His mercies are new every morning. We really do need a fresh supply of divine grace every day. God gives us abundant grace and renews us day by day. We must fix our gaze on things not seen, that which is eternal., if we desire these tribulations to work for us. 2Co 4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. This is where Hebrews 11:1 comes in. Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. When we are not looking at the things that are seen we must look by faith the things that are not seen. It is so easy to look at the things that are seen; all of the adversities and troubles and trials and everything that is wrong; now we just don't look away and ignore these things around us, but we cannot look upon them extensively. We cannot be obsessed with them. We look not at the things which are seen, but by faith we look at the things which are not seen. That means we must be obsessed with the things of faith. That is where our strength is!

## **II Corinthians 5 January 8, 2026. Ambassador for Christ**

Paul introduces chapter 5 by the previous verse. 2Co 4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2Co 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It was the outward man, our body, which is perishing that Paul was referring to.

This body that is so weak and frail will give way to this wonderful eternal body that God has prepared for us. 2Co 5:2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: We are earnestly waiting and groaning for the redemption of this earthly body, when we will put on immortality. The house that Paul is talking about is our glorified body. This mortal body or temporary body is going to give way to the glorified body. Ro 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 2Co 5:3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. We need a body.

Whenever a believer dies, his body is laid in the ground and his spirit goes to be with the Lord, so he is unclothed, but he is going to be clothed with that glorified body. As long as we are in this earthen vessel, we sure have groanings and burdens. We groan being burdened but not for that we would be unclothed. Paul says we don't have an obsession with death. Our groaning is not to be unclothed; the groaning is to be clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

2Co 5:4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. This word groan means to be in a strait, to sigh or murmur, or to pray inaudible. There is a verse in Exodus that tells us a little bit about Israel's groaning. Ex 2:23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. They were groaning because they were in such bondage to the Egyptians.

2Co 5:5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. God made us to be glorified. He intended that from the very beginning. God determined from the beginning that we should be eternal and that we should be glorified. Then He has given us the earnest of the Spirit. The infilling of the Holy Ghost and the operation of Spirit in us, glorious as they are, they are just an earnest or just a foretaste of what is going to be whenever we have our glorified bodies. God is preparing us right now for our eternal destiny. Here, Paul connects the ideas of our light affliction and the eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). Our light affliction is (in part) how God has prepared us. There was a man in the middle of painful trials. He took a walk in his neighborhood and saw a construction crew at work on a big church. He stood and watched a stone craftsman work a long time on a block. He could not see where the block would fit, because the church appeared to be finished. He watched the man work on that block carefully and, slowly shaping it into a precise pattern. Finally, he asked the man, why are you spending so much time chipping and shaping that block? The craftsman pointed up to the top of the nearly completed steeple and said, I'm shaping it down here so it will fit in up there. The man in the middle of the trials instantly knew that was God's message to him. He was being prepared down here so that he would fit in up in heaven.

When the trials are hard on earth, it isn't always easy to take comfort in our heavenly destiny. God knew this, so He gave us the Holy Spirit as a guarantee. He backs up the promise of heaven with an (earnest) down payment right now, the Holy Spirit. Earnest is the Greek word arrhabon, which described a pledge or a partial payment that required future payments but gave the one receiving the guarantee a legal claim to the goods in question. In the modern Greek language,

arrhabona means “engagement ring.” Paul said in 2Co 11:1 Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. 2 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. 3 **But I fear**, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. We have been given the promise of marriage. We have been given the engagement ring. But what is it that will break that engagement? Lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. People are letting the devil rob them of what they could have. God’s best! We Christians can experience the great blessings from the Holy Spirit now.

When we consider how glorious the down payment is, we should consider how great the whole gift will be. But many are losing out. They are allowing the devil to rob them. They do not allow the Holy Spirit to have His way in their hearts. They know nothing of yielding to the life of Christ! The work of the Holy Spirit in the soul is the bud of heaven. Grace is not a thing which will be taken away from us when we enter glory, but it will develop us into glory if we let the Holy Spirit finish the work. Grace is never withdrawn as though it had answered its purpose, but it will be matured into glory if we let it. 2Co 5:6 Therefore **we are always confident**, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: As long as we are in this world we are literally apart from the Lord. We know He is with us and we walk with and we count on that fellowship, but we are not actually in heaven yet, we are absent from the Lord. We are living by faith. **Paul said we are always confident. What are we confident in?** The presence of the Holy Spirit in Paul’s life gave him confidence. It assured him that God was at work in him and would continue His work.

If you cannot say of yourself that you are always confident, then ask God for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in your life. We can be always confident, even in hard times, if we keep Colossians 3:2: Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. So, what is the way to maintain peace when there are changes in the soul? Or, when we are sometimes cast down? The only way is never to be unduly depressed by adversity or by doubts and fears. How can this be? Because we should have learned to live not upon the things without or upon things within, or by circumstances, but upon things above, which are the true food for a new creation. This should be our prayer to the Lord in Col 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. The next verse is so fitting! 2Co 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 2Co 5:8 We are **confident**, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. That means to depart from this body is to be with the Lord. Are we confident? Paul repeats this word confident. It must be important if he repeats it again. Confident means to exercise courage. Courage where? In the Lord! He is available wherever we are, because God is always with us. The source of true courage is God’s presence and strength. God will never leave us or forsake us! We have eternal life the moment we believe.

It is the life of the Lords Jesus that He has placed within us the moment we believe on Him. But immortality refers to the body that we will have in glory. 1Co 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. Paul knew to be absent from this body was to be present with the Lord. God made us to be glorified. He intended

that from the very beginning. God determined from the beginning that we should be eternal and that we should be glorified. Paul looked forward to that. 2Co 5:8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and **to be present with the Lord**. At that moment in time when we leave this world by way of the grave, we are present with the Lord at that moment in time. The day will come, whether we go by way of the grave or translation, when we will no longer be absent from the Lord. On that day, we will not have to walk by faith, but we will see the glory and the presence of God by sight. Paul is confident based on the guarantee of the Holy Spirit of his eternal destiny. He is not afraid of the world beyond. In fact, he would be well pleased to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

To be present with the Lord is what makes heaven really heaven. So we long to be present with the Lord. Heaven is precious to us for many reasons. We want to be with loved ones who have passed before us and whom we miss so dearly. We want to be with the great men and women of God who have passed before us in centuries past. We want to walk the streets of gold, see the pearly gates, and see the angels round the throne of God worshipping Him day and night. However, none of those things, precious as they are, make heaven really heaven. What makes heaven really heaven is the unhindered, unrestricted presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. The place of heaven would be like hell if we could not be present with the Lord Jesus. To see Him face to face. To see those eyes and all that He has done for us; the much much more. To have Him reveal even more! Oh our minds cannot even comprehend what Jesus is to us and what He paid for us. 2Co 5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. Our desire, our focus must be that we are accepted of Him. Since what we do right now has eternal consequences, our goal must persistently be to please God.

It does not matter what anybody else thinks of us. Our business is to please Christ. The less we trouble ourselves about pleasing men the more we will succeed in pleasing God. Paul tells us that we can't do anything right now about pleasing God if we are absent from these bodies and present with the Lord. That day has not yet come. Yet we can do something about pleasing the Lord when we are absent from His immediate presence and present in these bodies now. 2Co 5:10 For **we** must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. We must realize that we are appearing before the judgement seat of Christ right now, it should bring great comfort to us. We must look at Revelation 1 where Jesus is walking amidst the candlesticks right now. The judgement seat of Christ is Jesus inspecting or judging us and giving us the opportunity to change those things that are not right. The judgement seat is the wonderful throne of divine grace. He says to the Churches in Revelation repent. There is not going to be any repentance after we get to heaven. The repentance is done now. We are judged NOW, to correct those things now. When we go to heaven, it will be to receive our reward. That is what the believers get is a reward. This is not the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-15. Who is the "**we**" of verse ten? Christians. Only sinners will appear at the Great White Throne Judgment.

The purpose is for the Christian to receive our reward. This is based upon what building materials one has used in building. I Corinthians 3:12-15. 1Co 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon,

he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, why? That every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. We are judged now and then we are rewarded after we get to glory. At that day we will be rewarded according to how we have conducted ourselves in this life. 2Co 5:11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. This terror does not mean that we should be afraid of God. God does not want His people to be afraid of Him. That is not good in any relationship.

The fear of the Lord or the terror of the Lord is in ah of Him or in reverence to Him. Rev 1:13-17, you will find what John saw. He saw the judge and remember what he did. I fell at His feet as dead. He was in such ah of Him and overcome by what he saw. That is the attitude we need before the Lord and not one of being afraid of Him to the point we want to run away. Then 2Co 5:11 but we are made manifest unto God and that is right now. Re 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

Note what Paul says in 2Co 5:12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion **to glory on our behalf**, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which **glory in appearance, and not in heart**. Much of the religious world today boasts and glory's in the wrong thing. They boast in themselves. They glory in appearance. All of us have been leveled in death. We believers all died with Christ. We are not any better than anyone else. Paul has already demonstrated who he was and now he is giving these Corinthians the opportunity to defend them before those who are judging them according to outward appearance and not according to the heart. Many times people look at us and judge us by what they see on the outside. They judge us by what we have or don't have; and how we dress; where you live; how much of the world's goods do we have. God is the only one that sees the desires of the heart. We don't commend ourselves again to you: Though Paul gloried in his weakness, his trials, and his struggles, he doesn't do it to brag before the Corinthian Christians. The Corinthian Christians thought the trials made Paul less of an Apostle and man of God. One problem with the Corinthian Christians is that they liked those who glory in appearance and not in heart. They looked down on Paul because his glory was not in appearance and only in the heart. By telling the Corinthian Christians how God worked through his struggles and trials, Paul gave them something to answer those who thought that way. Paul is basically saying, what do you glory in?

Are you among those who glory in appearance and not in heart? Remember what the Lord said to Samuel: The LORD does not see as a man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). Most people are so impressed by a person's image. It isn't that appearance is completely unimportant, but the heart is what the Lord is concerned about. In V13 are some things that Paul was accused of. 2Co 5:13 For whether we be **beside**

**ourselves**, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. The word beside ourselves simply means insane. They accused Paul of being insane. Whether we be sober which means to speak sensibly, it is for your cause. 2Co 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because **we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead**. It is Divine love that controls us. It is the love of Christ that controls us. Paul wants them to know that what he did, and the way he was, and the way he conducted himself, was because he was constrained by the love of God.: The love of Christ constrains us because **#1 we thus judge, that #2 if one died for all, then were all dead**: Then **#3** 2Co 5:15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

This is the way the love of Christ constrains us. We realize that Jesus died for all. He is our Head! We must have our attention and focus on Christ. We must also realize that we die in Christ. So all men are on the same level. Paul elsewhere gives the three-part answer to being on the same level. We are not any better than anyone else. **#1** we are dead to sin; **#2** we have crucified the flesh; **#3** the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. These answers are found in these verses. Ro 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Ga 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Ga 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. The love of Christ constrains us that we live for others. We have the same spirit and attitude and heart that Jesus had and that was indeed to give Himself for others. 2Co 5:16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

Because of what he just went through in V 14-15, the love of Christ constrains us. This is where we begin to make distinctions; if we begin to look at outward appearances then we are looking after the flesh. We know no man after the flesh. 2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: This means we cannot boast and put one above another and of course the love of Christ will not allow us to do that. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: We must claim that for ourselves and we must see that in other people. Then old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. Sometimes Christians have a hard time laying hold of this verse. They allow the devil to intimidate them with what they did when they were sinners or when they fall into sin. God will make this verse a reality in our lives. We have become a New Creation in Christ! 2Co 5:18 And **all things** are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; Paul is pointing to **all things** are of God. God did the work of reconciliation? How did God reconcile the world unto Himself? It was by the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. So, what is the ministry of reconciliation? It is the restoration of the fellowship with God. That was what was broken from the very beginning with Adam and Eve.

2Co 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. God reconciled the world unto Himself by not imputing our trespasses unto us. He put them or imputed them on Christ and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Man has been reconciled back unto God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Our title of this chapter is ambassador for Christ. What does

it mean to be an ambassador for Christ? It means senior representatives. 2Co 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. This word ambassadors means to be a senior. What we are talking about is we are to be seniors as opposed to being a child. If we are going to be ambassadors, we cannot be children. We are to conduct ourselves as seniors. We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: this means that God is using Paul to literally invite us in. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. He already laid the foundation. He has given all the provisions that are necessary to be reconciled to God, now He simply wants us to be reconciled unto Christ.

Then the basis; 2Co 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Jesus was made sin for me, (personal) who knew no sin that I might be the righteousness of Christ. We stand before God as having been made righteous. The only way that God could reconcile man unto Himself is to take care of the sin question. Sin had separated men from God and God found a way to take care of that sin. The way He did was; He has made Him, His Son Jesus Christ to be sin. When Jesus hung on the cross, God saw the bulk of sin (every sin) for the whole world put upon Him who knew no sin. The result is that we were made the righteousness of God in Him. This is a double edge sword. He judged the sin on the one side, our sin which was on Christ, but then God did not put us back into the Garden of Eden to start it all over again, God gave to us the very righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. (double edge sword).

That is why this never fails and that is why we have eternal life because He has imputed to us the very righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. God has done all of this that we might be reconciled unto Him. (He restored our broken relationship). This is the wonderful Gospel of the grace of God in which thrills our heart! Yes! What love that God had for us that He would put the whole sin of this world on His Son Jesus Christ that I might have the righteousness of Christ. Now God sees me as He sees His Son. Wow what a wonder! Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted (as) in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

## **II Corinthians 6 January 15, 2026 The Proof of the Ministry**

This Chapter is a continuation of what Paul was talking about in chapter 5. He was talking about us being ambassadors (seniors) and not children. The reason for that was that Christ was made sin and has given us this ministry of reconciliation. 2Co 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. How can believers receive the grace of God in vain? By refusing the operations of divine grace in our lives. Then, this is not simply working for Him as being a slave or a servant, but working with Him. We are partners as it were with God. We beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. This happens because some people do not take advantage of that reconciliation that Paul talked about in chapter 5. They don't come into the provision and they don't come into the glories of the grace of God. These are the wonderful provisions that Christ has provided for us on Calvary as He gave Himself for us and provided His righteousness to us. People can come into salvation and lay hold of being saved, but there so much more grace to the grace of God than just the grace of being born again and being filled with the Spirit and being healed. Many times the depths of the grace of God are left untouched. We can never exhaust the riches of Divine grace.

We all need grace for especially the trial that we may be under. Now I will never need the grace for child birth as a woman needs, but this grace that I may need in the trials that I am going through may not be the same grace that you need for your trial. But the grace is there for all trials and every situation. If we do not lay hold of what God holds out to us and if we do not walk in these wonderful ways of grace than it is just in vain. There is an emptiness there. How many people stop short of the grace of God needed because of unbelief? Are we going to trust God in every situation for His grace. 2Co 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) I have succoured or helped thee and this is on the basis of the grace of God. We must answer that call. Whether we are talking about initial salvation or talking about the fullness of God's salvation and the fullness of God's provision, the same principal applies. Now is the accepted time; and now is the day of salvation. Now is the time to avail ourselves of the fullness of the grace of God so that it is not in vain. Why should people not hesitate to lay hold of all God's promises in every situation? It is because they bring salvation.

This is what we should say: it is victory at hand and victory ahead; because God has given us abundant grace that sustains in everything. It is His provision of the fullness of the grace of God that we must lay hold of now and in the future in every situation. 2Co 6:3 Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: Paul is saying here: Not just accepting the grace for our own lives, but it is a matter of being a minister of that same grace to other people. Also, we cannot give anything to anyone else that we have not received ourselves. V4-10 we find a number of **proofs of Paul's ministry**; and we should have these proofs in our own lives also. 2Co 6:4 But in all things approving **ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses**. In much patience refers to an attitude that we must have. Patience – compare with Jas 1:4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Patience is not just a matter of waiting for something. Patience is actually a work within our own hearts that God is doing. It refers to an attitude during these different workings of the Lord in our heart. Then much patience in afflictions, that is in pressures. The life of Christ must be made manifest in time of pressure.

We have to deal with these things in our lives that bring on pressures and we can answer them in ways of the flesh or we can answer them in the ways and the works of Christ. Then Paul says in necessities and how do we handle necessities? Sometimes not very well, but God allows us to have these necessities or these needs in order that we might demonstrate the life of Christ in our lives. We can either demonstrate the life of Christ or we can demonstrate the ways of the flesh, one of the two. Then in distresses and we are going to have a few of those in our experience. The word distress actually means calamity or anguish. This is something that reaches right down into the very depths of your heart and your being. So how do we handle that? One of the things we cannot do is don't get down on yourselves if fail in one of these areas. It is not like school where you flunk a test and that's it, you're done. Oh no, if your heart attitude is right before God wanting His desire then God brings the test back to you over and over till you pass it. The Apostle Paul was approved in the ministry of the gospel. These are things that Paul was approved in and we are to also be approved in. 2Co 6:5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

These are things that we receive at the hands of other people. We may not be beat up physically but sometimes we are verbally beat up. Tumults speak of unstable situations. Then in labors both on the gospel and physical labor. In watchings and the word means sleepless and it often refers to sleeplessness as far as prayer is concerned. In fastings and that associated with prayer. Verses 4 and 5 tell us of the negative endurance that Paul went through. We also go through these same things in a negative manner that we are forced to prove ourselves in. V 6-7 tell us of the positive outflow of the life of Christ in our own lives. 2Co 6:6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, Our lives demonstrate the pureness of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus; the pureness of the life of Christ. Then by knowledge; do we conduct ourselves according to the knowledge of the word of God. We do not conduct ourselves according to the knowledge of society and man and by their standards or by their man-made doctrines. Then by longsuffering and once again this is an attitude that we have of being longsuffering with people. Are we able to bear with them even as God has borne with us? By kindness, by the Holy Ghost.

Our lives must be filled with the Spirit of God, so it is not our own works and lives that are on display, but we are living by the power of the Holy Ghost. Then by love unfeigned, that is by unpretended love. Does our life show forth love or does it show forth the flesh? 2Co 6:7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. By the word of truth meaning the truth of the gospel that is on display in our own experience. It cannot be by the error of man or man-made doctrines. That is, we are walking in truth. Are we going to follow the doctrines of man that are in error? We will be accountable for what we support. Are we supporting truth or error? These are all **proofs of Paul's ministry and they are proofs of the ministry that we support**. Then Paul says this proof; by the power of God. So is the power of God on display in our lives. So often we find that the power of God is put on display in our lives, because of some need we have. It may be financially or a physical need. It is not until we come to the end of our own resources and strength that the power of God is even needed. Up until the time that we lose all of our strength, we will depend upon it. That is just the way we are. So God brings us to the end of our own resources in order that we might learn by experience what is His strength and resources. Then the proof; by the armor of righteousness. That means we demonstrate the righteousness of Christ in our lives.

It is not our own human righteousness according to men's standards, but it is the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of men is whatever a person wants to do. We are in the day in the book of Judges; every man does that which is right in his own eyes. The armor of righteousness is what is right in the eyes of the Lord. Then, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. The right hand is the right hand of power. The left hand is the left hand of weakness. Whether it is in a place of power or strength in our lives, or whether it is in a place of weakness in our lives, it is still righteousness that must be manifest. Regardless of our experience. Sometimes God lets us be on the right hand of power, but there are also the times when we are on the left hand of weakness. Paul's credentials are in the pronounced items in Chapter 6:4 to 10. He needed no such commendation from Corinth or other churches; Paul says not that we are competent from ourselves to reckon anything as from ourselves; but our competency is from God, who also hath made us competent ministers of the new covenant. Ye are our epistle, written in your hearts, known and read of all men. The fruit of his labors which was the Gospel was their recommendation.

He preached the word of grace in the power of the Holy Spirit, the essential message of the new covenant. If others need credentials, it was because their message and ministry were not wholly scriptural, like many today, or because they corrupted the word of God for gain. The gain is not just money. It can be to puff up the flesh. There are many today wanting credentials, because their message and ministry is not wholly scriptural. Php 2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. Paul had very little in the natural to offer others, but he had great wealth which he shared with others. He shared the unsearchable riches of Christ. It was all by grace, and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Eph 3:8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; **Here is three citations where** that Paul demonstrated the power of God . Ac 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. Ac 28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

Ac 16:18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. All of these are a demonstration of the Power of God which came into focus after natural strength is gone. 2Co 6:8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; A wonderful example and expression of all these together in 1Sa 18:14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him. David behaved himself when he was in honor, but he still behaved himself wisely when he was demoted. The Apostle Paul was a righteous man and he had to contend with the evil report of others and you and I will have to do the same. We must be able to conduct ourselves in the time of evil reports; it is God who will defend us; so let God defend us against the evil reports. And then we must know how to conduct ourselves in the time of good reports so that we do not become so puffed up nobody can be around us. Then Paul says, as deceivers, and yet true; This is another one of those false accusations. Some may have thought Paul was a deceiver and some accused him of being a deceiver as we see in 2Co 12:16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

Paul didn't do that, where some said he caught you with guile; that was the way he was reported doing, but Paul was proven true and that is what God will do. He will prove that we are true, but we must leave our defense unto God. 2Co 6:9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; Who in the world has heard of us? We are not on TV or the newspapers every day; our names are not household words and that was true of the Apostle Paul. Then yet well known; those in certain circles knew him well. The same is true of us. There are those who receive of the true ministry of truth know us. Then as dying, and behold we live; again the dying daily, poured out for the Gospel every day. Satan would take our lives every day yet we live because of God. Then as chastened, and not killed; We are going through the fire and through the battles, but we will not wind-up dead on the battlefield. 2Co 6:10 As sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. As sorrowful yet always rejoicing: This is another one where our outward experience feelings may tend to make us sorrowful. But what is important for us is that we must take the joy of the Lord in spite of the circumstances.

So as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; we can rejoice in the Lord and we can find something to glory in rather than being a gloomy Gus and always giving the idea that the Christian life is the worst thing in the world to live. We have our times and we are subject to these limitations that are in this world just like everybody else. Then as poor, yet making many rich; Paul spent every dime he had and sacrificed all of these things for the Gospel, yet he made many rich, how? By giving them the Gospel and we can do exactly the same thing. Then as having nothing of the world's goods, and yet possessing all things, we are so rich in Christ. Those riches will be shown forth in eternity. He was ready to preach the gospel to them. 2Co 6:11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. He was ready to preach the gospel to them. Paul is still pleading with the Corinthians to give him the place in their lives that God wants them to give Him. Paul was not trying to establish a new denomination or a following. What Paul wants them to accept is his Gospel. He said our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged; he means he had a love for them; you are not just people or numbers, or statistics to us, our heart is open and enlarged to you. 1Co 3:2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

Ac 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Though these saints caused the Apostle Paul many heartaches, he had such a love for them and it had not diminished. He continues to instruct and admonish them. 2Co 6:11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. 2Co 6:12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Weymouth's translation says There is no want of affection for you in us. The want or the lack is in your own affection. Paul says it is not us that are lacking in our affection, in our love toward you, it is you that are lacking in love. Weymouth's translation - 2Co 6:11 O Corinthians, our lips are unsealed to you: our heart is expanded. 12 There is no narrowness in our love to you: the narrowness is in your own feelings. 2Co 6:13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. Paul is saying we are wanting you to love us as we love you. And the reason for that is because of the message; because of the Gospel. (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. Paul wants their heart enlarged toward him and the message that he preach. He wanted those Corinthians to receive him and love him in kind as he has poured the same love and affection and their lives for them.

Paul wants to see the same self-searching honesty in the Corinthian Christians that he just displayed to them. They had to do this so that they could be reconciled. The thing between Paul and the Corinthian church could be healed, but it was in the hands of the Corinthian Christians to do it. They had to also be open. The Corinthian church was engaged in carnal fellowships was one of their problems and Paul addresses it here. **2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?** Notice the connection between V 13 and 14. Paul is not introducing something new here at this point. V 13 Paul says I want you to love us even as we love you; In other words return the same love for the Gospel. That was not just a personal thing for personal gain, he is talking about a love for the message of which Paul is the representative. It was for the Gospel. He says, 2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: what he is talking about is other ministers that had come, and they were preaching a gospel that was contrary to the message that the Apostle Paul delivered. When Paul says the unbeliever, it does not necessarily mean that they had never accepted Christ.

It does mean that they did not believe and preach all of the message of the grace of God that the Apostle Paul did. We find this same division in Christendom today. There are many people who have been saved and many who have been filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, but they are still not walking and talking in the fullness of light of the Gospel. They have a few scriptures they go over or a few little streams that they paddle around in. But there is no real depth of the Gospel that they are preaching. They are delivering a mixture of truth and error and mixture is deadly. Satan is always looking for ways to trap, confuse, or dilute believers. If he can find a crack in the door, he will make every effort to mix truth and error, all the while saying, "Just be open minded." Satan does far greater damage as the angel of light than as a roaring lion. The most gullible people fall into several categories. New believers who aren't well-versed in Scripture can be tricked into the traps of error. Older believers, tired of the real Gospel become complacent to where they are at and just want someone who tickles their ears. Many want to show how to act rather than showing people the truth of the Gospel of Christ. They end up drifting with the drift of the which causes a believer, a church, or even a generation to crash on the rocks of analyzing with their minds instead of yielding to the Spirit.

Today there is a denial of self-sacrifice and clear biblical teaching. Paul said it this way in Col 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. What robs a Christian of joy? It is the danger of error. If Christian are listening to error, I can guaranty on the authority of God's word their joy is being robbed. Those preaching error are thieves demanding knowledge beyond what God has revealed. Error will leave the Christian feeling empty and hollow. People cannot see that there is a counterfeit religion which must be fought against, and error must be avoided. How do we counter these hollow philosophies? The believer must beware of the lust of the mind and be content with what God has revealed in His word. Anything that goes beyond the Scriptures simply puffs up one's mind instead of exalting Christ. That is one way the devil is doing it today. While there is certainly an initial thrill of a new doctrine, heresy and error leave the person joyless and empty. Joy comes not from philosophy, but from Christ. The fight for joy is therefore a fight to exalt Christ. Christ is supreme and true. He is the Supreme truth. Ps 138:2 .... for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

So Paul says, be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: so many times this is used in conjunction with marriage and it certainly does apply, but that is not the actual context of how it is given here. Paul is talking about the fellowship that they have with other ministers at his expense. In other words they have chosen the message of error that others have preached rather than the message of the Apostle Paul. Notice the different points of contrast he makes of the two messages. What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Not all messages that are preached today are righteous messages. When they testify of the flesh and law keeping, that is not a righteous message. If it is in error that is definitely not a righteous message. Paul was against that type of preaching to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, and to the Hebrews. We know that Law keeping is not a righteous message and yet many are preaching it and this is just one example. Then what communion hath light with darkness? Everything that is preached today is not light; it is indeed darkness when the truth is not present and error is. So Paul says, how do you reconcile these two? We cannot compromise truth but by standing firm on the pure gospel and proclaim God's grace and truth.

Then we must continue persuading people to come to God through Christ's sacrificial love, and separate themselves from those who distort the truth of the Gospel message. Paul says further: 2Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Belial means worthlessness. There are some messages that do not magnify Christ Himself and that is how we measure a message. Does it magnify Christ or is it promoting and publishing and pushing men and their personalities. Then what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? An infidel means one without faith. Are men preaching a Gospel that produces faith? There is only one Gospel that will do that and that is not one full of error. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. The word must be preached in order to produce faith. Then another difference between error and truth is in V16. 2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. As Paul stated in 1Co 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? There is only one person that we are of and that is Christ.

We cannot choose to be identified with some other head rather than the Lord Jesus Christ. There are those that would preach and tell their congregation that they cannot go or listen to any other messages. They have all the truth that is needed. That is so harmful especially if people are being taught error. They become fearful of what might happen to them. That is not the grace message. This is what scripture tells us in 1Sa 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. Rebellion is idolatry. There is some preaching that incites rebellion and that is not of God. There are five sharp pointed questions in our chapter that indicate the complete separation which God desires of His people. The five sharp pointed questions are: Number (1): 2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: Number (2) for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Number (3) and what communion hath light with darkness? Number (4) 5 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Number (5) 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

V16-18 are a 7-fold provision for us. But its fulfillment is dependent on our willingness to separate from defilement. It is up to us whether we enjoy the 7-fold provision that God has given to us. (#1) 2Co 6:16 I will dwell in them; God gives us that opportunity to afford Him the dwelling place in our hearts. Dwelling in our hearts doesn't just mean, we have accepted Christ. It means surrendering our lives to God as His habitation. He takes up the residence and He is the one who literally owns and operates our lives. Then (#2) 2Co 6:16 I will walk in them; Walking in them means that He is able to manifest Himself in a practical way in our own experience. People see God walking in our midst because of our lives. (#3) V16; I will be their God in practicality, dependence upon God; that is there is none other; no other gods before you. (#4) V16: they shall be my people: God puts His seal of ownership on us. And if we have surrendered ourselves to God as His people, it means that we have given Him the right to do anything with His own. 2Co 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them. He talking about coming out from these other religious leaders. 2Co 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

We must separate from that which is unclean. (#5) I will receive you. This simply means that He is going to bring us into the closeness of His fellowship, His Holy of Holies, into intimacy with Him. (#6) 2Co 6:18 And will be a Father unto you. There are few Christians today that really understand the Fatherhood of God. One way to tell this is very often when people pray, they just address God as Oh God, or Almighty God and all of those are wonderful, but it is really important that you and I develop a relationship of calling upon Him as our Father. It is because it is a loving relationship. It is an intimate relationship. It's a close relationship. (#7) 2Co 6:18 ...ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. We must understand what the sonship is all about in our experience and that is growing up into maturity in Christ in all things. There are many today who would wonder why we are so particular with whom we feed and fellowship spiritually. Yet, in the natural, if you knew a portion of food was contaminated with poison would you go ahead and eat it? No we would not eat it. Paul was concerned for these Corinthians. As Paul stated in 1Co 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? There is only one that we are of and that is Christ. We cannot choose to be identified with some other head rather than the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **II Corinthians 7 January 22, 2026**

2Co 7:1 Having therefore **these promises**, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. What promises is Paul referring back to. It is those promises that we had in V16-18 in the previous chapter where God says, I will dwell with them and I will walk in them and I will be their God, and they shall be my people and these various things. Chapter 6 insisted on us having a life of cleansing or a life of separation, which is what we must have before God. But it is important as to how we gain that separation. There are some that seem to want to separate themselves with do's and don'ts and laws and all sorts of restrictions that even God never dreamed of. God's way of cleansing is found in Joh 15:3 Now ye are **clean through the word** which I have spoken unto you. And then we can look at Eph 5:26 for another cleansing. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. This is what is so important in the cleansing process is that we go to the word of God. This is why it is so important to spend time in the scripture. It doesn't make any difference whether we do something wrong or not. Just by virtue of walking in this world we are going to be defiled every day.

2Co 7:1 Having therefore **these promises**, dearly beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves** from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Note what this says; let us cleanse ourselves. For everyone who would say we don't have to do anything or that practical is not in the Bible. They must have torn this page out of there Bible. It is not enough to ask God to cleanse us; we must clean up our own lives and get rid of those things that make it easy for us to sin. No believer can legislate for any other believer; each one knows the problems of his own heart and life. My Bible says let us cleanse ourselves. There is a cleansing that God alone does in our lives, but there is also a cleansing that God wants to do in cooperation with us. Here, Paul writes about a cleansing that isn't just something God does for us as we sit passively; this is a self-cleansing for intimacy with God that goes beyond a general cleansing for sin. It is not our work apart from God, but it is a work that awaits our will and effort: let us cleanse ourselves. This aspect of cleansing is mostly connected with intimacy with God and usefulness for service.

How can those expect God to purify their hearts who are continually indulging their eyes, ears, and hands in what is forbidden, and in what tends to increase and bring into action all the evil propensities of the soul?

That is why we need to go to the laver of God's word daily and that doesn't mean that we must sit down for two or three hours and study, though there would be nothing wrong with that. But when we have this message in our hearts and when we are able to meditate on the word or even memorizing scripture. This is cleansing to us in that manner. Then this verse says perfecting holiness in the fear of God. God's answer is not just what we do. God's answer to holiness is who we are. Hebrews 12:10 is a real good commentary on such holiness. Heb 12:10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. We are actually made holy through the chastening hand of God. Holiness is a direct result of receiving chastening at the hand of God. God makes us holy inside out. When we are made holy on the inside, then there is that reflection in our lives in the outward appearance. 2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. What two necessary steps must we take before we can ever have an intimate relationship with the Lord? 6:17; 7:1 It is Separation from evil, and laying hold of His promises. Verse 1 states let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. **This indicates two types of cleansing.** There is a main aspect of cleansing that comes to us as we trust in Jesus and His work on our behalf. This work of cleansing is really God's work in us and not our work. But there is another aspect of cleansing that God looks for us to do with the participation of our own will and effort; not that it is our work apart from God, but it is a work that awaits our will and effort: let us cleanse ourselves. There are some that teach, we don't have to do anything, but that is not Paul's teaching. This aspect of cleansing is mostly connected with intimacy with God and usefulness for service. How can people expect God to purify their hearts who are continually indulging their eyes, ears, and hands in what is forbidden, and in what tends to increase and bring into action all the evil propensities of the soul?

Also people are not made clean by error. That defiles! The only way we are cleansed is if afford ourselves the truth of God's word. Refer to Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any **twoedged sword**, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. What does the sword do? It separates. You know I have been criticized for being too direct, or telling it like it is. Let's look at what Jesus said. Mt 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, **but a sword**. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. Are these words of Jesus too direct or telling it like it is. Refer to how Luke says these same words of Jesus. Lu 12:51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; **but rather division**: 52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the

father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

The sword of God, His word will bring division. People want only to hear things pleasing to the flesh. The flesh does not like the chastening or correction that we so desperately need. Therefore the cleansing will be from the Lord with our cooperation or with the participation of our own will and effort. 2Co 7:2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. We have seen Paul making this same plea again and again. He undoubtable established this assembly and there were those that were creeping in and trying to take over. They were saying things that were not true. And they were also trying to literally steal the hearts of these people and turn them against the Apostle Paul. They had said many things to where that Paul actually had to defend himself. Here we have some of the accusations that were leveled against Paul and he doesn't go into any detail as to defending himself. 2Co 7:3 I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you. Paul says I am not bringing these things out to condemn you or to make you feel bad. Paul says regardless of your attitude we still have this same love for you. That is so important for us.

If we have unconditional love for people then whatever they may or may not do does not change that love. We must tell people the truth. I remember a pastor saying, if I saw your house on fire would you want me to come and tell you and even yank you out of that house. It is amazing when we tell some people the truth, they get angry. Paul didn't tell them to condemn them or make them feel bad. He told them the truth out of love. It is the same way with God. He has unconditional love for us. So what we may or may not do does not change that. Now the fellowship is changed, but His love for us is still there. 2Co 7:4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. How could Paul be exceedingly joyful in tribulation? It was because of faith. This is sometimes difficult to understand. Faith brings joy. Faith comes by hearing and hearing of the word of God. When we begin to understand what Jesus has done for us; what He has given for us; in us and by His word; and as this sinks deep within our heart, faith grows and joy blossoms. The Lord can give us this joy. Paul spoke in boldness of speech for their benefit not for his benefit. Paul spoke in some real hard terms.

1Co 5 is one of them and there are expressions and other chapters where Paul is rather blatant when it comes to addressing these people. He was bold toward them because he loved them and he wanted to impart truth to them. Paul did not want them to go astray. But then, in these next few thoughts and words, Paul commends these people. We really do need to affirm people as much as we can because we do a lot more for them by affirmation than we do by correction. Paul did have to correct and that is needed. But he also affirmed them and Paul seems to follow that every chance he gets. Now Paul did not believe in flattery, but he did anything that he could in order to commend people. This is a great trait to adopt in our own lives. There is another thing that Paul did not want them to have and that was both the friendship of the world and the fellowship of the Triune God. God has unconditional love for us. So what we may or may not do does not change that. Now if we continue in the ways of the world, the fellowship is changed and disconnected from God, but His love for us is still there. Paul desired that they not sever the

fellowship with God. The true source of our cleansing is the water of The Word. This is what is so important in the cleansing process is that we go to the word of God.

When we have this message in our hearts and when we are able to meditate on the word or even memorizing scripture and it is cleansing to us in that manner. Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. One of the greatest hinderances of our spiritual growth is the fears within. 2Co 7:5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. This is the tribulation that Paul had on every side. He says without were fightings which means outside of the circle that Paul just like it is with us. Then Paul says, within were fears. Here Paul is talking about within himself but God knows how to deliver that. As long as we are in this world, we will have these particular moments. Many of those fears that Paul had were because of the Corinthians. They actually brought about this. Just like today with the conduct of other people often times brings fears or frustrations and anxieties into our lives because we are so concerned with them. But we must learn that we cannot be consumed of those things. If we do, we will succumb to it. God is very faithful to help us and to minister to that need. Paul is human just like us. How did God comfort Paul?

2Co 7:6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; Cast down means to be depressed or lowly. God cannot comfort us until we are cast down. When we are cast down, we will learn the comfort of God only in that state. We will only know the God of all comfort as we are cast down. Sometimes God comforts us with no one else around such as songs in the night, but that is not always the case. God can comfort us just Himself, but God also uses others to comfort us and here he uses Titus. This is the marvel and the beauty of the body of Christ. God comforts us but, he comforted us by the coming of Titus. How many times has God used some other saint in order to comfort us? They may not even have known it. The comfort was from God but the channel was through His people. This is the way we want to be used of God. 2Co 7:7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. It wasn't just Titus' presence that comforted Paul and that was a part of it. But what comforted Paul was when Titus had gone to the Corinthians and what he saw absolutely filled him with elation. He was comforted.

He was blessed because he saw some necessary and welcomed changes in the lives of the Corinthians. That radiated in him when he came to visit Paul here. Then his words; #1 he told us your earnest desire. He told Paul that these people had an earnest desire and it really indicates an earnest desire for the truth. The #2 your mourning; if we go back 1Co 5:12 this is one great worry that the Apostle Paul had about these Corinthians. Rather than mourning, they were glorying. They did not have the right attitude for this grave situation that prevailed there in Corinth in 1Co 5. Paul reprimanded them on that and evidently, they took that and now Titus says, they were indeed in mourning. 1Co 5:12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? Then #3 your fervent mind toward me; Paul found out that the saints at Corinth really did have a desire toward him. We know there was room for improvement but there comes a time in our lives when we are looking for any encouragement that we can possibly find. It is kind of like Elijah in the time of famine when he went on top of

the mountain and put his head between his knees and he began to pray and cry out to the Lord and he sent his servant to see if he saw anything and it was the seventh time and his servant came back and said I see a cloud about the size of a man's hand and Elijah said that is enough.

That is what we are sometimes looking for just a little encouragement. We are looking for just a little glimpse that God has heard us. This is what Paul saw here in the words of Titus, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. This happened in the midst of Paul's tribulation and God does exactly the same thing in our lives. The next couple of verses are reference that Paul mention about the incestuous man in 1Co 5. 2Co 7:8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. He is talking about 1Co 5. Paul says here I do repent or I do not apologize for writing you that letter. I believe that I did not do anything wrong. It hurt me to write it. It hurt you to read it and I understand that. So I do not repent for sending it to you though I did repent. The word should rather be translated regret. Paul did not regret the writing the letter. It is like parents today when they discipline their children, they really cannot repent of doing it because it needed to be done. They just regretted because it had to be done and it does not make anyone feel good for the most part when they had to discipline someone.

Then Paul says, for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. That is exactly what the epistle needed to do. There are times when people need to feel sorry only for the season it takes to bring them to repentance. 2Co 7:9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. Paul says I don't glory in the fact that I had to make you feel so bad and to bring such conviction on you. I don't rejoice in that, but here is what I do rejoice in. That you sorrowed to repentance. That is what it was for. That was what the discipline that Paul inflicted out for the man in 1Cor 5 was for; it was to bring him to repentance. Then Paul says, for ye were made sorry after a godly manner. This is a very important statement and Paul enlarges on it in V10. There is much sorrow going on in this world today but it is not all godly sorrow. It doesn't produce any of the effects that godly sorrow produces. Then Paul says, for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. That is the beauty of bringing conviction to someone by the power of the Holy Ghost. It does not do damage to them.

It is rather the beginning of the way and the path of edification. 2Co 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. Godly sorrow is simply God's dealings in the heart to bring them to repentance. There is much sorrow in the world today but it is not all godly sorrow. Sometimes people are sorry because they are caught. Then the only way to come to real salvation and deliverance in this situation is to feel the remorse and feel the godly sorrow to the point of repentance and then God can deliver. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. You are not to be sorrowful about that kind of sorrow. Then further, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. If it is sorry just for the sake of being sorry that doesn't do a thing. This sorrow of the world can be compared to Pr 17:22 A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. The sorrow of the world actually dries up the bones. 2Co 7:11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what

revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. In other words you sorrowed for the right reasons. It was after a godly sort.

You sorrowed and realize that it was an offence to God and it needed to bring you to repentance. So there are about 7 things that were accomplished as a result of the godly sorrow. #1 what carefulness; it means what earnestness. When Paul wrote 1Co 5 there was no earnestness. They did not realize the seriousness of this. #2 what clearing of yourselves; they were cleared in the guilt and of their own responsibility here in V11. #3 what indignation; the indignation is against sin and unrighteousness and this is what I see missing in our world today. People are no longer upset with sin. They are simply ignoring it or that it even is sin. There must be an indignation or an anger against sin. # 4 what fear; that fear simply means the submission that they have unto God; the reverence of fear that they have toward Him. #5 what vehement desire; this indicates the desire or the zeal that they had for Paul and the Gospel truth. They are no longer complacent or lackadaisical in this situation. They realized that they had to act on what the Apostle Paul had said to them and they did. #6 what zeal; that means they had the zeal to carry out; they had the zeal to do what was right. They actually followed through with it. Then #7 what revenge; it means vengeance against the flesh and unrighteousness. It does not mean to pour out punishment on a person but rather the vengeance of the Lord is given the opportunity to work in our lives.

So Paul sums it up here and it closes the incident of 1Co 5. V11 In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. This is what Paul was looking for previously to show love and restore this man and evidently, they did that because he said the case is closed. In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. The Apostle Paul wrote his first epistle unto these saints to show his love for them. 2Co 7:12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. Paul didn't do this in taking sides with the person that offended or the person that was offended. He did it for righteousness sake. He did it simply because it was according to the truth and this is what we must find out in our lives. We cannot operate from a point of prejudice or of pride. **It has to be in defense of the gospel** and this exactly what Paul did. This is why he did it. But that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. Paul says I did it so you could know firsthand and full well the love that we have for you. The attitude that you had allowing this man to continue on in this way could not continue on. 2Co 7:13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. This is what brought him comfort that the Corinthians had finally come to the place where they were willing to bow to what God said to do.

The Corinthians believers had a change toward Paul. When Paul saw Titus and his whole demeanor, he was thrilled to death with what he had seen. That is the way that we do often times. It's not so much what people say, it is their entire spirit and their body language that just reflects that there really has been a change and this is what Titus brought to Paul. His spirit was refreshed by you all. Paul was comforted because the Corinthians had such a positive affect from Titus. 2Co 7:14 For if I have boasted anything to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. Paul says I bragged on you Corinthians and I will not apologize. I am not ashamed of that boast at all.

2Co 7:15 And **his inward affection** is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. They had received Titus and he was accepted of them. Paul commended Titus for his pastor's heart toward these people.

If we are going to minister to people, we really do have to make a connection with them insofar as the love of God is concerned and that is what Titus did. Notice in his inward affection which means in his inner most being, Titus felt such a strong love and concern and affection for these people. The fear and trembling does not mean they were afraid but Titus saw their submission and their reverence and acceptance of him. They did give him the respect that a minister of the gospel should be given. Paul dared not boast in the flesh concerning these saints, yet because he had laid the right foundation and had taught them the Word of God, Paul knew his work would stand. He loved and commended them for their action of righteousness. 2Co 7:16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things. Even though these Corinthians were so carnal, Paul is making every effort to commend them for that part of spirituality that he does see and this is so important in our lives. Sometimes we tend to focus on the things that are wrong rather than the things that are right. We really need to put more of a positive slant and emphasis and commend people on that which is right and not always enlarge on what is wrong. Even sometimes we see that people make such a little move to the Lord and the Gospel. We must focus on what small progress is made and not so much on what has not been made.

## **II Corinthians 8 January 29, 2026**

Paul does not beg for money or use any tactics to get money. He preaches the gospel and it is important to teach giving. This chapter 8 must be contrasted with 1Cor 9. 1Cor 9 deals with the tithe. The tithe in that chapter goes to the pastor. But the pastor is not to use all that money for his use and gratification, but he has the responsibility of taking care of the flock he is entrusted to. And he is also responsible for all the financial obligations of the meeting. Then he will be called on to meet the financial needs of people in the congregation. That is the needs of the sheep. That is what he is charged with. 1Cor 9 deals with the tithe which goes to the pastor and the gospel workers. 2Cor 8 does not go to the pastor as we have seen before. This was a special offering over and above the tithe. It is simply giving. 2Co 8:1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of **the grace** of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia. Perhaps we have never considered giving as being referred to as a grace, but that is exactly what Paul refers to here. V2 describes that grace. 2Co 8:2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves. The grace that was in these Macedonian saints, and these are the same saints as Philippian believers. When Paul wrote the epistle to the Philippians, it was written to these Macedonian believers. He wrote some of the deepest truth there is in the scripture. They were a very special people and a very poor people. The Corinthian assembly was a very rich assembly, but the Macedonian saints out gave them in percentages and actual literal amounts. The Macedonians had to give out of their poverty. So notice the description of the grace that they had. It was not an easy thing for them to give because deep poverty abounded. It was out of their own trial of affliction that they gave. Then notice, the abundance of their joy; it was not forced of them; it wasn't that someone came along and made them feel so guilty that they had to give. They had a joy about giving even though it was a great sacrifice to them. Then notice further, their deep

poverty; it wasn't just being poor, but it was deep poverty. These people as Paul says on down here, they gave beyond their power. They actually didn't have it. They also abounded which means it was quite a sum that they had come up with, kind of out of nowhere as it were.

It abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 2Co 8:3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; For to their power or as to their ability and Paul corrects that and says, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power. It was more than what they were able to afford. Then next, they were willing of themselves. It wasn't that someone forced them to do it. They were willing of themselves. Notice how far that willingness went in V4. 2Co 8:4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. Praying us means literally begging us. Not many beg me to take their money, but these literally begged Paul to take their money. Begging us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the (notice this) ministering to the saints. This is not to the work of the ministry. This is not to the gospel. This is not to the workers or to Paul. This is to the saints and of course this is that offering that they had taken for those poor Jews at Jerusalem. They wanted Paul to take this ministering to the saints. Paul wanted the saints at Corinth to know the grace of giving. Paul wanted this grace finished in those Corinthians. They did know how to give to a certain degree, but they did not have the fullness of the Spirit of Grace that these Macedonian saints did.

Again the Corinthian assembly was a very rich assembly. They actually could afford it. Paul wanted that grace finished in those Corinthians. When we are in a trial, isn't it a great comfort to know of the abundance of God's grace? We can never out give God. It is all His anyway. Jesus also explained the gift that was given out of extreme poverty in Mark 12:41-44 where this woman cast in all she had. She was poor and gave everything. This is equivalent to giving to the Lord of her whole self. She knew the Lord would keep her. Those others just gave of their extra. Mr 12:41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living. So what was the Macedonian's or Philippian saints secret of their wholehearted giving? 2Co 8:5 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.

Here is the secret of all giving, they first gave their own selves to the Lord. When we give our own selves to the Lord, then not only everything that we have but everything that we are becomes His. This is what God wants from every one of us. It doesn't make a difference whether we have a lot of money or we don't have any. God still wants us. That is the key to giving. They first gave of themselves to the Lord and then unto us. They were very compliant unto the Apostle Paul. They gave unto him too. And it was by the will of God. 2Co 8:6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. Notice that Titus had a real close affiliation with this assemble. There was a bond or a tie between them. So Paul desired Titus to come down here and to finish the work that he had already begun. It was to finish in you the same grace and that is the grace of giving. Paul wanted this to be finished or completed or perfected in the lives of these Corinthians. When he says he will finish it, the

Corinthians had only begun in this matter. Yes, they knew how to give in a certain degree but they did not have the fullness of the Spirit of Grace that these Macedonian saints did. We must first give ourselves to the Lord first. It was not an easy thing for them to give.

It was out of their own trial of affliction that they gave. When we give our own selves to the Lord, then not only everything that we have but everything that we are becomes His. This is what God wants from every one of us. It doesn't make a difference whether we have a lot of money or we don't have any. God still wants us. That is the key to giving. They first gave of themselves to the Lord and then unto us. They were very compliant unto the Apostle Paul. They gave unto him too. And it was by the will of God. There was a glorious promise given to these saints of Macedonia or Philippian saints who gave out of their poverty. Php 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. When we follow what these Macedonians did, they gave themselves unto the Lord first and then ministering to the saints. God shall supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Jesus will take care of all our needs. Note how this giving was commented by Paul in 1Co 16:17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. The word Stephanas means crowned and it speaks of those people who will be crowned with that crown of life. Fortunatus means well freighted or well loaded with the gospel. Achaicus means wailing; there really is a segment of people; part of the body of Christ that are wailers so to speak. In other words they are wailing because of the bearing of burdens.

There are some people that God has just given them this place in the body. They are burden bearers. That is why they are such prayer warriors. Many times they are weeping and wailing before the Lord because of those burdens they are bearing for one another. Then notice, that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. The Corinthians were a very rich assembly. They could have funded all of the trips of Paul's missionary journeys, but they didn't do that. But the work didn't stop. This is what we find throughout scripture. If a person does not stand up or measure up to what God wants to do, God will find someone else to do it and bless them for it. 2Co 8:7 Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. Notice how much Paul commends these people as to what they actually have. Sometimes people think they don't have any kind of gifts or blessings. But notice how Paul points out how very well off these Corinthians were in spiritual things. Notice in faith, in utterance which means they were able to speak this wonderful message that they had learned. They had this verbal testimony that they could give. Then in knowledge and that is the knowledge of the word of God.

The message of the Apostle Paul had not fallen on deaf ears. They still had a great deal of knowledge that they had learned from the Apostle Paul. Then in all diligence. They had a certain zeal for the gospel. And in your love to us. Paul could commend them in measure for the love they had to him. Then Paul says, see that ye abound in this grace also. You are lacking in the grace of giving. Remember scripture says, God so loved.... Giving is an expression of love and who is a better example of giving than God Himself. He is love. 2Co 8:8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. I speak not by commandment; Paul meant, I am not going to demand or to speak as a dictator that you do this. But #1 by occasion of the forwardness of others; Paul used the Macedonians as the example and an incentive for the Corinthians to give. Then #2 to prove the

sincerity of your love. This giving is an expression of love. The secret of giving is love. 2Co 8:9 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. Paul used Christ as the example of giving. Again he calls this giving a grace. It was the grace of giving that Jesus had.

It was, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor. Jesus had all the riches in glory that we simply cannot comprehend and yet He gave all of that up and took upon Himself utter poverty. He willing became impoverished in order that He might give of those other riches unto us. The grace of giving cost Jesus everything that He had in order that He might give His marvelous riches unto us. What is the result of Jesus Gift unto us? We are rich. 2Co 8:10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. This is all that Paul could do is give his advice. He doesn't make a decree or an order the way that some fund raisers do. But notice what Paul says here. This is expedient for you that I am not doing it for my benefit and I am not even doing it for the benefit of the saints at Jerusalem, though they could certainly use it. Remember Paul prayed in Romans that the people at Jerusalem would take the offering. You bring it up there but if they won't receive it, you haven't accomplished a thing. Paul had reservations whether they would even take the money. So Paul says I am not doing this even for the benefit of the recipients at Jerusalem. I am doing it for your benefit. It is useful for you. That means a person must learn the joy and the ministry or have the grace of giving if we are going to come to full maturity in Christ.

Then further, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago; now it has been a year since the Corinthians had promised to take up this collection or this offering for these poor saints at Jerusalem. Can you imagine if some people who have been caught in some of these tragedies such as hurricanes had to wait a year before any assistance came? These poor saints at Jerusalem still needed the funds. 2Co 8:11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. You agreed to do it a year ago now do it. Then he says, that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. Paul is telling them I want you to give of what you have. This is so important to understand God's thought in the matter of giving. There are people in our world today that try to get people to give money that they do not have. They want them to go in debt in order to give to their programs and this is not scriptural. No matter how wonderful it might sound, it is not scriptural. A few years ago there were those that came up with the term of making a faith promise. That means you are agreeing to give funds that you do not have.

Paul tells us plainly here that God tells us to give out of what we have. The key here is the Corinthians had it. When the Corinthians promised to give it they had it. 2Co 8:12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. This is the first key. They had a willing mind except after a year they hadn't done it. Then Paul says, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. We say it this way, we cannot give what we do not have. That applies not only to money but anything we have. We cannot give love that we do not have in our own heart. We cannot give peace that we do not have in our own heart. We can't give truth that we don't have in our own heart. In other words we have to have God give it to us first before we can give to others. That is what Paul is saying here, man has to give according to what he has and not according to what he

hath not and also not according to what he thinks he might get. This faith promise is really a myth that men use in order to extract funds from other people. 2Co 8:13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: Paul wasn't trying to put all the burden on them. That is not what he is saying here.

2Co 8:14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: We can contrast this with V2; The Macedonians gave out of their poverty and Paul is asking the Corinthians to give out of their abundance. 2Co 8:2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. Then notice this: Now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: This is the way God has designed it where that one time we may be the one in need and the next time we may be the one ministering to someone in need. There is an equality there to where we all actually depend upon one another. These Macedonians first gave of themselves to the Lord and then unto us. They were very compliant unto the Apostle Paul. They gave unto him too. And it was by the will of God. Pride has no place in our lives and some people are so proud they will not accept anything or any help. But when they get over their pride and accept from others the gifts that would be given to them, God then will restore.

It teaches us that we all like to be on the giving side or on the independent side or on the supply side and we don't want to be on the side of need, but God says we need to learn to receive as well as to give. If we don't have that heart God will fix it to where we will have to be. This is what Paul is talking about an equality where we minister one to another and not just in money but in many things. That is the way God designed the body and that is the way He wants the body of Christ to function. Your abundance will supply their need but there may be a time when their abundance will supply your need. 2Co 8:6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. Notice that Titus had a real close affiliation with this assemble. There was a bond or a tie between them. So Paul desire Titus to come down here and to finish the work that he had already begun. It was to finish in you the same grace and that is the grace of giving and Paul wanted this to be finished or completed or perfected in the lives of these Corinthians. When he says he will finish it, the Corinthians had only begun in this matter. Yes, they knew how to give in a certain degree but they did not have the fullness of the Spirit of Grace that these Macedonian saints did.

2Co 8:15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack. It is the principal of the manna. The principals that God gave to Israel concerning the manna are to be applied directly to money. The way that Israel conducted themselves in gathering the manna, the same thing applies. 2Co 8:16 But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. Paul continues to commend Titus for his tremendous effort to the Corinthian saints in bringing them to maturity and this time he is especially talking about this grace of giving. 2Co 8:17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. Titus accepted Paul's exhortation to go to Corinth and he abided by that and went. Then, but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. It was Titus's own desire to go down to Corinth and not just at Paul's

prompting. It was because of Titus's own love for the Corinthians that he went down to Corinth. 2Co 8:18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;

This is an unidentified brother and his name was not even mentioned but he was a very faithful man in matters regarding money. He was undoubtedly a very trusting and worthy fellow. He might have had some way of transporting the money. They didn't have Brinks and there was just as much trouble with highway robbery and such. So it was money that had to be protected so perhaps this fellow was gifted in that way. 2Co 8:19 And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:\*\*\* This unidentified brother had a wide known reputation in this area and so the churches actually chose him to travel with us with this grace, or with this gift. It must have been a large sum of money. Then Paul says, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: For these Corinthians it comes back as a testimony of the grace of God that is in you, the declaration of your own ready mind which is for us as well. The end result of our giving is we give to the glory of God. 2Co 8:20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: He wanted to be free from all blame, that he be not accused of misusing funds. Because it must have been a very large sum of money. If you want to bring out greed or the worst in people, just give them a whole lot of money, then you find out how honest they are.

So Paul says here because this was such a large sum of money, then we wanted to be absolutely blameless in the accounting of it. That is why this one brother was chosen because it seems he had such expertise in that area and he was so honest in that area. Paul did not want the gospel to be blamed at all. 2Co 8:21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. We are living our lives before men. We also have to have an honest testimony before men if we are going to have any kind of a chance to minister the gospel to them. We must appear honest and be honest. 2Co 8:22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. Paul says of this unidentified brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things. He must have had a tremendous reputation in this regard. He was really trust worthy and people knew about him. Then here is where Paul implants a thought in them. He has been telling them and exhorting them to get this money together. So he is actually planting the idea that it is going to be a large sum of money and because of what he says here.

He is often proved diligent in many things but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. I have this confidence in you that you are going to put together this lavish offering that you promised a year ago. 2Co 8:23 Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. Once again Paul commends Titus that he is absolutely confident of this minister of the gospel Titus. He says, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of (this unidentified brother) they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. They came with the highest accommodations and honor from the Apostle Paul.

2Co 8:24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf. The proof of your love is to give this money that you promised to give over a year ago. Then, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf. In other words his final parting words in this matter is saying you Corinthians, don't disappoint me because I have already bragged about you to these people and it should be a great sum of money that is collected for these poor saints at Jerusalem.

## **II Corinthians 9 February 5, 2026**

Paul devoted two entire chapters just to money and Chapter 9 is another one of those chapters. It is a very important part of our experience. Though Paul had previously instructed the Corinthian saints in the matter of giving, he thought it advisable to further warn them because they had not been faithful to give. 2Co 9:1 For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: He mentions this in Romans 15:25, 26. We see it in 1Cor 16: 1-3 and 2 Cor 8:10-11 and they are all talking about the same thing. It is this offering that they were gathering up to go to Jerusalem. Superfluous means needless or there is no need for me to write to you. In other words, I am not going to try to convince you of the need. It is needless for me to write and try to explain this need to you anymore. Instead these next verses concentrate on the benefit of a cheerful giver. People in this world concentrate on making you feel guilty about a certain need and they hold that need up before you and they come from all directions; telephone calls, emails and the like constantly telling you their need. Paul says it is needless for him to write to them about the need, but what he is going to do is point out the benefits of a cheerful giver.

2Co 9:2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. So he says, I know that you purposed it in your mind before. You made a mental ascent or a mental commitment. He bragged on them to the Macedonians, that Achaia which is Corinth was ready a year ago, and your zeal hath provoked very many. This is another thing concerning giving and that is what these fund raisers know. If they can get one to give; well that is an incentive for others to give. Then you here things like who will match this. This is matching funds. It is a part of human nature that when one does it then there is an incentive for others to do it and these fund raisers know that. They play on this. Paul simply says here that your zeal hath provoked very many. 2Co 9:3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: What Paul is saying is that he has sent an entourage of people down here ahead of time to be sure this money is put together. 2Co 9:4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

Some of these Macedonian saints were coming with Paul and Paul had bragged about these Corinthians having all this money. If we come down there and these people come down there with me and you don't have this money together then he says, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed. Somebody is going to be embarrassed and it is going to be you. If we come down there and this money is not altogether the way that you said and the way that I have already testified that it would be, you would be ashamed in the same confident boasting. 2Co 9:5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, (or your gift) whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, (or gift) and not as of covetousness. Paul is saying that he thought it

wise that he sent these others down ahead of us to make sure that all of this money was in order before the rest of the group ever gets there. Moffat puts this last phrase; that it might be ready, as a matter of bounty, (or gift) and not as of covetousness. Moffat says it this way. Forth coming as a generous gift and not as money wrung out of you. That's what Paul wanted; generous givers.

He said, I am not just interested in getting the dollar at all cost, but I want it to appear this way; that it is forth coming as a generous gift and not as somebody coming down there and twisting your arm or wringing it out of you. So that is what is meant by; not as a matter of covetousness. Or having the wrong desire or attitude or for the wrong reason. 2Co 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; Paul is talking about money and this is a principal of the word of God. If you want a bountiful harvest then sow a lot of the scripture in your own heart as well in others. So Paul puts this in context with money. Every farmer knows that if you sow bountifully, you will reap bountifully. This is God's principal. You cannot sow a little bit of grain and expect you will have a real bountiful harvest. It comes in proportion as to how much you have sown. Now there is always much more that comes forth from what you sow, but a bountiful harvest depends on a bountiful sowing and that is what Paul is talking about.

2Co 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. This is the secret; according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give. It is the attitude of the heart. Again this offering is not referring to the tithe. The tithe belongs to God. That is the first fruit that goes to God. Paul is talking about giving above and beyond as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly. In other words give it but not hanging on as long as you can and thinking why should I or why did I do that. And saying I hope I get this back and so forth. That is grudgingly and we don't give that way. Instead of giving it grudgingly, we give it joyfully. That is exactly what the Macedonians did. Then he further says, not of necessity or because someone is expecting you to give; or because someone will think evil of him or bad of him if doesn't give. Or as if he is depending upon the opinions of other people. God loves a cheerful giver. That word cheerful means hilarious and God loves a hilarious giver. This is a person that is made happy to give. It is the attitude of the heart.

But notice, so often when people get into trouble, they like to claim verse 8. 2Co 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: But what is important to realize is this verse is a direct result of verse 7. When we are a cheerful giver, then God is able to make all grace abound toward you. Then notice the fullness or the completeness of this verse. It is all grace! It is always all grace! It is all sufficiency! It is in all things! It is to every good work! See the fullness of that. Whenever we give unto the Lord like the Macedonian saints and commit ourselves unto the Lord, these verses take on such a reality and practicality in our own experience. God is able to make all grace; there are volumes in that little phrase because all grace goes far, far beyond all money. Money is only one little minute portion of the grace of God that He gives to us. He says, God will make all grace. It means all grace for every part of our individual life and experience. There is no way that we can fully define or explore all of the grace of God. Yet he says, he will make all grace for every part of our lives abound toward you; that you, always (not here a little or for

one time, but always. It is every time) having all sufficiency (no lack to the grace of God; to the need that God is able to supply in our lives. It is all sufficiency) in all things, (then that you ) may abound to every good work: Every good work that God has ordained for us then He supplies that sufficiency for us.

2Co 9:9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever. Paul quotes the Old Testament. He hath dispersed abroad. This “he” is not God. We go back to Psalm 112 where this verse is taken. The “he” refers to the good man. It refers to the godly man, the righteous man. So notice this godly righteous man has dispersed abroad. He has been a giver. He has been a cheerful giver, the way Paul spoke of here.

Ps 112:9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour. He hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever. So notice giving is an expression of righteousness. It is an outward sign; and outward expression of the righteousness which God has planted within our hearts. Then notice, he has given to the poor. Why did he give to the poor? Because when you give to the poor, you give to someone who is not going to give it back, because they can't. If you want to really give, give to someone who is not going to try and pay you back. Many gifts that are given in this world are given with the idea that one day you are going to give it back to me. But to the poor, he can't pay you back.

2Co 9:10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; Now He: This He refers to God. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower: this is what we have to realize. There are four things in this verse that we must notice. #1 He ministers seed. Whether that seed is money, or whether it is the word of God, or whether it is seeds of kindness or seeds of love; no matter what it is, we must realize that the seed came from God. Then #2 both minister bread for your food. As we minister the seeds, and as we sow, God is still ministering to our needs; God is still giving us our daily bread. We didn't sacrifice ours so that now we don't have any. No! When we give to others, God ministers bread for our food. #3 and multiply your seed sown. This is the beauty of what God can do. This is what Paul is teaching the Corinthians and us. We take what God gives to us and when we give it, God multiplies it. God multiplies the seed which we sow. It may be money or any of the other seeds we mentioned. #4 He increases the fruits of your righteousness. All of this comes right back and it is added to our spiritual account. It is that account of righteousness that we have before the Lord.

Our circumstances never hinder God from His work within us. God is not just capable. His power actually operates best when human circumstances are at their worst. Paul's perspective isn't just theoretical. He wrote many of these insights while literally chained in prison. Here is how he characterizes God's ability in relation to our difficulties. Eph 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Paul describes God whose capacity doesn't just meet our needs but dwarfs our imagination. In 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Paul struggled with a thorn in the flesh which is described as a severe personal difficulty. He asked God to remove it. God's response redefined Paul's understanding of difficulty. God said, My power is made perfect in weakness. Then Paul concludes that he will boast in his hardships, because when he is humanly hindered or weak, God's power is most visible. Then in Romans 8 is God's sovereignty or power and authority over

circumstances. There Paul says that circumstances (no matter how dire) are never a barrier to God's ultimate purpose. He lists the potential hindrances; tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword. Paul. Says by his experience there is no separation. None of these things can separate us from God's love. God doesn't just get around bad circumstances. He works through them.

In Romans 5, Paul says that if God was able to reconcile us while we were enemies which is the hardest possible circumstance, how much more is He able to save and sustain us now that we are His friends. To Paul, the difficulty of a situation is irrelevant because God's grace is always Grace! When Paul was under house arrest in Rome (roughly AD 60–62), he was in a situation that should have, by all logic, ended his life. He was awaiting a trial before Nero, chained to a Roman soldier 24/7, and unable to travel. Instead of seeing a hindered God, Paul used this time to prove that God's ability is actually strengthened by restriction. Here is how he applied his thoughts to those famous chains. In Philippians 1:12-13, Paul writes something shocking to his friends. What has happened to me has actually served to advance the Gospel. Paul was chained to a member of the Praetorian Guard (the elite imperial guard). Every six hours, a new soldier was rotated in. Paul didn't see himself as a prisoner of Rome; he saw the guards as a captive audience. By the time he wrote to the Philippians, he could say the Gospel had become known throughout the whole imperial guard. God's ability wasn't hindered by the walls of a prison. The walls actually provided Paul with direct access to the highest levels of the Roman government.

These were people he never could have reached as a free traveling preacher. Paul noticed that God's power works even through poison. When he remained joyful and bold in prison, it had an effect on the local church in Rome. Php 1:14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Paul realized that God uses the difficulty of one person to fuel the bravery of many. His physical limitation became a spiritual incentive for a city-wide movement. In his final letter, written from a much harsher Roman dungeon (the Mamertine Prison), Paul offered his ultimate conclusion on God's ability versus human difficulty. 2Ti 2:9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Paul's application was simple. You can chain the messenger, but you cannot chain the Message. Paul knew that God's ability is independent of the physical state of His servants. While Paul sat in the dark dungeon, his letters (the Prison Epistles) were traveling across the entire empire, doing more work than his feet ever could. Paul's experience in Rome taught that God's power is like a river. When you put a dam or a difficulty in its way, the water doesn't stop. It just builds up pressure and finds a new way to flow, and often a more powerful way to flow. That is what the word of God will do.

2Co 9:11 Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. The gifts are given to benefit men. They are given to those poor people in Jerusalem. But notice the end result that God wants and what Paul is talking about here, it causes through us thanksgiving to God. That is exactly what should happen when needs are met then it should prompt a wonderful praise and adoration and glory to God. Giving brings glory to God. It supplies the need, provokes Thanksgiving to God, shows a good testimony, provokes prayer for the giver. 2Co 9:12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; God is the ultimate one that receives the glory and the bounty. Notice further in 2Co 9:13 Whiles by the experiment of this

ministration (or the proof or the evidence of this money) they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, #1(they glorify God for your attitude and what they see in your life or what is manifest in your experience. They see the gospel message worked out in your life of a cheerful giver) and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men.

2Co 9:14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. #2 And by their prayer for you; this becomes a tremendous order for us. If we have benefited from anyone; it might be money or in services, or in encouragement or anything. Whatever benefit that we have received from other people. Then it is our responsibility to pray for them. So by their prayer for you. It is incumbent upon us to pray for those who give any kind of gift to us regardless of what it might be. But notice further, which long after you. #3 When people give a gift to someone else then the giver and the receiver actually develop a bond between them. They have something common, something that ties them together. That is what Paul is talking about here. By their prayer for you, which long after you. There is a love and an affection aroused in both of them, the giver and the receiver. Long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. #4 They have seen the grace of God because it has been manifested in a practical way through these people. Grace is not just a term or a definition of something. Grace is something tangible here in this gift to them. That is the exceeding grace of God in you. And ultimately it brings us to verse 15.

2Co 9:15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. All gifts are because of God's gift to us, which is His Son and everything is tied up in Him. Whatever we receive through other people is of Christ. Everything we receive is of Christ. Jesus Christ is God's unspeakable Gift. Why is He called Unspeakable? The original Greek word used literally means something that cannot be fully related or described. While many things can be explained with words, theologians and scholars generally agree that this gift is considered unspeakable for several reasons. It represents the Son of God taking on human form (the Incarnation). The idea of the infinite Creator becoming a finite creature is a mystery beyond full human comprehension. It highlights God's sacrificial love in giving His only Son to save humanity. The gift includes everything that comes through Christ; salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and the promise of eternal life. In this chapter, the Apostle Paul was encouraging the people of Corinth to be generous and cheerful givers. But he concludes by pointing that God is the ultimate "Cheerful Giver," whose gift of Christ is so massive that human generosity, while good, can never truly compare.

The unspeakable gift is the culmination of two chapters (2 Corinthians 8 and 9) where Paul is teaching about human generosity. He is encouraging the church to give to those in need, but then he suddenly shifts the focus to God's giving. The Gift of Jesus is so vast that it makes all human efforts look like a drop in the ocean. Paul really says, I've been talking about your gifts, but let's talk about the Gift that is beyond words. 2Co 8:9 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. Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Romans 8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? The Gift of God isn't earned. It is Infinite. We can count the money in a collection plate, but we cannot count the depth of the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8). The gift of God, Jesus Christ doesn't just improve a person's life. He,

the Gift, changes our eternal destiny from death to life. This isn't a gift from one man to another, but from the Creator to the creature. Do you remember the phrase, "given unto man." Galatians 2:20, stating Christ loved me and gave himself for me. This focusses the direction of the grace. It is from the highest point of heaven to the lowliest state of humanity. Grace originates with God and descends from above (James 1:17) to humanity.

It is God reaching down to those who cannot reach up to Him. Visualize for a moment how grace moves in the shape of the cross, we look at the vertical beam. It is the relationship between God and humanity and Jesus Christ being the center. Then the horizontal beam, Grace is the relationship between human beings. The cross isn't just a symbol of sacrifice; it is a geographic map of how grace operates. The vertical beam represents the descent of God's love and the descent of man's reconciliation and understanding. Grace begins at the top. It is God bending down to reach a world that cannot reach Him. Paul explains it in Php 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Also in John 1:14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth. Because of the vertical work of the cross, the way up is opened. Grace allows humanity to stand before God because of Christ. As Paul says in Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Then the Horizontal Beam is Man and Neighbor.

The horizontal beam of the cross represents the extension of grace. Once grace hits the center or the heart of the believer, it must travel outward to the left and right. Who is in the center, Christ! It is the outward expression of Grace that is received vertically and it must be distributed horizontally. It is the Ministry of Reconciliation. If it doesn't move horizontally, it stagnates. That is why Paul says in Col 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. The horizontal beam of the cross points in opposite directions, symbolizing that grace is for everyone, regardless of their background. It reaches to the ends of the earth. A good scripture that Paul tells us is in Ephesians 2:14: For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. The intersection or the point where the vertical and horizontal beams meet is the Heart. This is where the "Unspeakable Gift" resides, pulling the believer upward toward God and pushing them outward toward our neighbor. Where the vertical and horizontal beams of the cross meet is the Heart. This is where the "Unspeakable Gift" resides. This where grace and truth met. This is Christ! Grace and Truth meet in the person of Jesus Christ. John identifies Jesus as the location where these two forces converge. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Truth represents the vertical standard of God. His holiness, His law, and the true reality of our condition. Grace represents the horizontal reach of God; His mercy, His forgiveness, and His desire to be with us. In the Old Testament, there is a beautiful, prophetic verse in Ps 85:10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. This happened at the cross. This describes the exact moment at the heart of the cross where mercy and truth are met together; and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Without the cross, Truth would demand judgment, and Grace might seem to ignore justice. At the intersection (the Heart), Christ satisfies both. He upholds Truth by paying the price Himself for sin. He extends Grace by offering the payment of Himself to us as a Gift. The Unspeakable Gift resides there. The vertical

(Divine) and the horizontal (Human) are joined in one person Jesus Christ. This is why it is Unspeakable, because the finite (man) and the infinite (God) meet at a single point at the heart of the Lord Jesus. It was at the Heart of Christ. When the Unspeakable Gift dwells in a person's heart, that person becomes a new intersection where God's truth and God's grace are visible to the world.

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2Co 9:9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever. Paul quotes the Old Testament. He hath dispersed abroad. This “he” is not God. We go back to Psalm 112 where this verse is taken. The “he” refers to the good man. It refers to the godly man, the righteous man. So notice this godly righteous man has dispersed abroad. He has been a giver. He has been a cheerful giver, the way Paul spoke of here.

Ps 112:9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour. He hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever. So notice giving is an expression of righteousness. It is an outward sign; and outward expression of the righteousness which God has planted within our hearts. Then notice, he has given to the poor. Why did he give to the poor? Because when you give to the poor, you give to someone who is not going to give it back, because they can't. If you want to really give, give to someone who is not going to try and pay you back. Many gifts that are given in this world are given with the idea that one day you are going to give it back to me. But to the poor, he can't pay you back.

2Co 9:10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; Now He: This He refers to God. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower: this is what we have to realize. There are four things in this verse that we must notice. #1 He ministers seed. Whether that seed is money, or whether it is the word of God, or whether it is seeds of kindness or seeds of love; no matter what it is, we must realize that the seed came from God. Then #2 both minister bread for your food. As we minister the seeds, and as we sow, God is still ministering to our needs; God is still giving us our daily bread. We didn't sacrifice ours so that now we don't have any. No! When we give to others, God ministers bread for our food. #3 and multiply your seed sown. This is the beauty of what God can do. This is what Paul is teaching the Corinthians and us. We take what God gives to us and when we give it, God multiplies it. God multiplies the seed which we sow. It may be money or any of the other seeds we mentioned. #4 He increases the fruits of your righteousness. All of this comes right back and it is added to our spiritual account. It is that account of righteousness that we have before the Lord.

Our circumstances never hinder God from His work within us. God is not just capable. His power actually operates best when human circumstances are at their worst. Paul's perspective isn't just theoretical. He wrote many of these insights while literally chained in prison. Here is how he characterizes God's ability in relation to our difficulties. Eph 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Paul describes God whose capacity doesn't just meet our needs but dwarfs our imagination. In 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Paul struggled with a thorn in the flesh which is described as a severe personal difficulty. He asked God to remove it. God's response redefined Paul's understanding of difficulty. God said, My power is made perfect in weakness. Then Paul concludes that he will boast in his hardships, because when he is humanly hindered or weak, God's power is most visible. Then in Romans 8 is God's sovereignty or power and authority over circumstances. There Paul says that circumstances (no matter how dire) are never a barrier to

God's ultimate purpose. He lists the potential hindrances; tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword. Paul. Says by his experience there is no separation. None of these things can separate us from God's love. God doesn't just get around bad circumstances. He works through them.

In Romans 5, Paul says that if God was able to reconcile us while we were enemies which is the hardest possible circumstance, how much more is He able to save and sustain us now that we are His friends. To Paul, the difficulty of a situation is irrelevant because God's grace is always Grace! When Paul was under house arrest in Rome (roughly AD 60–62), he was in a situation that should have, by all logic, ended his life. He was awaiting a trial before Nero, chained to a Roman soldier 24/7, and unable to travel. Instead of seeing a hindered God, Paul used this time to prove that God's ability is actually strengthened by restriction. Here is how he applied his thoughts to those famous chains. In Philippians 1:12-13, Paul writes something shocking to his friends. What has happened to me has actually served to advance the Gospel. Paul was chained to a member of the Praetorian Guard (the elite imperial guard). Every six hours, a new soldier was rotated in. Paul didn't see himself as a prisoner of Rome; he saw the guards as a captive audience. By the time he wrote to the Philippians, he could say the Gospel had become known throughout the whole imperial guard. God's ability wasn't hindered by the walls of a prison. The walls actually provided Paul with direct access to the highest levels of the Roman government.

These were people he never could have reached as a free traveling preacher. Paul noticed that God's power works even through poison. When he remained joyful and bold in prison, it had an effect on the local church in Rome. Php 1:14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Paul realized that God uses the difficulty of one person to fuel the bravery of many. His physical limitation became a spiritual incentive for a city-wide movement. In his final letter, written from a much harsher Roman dungeon (the Mamertine Prison), Paul offered his ultimate conclusion on God's ability versus human difficulty. 2Ti 2:9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Paul's application was simple. You can chain the messenger, but you cannot chain the Message. Paul knew that God's ability is independent of the physical state of His servants. While Paul sat in the dark dungeon, his letters (the Prison Epistles) were traveling across the entire empire, doing more work than his feet ever could. Paul's experience in Rome taught that God's power is like a river. When you put a dam or a difficulty in its way, the water doesn't stop. It just builds up pressure and finds a new way to flow, and often a more powerful way to flow. That is what the word of God will do.

2Co 9:11 Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. The gifts are given to benefit men. They are given to those poor people in Jerusalem. But notice the end result that God wants and what Paul is talking about here, it causes through us thanksgiving to God. That is exactly what should happen when needs are met then it should prompt a wonderful praise and adoration and glory to God. Giving brings glory to God. It supplies the need, provokes Thanksgiving to God, shows a good testimony, provokes prayer for the giver. 2Co 9:12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; God is the ultimate one that receives the glory and the bounty. Notice further in 2Co 9:13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration (or the proof or the evidence of this money) they glorify God for your professed

subjection unto the gospel of Christ, #1(they glorify God for your attitude and what they see in your life or what is manifest in your experience. They see the gospel message worked out in your life of a cheerful giver) and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men.

2Co 9:14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. #2 And by their prayer for you; this becomes a tremendous order for us. If we have benefited from anyone; it might be money or in services, or in encouragement or anything. Whatever benefit that we have received from other people. Then it is our responsibility to pray for them. So by their prayer for you. It is incumbent upon us to pray for those who give any kind of gift to us regardless of what it might be. But notice further, which long after you. #3 When people give a gift to someone else then the giver and the receiver actually develop a bond between them. They have something common, something that ties them together. That is what Paul is talking about here. By their prayer for you, which long after you. There is a love and an affection aroused in both of them, the giver and the receiver. Long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. #4 They have seen the grace of God because it has been manifested in a practical way through these people. Grace is not just a term or a definition of something. Grace is something tangible here in this gift to them. That is the exceeding grace of God in you. And ultimately it brings us to verse 15.

2Co 9:15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. All gifts are because of God's gift to us, which is His Son and everything is tied up in Him. Whatever we receive through other people is of Christ. Everything we receive is of Christ. Jesus Christ is God's unspeakable Gift. Why is He called Unspeakable? The original Greek word used literally means something that cannot be fully related or described. While many things can be explained with words, theologians and scholars generally agree that this gift is considered unspeakable for several reasons. It represents the Son of God taking on human form (the Incarnation). The idea of the infinite Creator becoming a finite creature is a mystery beyond full human comprehension. It highlights God's sacrificial love in giving His only Son to save humanity. The gift includes everything that comes through Christ; salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and the promise of eternal life. In this chapter, the Apostle Paul was encouraging the people of Corinth to be generous and cheerful givers. But he concludes by pointing that God is the ultimate "Cheerful Giver," whose gift of Christ is so massive that human generosity, while good, can never truly compare.

The unspeakable gift is the culmination of two chapters (2 Corinthians 8 and 9) where Paul is teaching about human generosity. He is encouraging the church to give to those in need, but then he suddenly shifts the focus to God's giving. The Gift of Jesus is so vast that it makes all human efforts look like a drop in the ocean. Paul really says, I've been talking about your gifts, but let's talk about the Gift that is beyond words. 2Co 8:9 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. Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Romans 8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? The Gift of God isn't earned. It is Infinite. We can count the money in a collection plate, but we cannot count the depth of the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8). The gift of God, Jesus Christ doesn't just improve a person's life. He, the Gift, changes our eternal destiny from death to life. This isn't a gift from one man to another, but from the Creator to the creature. Do you remember the phrase, "given unto man." Galatians

2:20, stating Christ loved me and gave himself for me. This focusses the direction of the grace. It is from the highest point of heaven to the lowliest state of humanity. Grace originates with God and descends from above (James 1:17) to humanity.

It is God reaching down to those who cannot reach up to Him. Visualize for a moment how grace moves in the shape of the cross, we look at the vertical beam. It is the relationship between God and humanity and Jesus Christ being the center. Then the horizontal beam, Grace is the relationship between human beings. The cross isn't just a symbol of sacrifice; it is a geographic map of how grace operates. The vertical beam represents the descent of God's love and the descent of man's reconciliation and understanding. Grace begins at the top. It is God bending down to reach a world that cannot reach Him. Paul explains it in Php 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Also in John 1:14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth. Because of the vertical work of the cross, the way up is opened. Grace allows humanity to stand before God because of Christ. As Paul says in Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Then the Horizontal Beam is Man and Neighbor.

The horizontal beam of the cross represents the extension of grace. Once grace hits the center or the heart of the believer, it must travel outward to the left and right. Who is in the center, Christ! It is the outward expression of Grace that is received vertically and it must be distributed horizontally. It is the Ministry of Reconciliation. If it doesn't move horizontally, it stagnates. That is why Paul says in Col 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. The horizontal beam of the cross points in opposite directions, symbolizing that grace is for everyone, regardless of their background. It reaches to the ends of the earth. A good scripture that Paul tells us is in Ephesians 2:14: For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. The intersection or the point where the vertical and horizontal beams meet is the Heart. This is where the "Unspeakable Gift" resides, pulling the believer upward toward God and pushing them outward toward our neighbor. Where the vertical and horizontal beams of the cross meet is the Heart. This is where the "Unspeakable Gift" resides. This where grace and truth met. This is Christ! Grace and Truth meet in the person of Jesus Christ. John identifies Jesus as the location where these two forces converge. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Truth represents the vertical standard of God. His holiness, His law, and the true reality of our condition. Grace represents the horizontal reach of God; His mercy, His forgiveness, and His desire to be with us. In the Old Testament, there is a beautiful, prophetic verse in Ps 85:10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. This happened at the cross. This describes the exact moment at the heart of the cross where mercy and truth are met together; and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Without the cross, Truth would demand judgment, and Grace might seem to ignore justice. At the intersection (the Heart), Christ satisfies both. He upholds Truth by paying the price Himself for sin. He extends Grace by offering the payment of Himself to us as a Gift. The Unspeakable Gift resides there. The vertical (Divine) and the horizontal (Human) are joined in one person Jesus Christ. This is why it is Unspeakable, because the finite (man) and the infinite (God) meet at a single point at the heart of

the Lord Jesus. It was at the Heart of Christ. When the Unspeakable Gift dwells in a person's heart, that person becomes a new intersection where God's truth and God's grace are visible to the world.

## **II Corinthians 11:1-17 February 19, 2026**

2Co 11:1 Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: (folly or foolishness) and indeed bear with me. Paul's folly was announcing the truth of the bride of Christ. Today that same subject is still counted a little bit foolish because there are those who do not understand what Paul is saying. The majority of the Church teaches that the whole Church is going to be the bride of Christ. The Apostle Paul tells us here as well as many other places that is not true. 2Co 11:2 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. Espoused means engaged. Paul engaged the Church as a whole unto Christ. As we know today, engagements don't always result in marriage. There are many engagements that are broken. Just because there is an engagement does not mean there is going to be a wedding. Likewise Paul did indeed engage or espouse the Church as a whole unto Christ, but all of the Church is not going to answer that call. Here is the first reason they do not answer that call. Paul says, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. The fact of the matter is that the Church as a whole is not a chaste virgin. One question comes to mind.

Why does Paul teach this here to the Corinthian Church? It seems that this should be taught to more mature saints. The Corinthian church was, to put it mildly, a bit of a train wreck. They were dealing with division, sexual immorality, and intellectual pride. Yet, Paul chooses this moment to use the image of an espousal. The false apostles were trying to woo the Corinthians away. Paul uses the marriage metaphor to frame these false teachers not just as wrong, but as adulterers or homewreckers. Paul's folly is his concern that the bride is being corrupted before the wedding day. And not everyone in the engaged Church makes it in the bride. Paul's use of the term chaste virgin, it implies a process of sanctification and overcoming. These false teachers have come in to destroy what Paul was building with the Gospel. Paul isn't teaching the Bridehood as a reward or a crown for their study; he's using it as a standard for their conduct. He's essentially saying: How can you listen to these false teachers when you have been promised to the King of Kings? You are throwing away your dowry! It's less of a classroom lecture and more of a desperate plea from a father seeing his daughter flirt with disaster.

To understand why Paul used such language for a struggling church, we have to look at the fine print. He wasn't just using a metaphor; he was using legal and sacrificial language to show that the nearness to Christ being in the Church is not the same as mature readiness to be in the Bride of Christ. The Corinthians were bought by the blood of Christ's and He had Paul bring them the Gospel. The gap between the engagement and the wedding was the testing period. Paul's folly or fear in 2 Corinthians 11:3 is that the church is failing the background check before the wedding day even arrives. In 2 Corinthians 11:2, Paul uses the word **present**. I may **present** you as a chaste virgin to Christ. This word literally means **to place beside** or **to present**. This is term used in in the New Testament was to bring them before a magistrate to be examined or to give an account. Paul warns the engaged Church that their faithfulness will be inspected. 2 Timothy 2:15: Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Paul is the one who wants to present the Corinthians as submissive

with the terms of the engagement. If they are found ashamed (unapproved), they fail the inspection. Then there is the Sacrificial placing of an offering on an altar to see if it is without blemish. Paul uses this language when he says, Chaste Virgin. In the Old Testament, a priest could not present just any animal; it had to be without blemish.

Paul applies this same picture to the believers bodies and conduct. Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present** your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Then Eph 5:27 That he might **present** it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. This **presenting** is pictured as the altar and the sacrifice without blemish. Paul's godly jealousy is that of a priest. He is desiring that the Corinthians' old life be slain and now wants to present them on the altar of the wedding day as a pure sacrifice, not a corrupted one. But they would not make that choice. They chose the false teachers. Paul wanted to bring them into the presence of the King. Paul uses this same word in Colossians 1:22 To **present** you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight. The folly that Paul speaks of is his desire to even present us to Christ. For Paul, the Church is the field, but the Bride is the harvest. Paul is terrified that the Corinthians, by following false teachers, will be presented but found blemished. It would be like a sacrifice that the priest rejects at the altar. Note the Seven Letters to the Churches in Revelation 2 and 3.

In those chapters, Jesus addresses the Church or the engaged body, but he makes specific promises only to him that overcometh. That is the Chaste Virgin company of the Bride. The Requirement of Garments in the old Testament was that the bride was responsible for her own wedding garment. This is reflected in Revelation 19:7-8: For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Note: The righteousness here in Greek is means righteous acts. This isn't just the imputed righteousness of faith; it is the lived-out faithfulness of the believer. Revelation also teaches that while the invitation is corporate, the marriage is conditional upon fidelity. So, why tell this to the immature Corinthians? Paul brings this up in 2 Corinthians 11 because the so-called super-apostles (the false teachers) were offering a cheap version of Christianity that didn't require the simplicity that is in Christ (11:3). Paul is telling the Corinthians: You think you are safe because you are engaged, but I am jealous because I see you losing your wedding garments. Simplicity doesn't mean easy or basic; it means singleness, sincerity, and honesty.

It is the opposite of being double-minded. In the context of the Bride, the simplicity is undivided loyalty to one Husband. Mt 6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be **single**, thy whole body shall be full of light. **Single** is the root of simplicity. It is a stern teaching intended to produce godly sorrow and a return to holiness. Paul began 1 Corinthians by announcing that they had taken one head after another. Some say I am of Paul; I am of Apollos; I am of Cephas; I am this and that one. There is only one head of the Church which is Christ. If men do not have this one head they are not virgin in character. The Church today is trying to be like the world and they are following the path of the world. The things that work in the world they have tried to transmit them over into the ways of the Church. God never did intend for that to happen. God intended for the Church to be a heavenly body and yet the Church as a whole is not that way today. Therefore we cannot say that the Church is of virgin character. But the

woman that will be presented to Christ is going to be an absolute virgin. The Church as a whole today often operates as a visible institution rather than a spiritual body. Because visible institutions rely on human heads, denominations, celebrity pastors, or specific traditions. The subtlety of the serpent is often just the substitution of man's methods for God's patterns.

In the Bible, God is a God of precise patterns. We see that in the building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. When man tries to improve or modernize those patterns with worldly traditions, it results in the corruption of the simplicity that is in Christ. When God gave the instructions for the Tabernacle, He was not giving suggestions; He was giving a heavenly blueprint. The Problem Today is that the Church works on what works best. But in the Tabernacle, even the oil and incense had a specific formula that could not be imitated (Exodus 30:32-33). If man tried to invent his own version of the holy oil, he was cut off. When the Church adopts worldly methods like the false teachers in Corinth, they make the power of the Cross of none effect (1 Cor 1:17). Paul argued that if he used the world's wisdom, the faith of the people would stand in the wisdom of men rather than the power of God. Just as Israel built a golden calf to represent God who had just delivered them, modern religious systems often build golden calves, thinking they are serving God while actually violating His blueprint. God's blueprint requires a come out from among them and be ye separate lifestyle. Trying to fit God into our ways is the definition of idolatry. The Bride's only job is to yield.

As Mary said at the wedding in Cana: Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it (John 2:5). That is the only way to get the new wine. Man has been wrong so many times from the very beginning. Even when the Church adopts the way man handles marriage is contrary to the ways of God. When man started something way back in the past, he added to it down through the ages without God. When that happens it is corrupt. But the Church takes those things invented without God and tries to again fit them into God's blueprint. It will never work. God does not patch or fix man's inventions. In the scriptures, God always demands a complete return to the Original Pattern. When the Church takes a corrupted human system (like the modern concept of marriage, leadership, or worship and tries to Christianize it, they are putting new wine into old bottles, and the bottles eventually break. Mt 9:17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. If the foundation is built on man's added traditions rather than God's from the beginning Word, the house cannot stand. God forbids mixing two different systems. You cannot take the seed of man's inventions and mix it with the Seed of the Holy Spirit. If it is contrary to God's Blueprint it will not stand.

The Church is wearing the garments of another system. When the Church tries to fit God into man's way, they produce a hybrid that has no life-giving power. It might look like a church, but it cannot produce the Chaste Virgin Paul spoke of. Paul's folly was his refusal to use the old customs of Israel which got them in trouble in the first place. He wasn't going to even use their customs in marriage. He insisted on the simplicity of the Cross, even if it looked foolish to the world and the Church. If the Church is found clinging to Apollos or another head, it doesn't meet the criteria of being a chaste virgin because its heart is divided. The woman that will be presented to Christ is going to be an absolute virgin and mature in virgin character. This is the character that God will work in us. It will not be in the Church as a whole, but it most certainly can be in our lives if we will believe God for it and indeed establish Him as the Head in our own

experience. Paul is telling us here that the Church as a whole is doing exactly the same thing that Adam's wife Eve did. Notice, I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve. What actually happened in the Garden of Eden? Eve denied the headship of her husband.

When Satan came to her and he began to question her, and he began to form doubts in her mind; we never read that she went to Adam and ask if it was alright. No she did not. She made that decision on her own. Then after she had partaken of the forbidden fruit, then she induced him to do exactly the same thing and he did it. So she did not go to her husband first. Likewise today the Church as a whole is not going to Christ for leadership. They are looking to men as their head and as their leader. Paul uses the example of Eve to show that spiritual infidelity starts in the mind, not in outward behavior. The Subtilty is that the serpent didn't ask Eve to hate God; he asked her to reconsider God's word through a different lens. When people began saying I am of Apollos, their minds were being beguiled. They weren't trying to leave the faith; they were simply adding extra layers of human wisdom to the Gospel. Paul sees this intellectualizing the faith. It is the beginning of spiritual adultery. The word simplicity means singleness, sincerity, and lack of complexity. The moment you add human leaders, specific denominational creeds, and party loyalties, the faith is no longer simple. It becomes a complex system of human politics and headship rivalries.

Corruption here is the spoiling of a pure thing. The Church didn't just wake up and decide to worship an idol. Instead, it is slowly beguiled into believing that it needs these human heads, these titles, and these divisions to function. By the time the marriage arrives, the mind of the Church will have been so cluttered with human traditions and loyalties that the simplicity of Christ is buried under the weight of human craftiness. The core Truth of the word of God is Singleness of Mind. Beguilement is multiplicity of mind. Satan's goal is to make the Church try to follow multiple directions at once in its thinking. Satan will say its okay to hold onto Christ while also clinging to the heads of men. He brings confusion. Paul so concerned about the welfare of the Church, because he had espoused her to Christ. He saw signs of the church being deceived. And he saw that they would fail to come to enjoy the place provided. But he is telling us here that the Church as a whole is doing exactly the same thing that Adam's wife Eve did and that is taking another head other than Christ. Today many in the Church are listening to voice of Satan to take another head.

We must have a single vision, The simplicity that is in Christ is found in V4. 2Co 11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth **another** Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive **another** spirit, which ye have not received, or **another** gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. The simplicity that is in Christ is the Christ of the Gospel. Another spirit here is not simply talking about the Holy Spirit, but it is the Spirit of Christ Himself. There are those in the Church today who are not proclaiming that Spirit of Christ. Just as the serpent used craftiness to deceive Eve, Paul fears the Corinthians' minds are being corrupted from their sincere and pure devotion to Christ. When Paul reaches verse 4, he is essentially calling out the Corinthians for their being gullible. V4 For if he that cometh preacheth **another** Jesus; Paul uses the word **another** to highlight a counterfeit. He identifies a three-fold threat. 1. Another Jesus: A version of Christ that focused only on glory and power, ignoring the suffering of the Cross. 2. Another Spirit: A spirit of legalism or elitism rather than the Holy Spirit of grace. Another Gospel: A message of works or human wisdom rather than the finished work of Jesus. When Paul says, ye

might well bear with him. He isn't giving them permission to listen to false teachers. He is shaming them.

He's saying, I'm amazed at how much patience you have for these frauds! You tolerate these intruders who bring a fake gospel, yet you're critical and demanding of me, Paul; the one who actually loves them and brings them the truth. There was a time when some people had rejected Jesus and the disciples came to Him and said, now Lord do want us to call down fire from heaven on them? Jesus said in: Lu 9:55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. Many are not allowing Jesus to be the head and direct what men ought to do. They are receiving another gospel Paul says. There is really only one Gospel and that is the Gospel that the Apostle Paul preached and that is the Gospel of the grace of God. The Church in error has tried to receive another gospel. That is not glad tidings. Paul has the only message that is going to prepare us for the coming of the Lord. The Gospel of Divine Grace is the only Gospel that will make us of that virgin character to reign with Christ and to be the bride of Christ. Then notice further, another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. In regard to the headship of Christ in our world today there are many in very subtle ways who are trying to establish an authority over people that God did not give.

They are trying to control people with error. It is those things that are not in scripture. God never did give one person authority over another to direct his life. That can only come from Christ. Christ is our head and we must take our direction from Him. To do what they are doing is to depart from the simplicity that is in Christ, which simply means they are taking another head and not bowing to Christ's headship and His Gospel. Jesus is the ultimate authority. The Church today tolerates numerous false doctrines. But by tolerating false doctrine they lose their chaste virgin condition. In the last part of V4 Paul says you must bear with me. Then V5 thru the end of this chapter, Paul gives them reasons as to why they should bear with him and to listen to what he says. He doesn't just tell them; I have the authority and you just have to bear with me. He gives them several reasons why they should bear with him and listen to him. We have already seen how there were those questioning Paul's Apostolic authority. They were taking the teachings and the advice of false teachers. In so doing they were undermining Paul. So Paul has been forced to defend himself and the authority that God has given to him here in V5.

For Paul to speak this sharply in these verses, Paul points to these polished speakers who were undermining Paul's authority by calling him weak and unimpressive. The Corinthians prided themselves on being sophisticated and open-minded. Paul is telling them that their tolerance is actually spiritual unfaithfulness. These false teachers were likely charging money and boasting of their credentials. Paul gave the Gospel freely and he was being looked down upon because he didn't market himself the way they did. Paul is saying that by entertaining these other versions of a so-called faith, the Corinthians aren't being spiritual, they are being cheated on by a spiritual con artist. This is what happens when people sit and listen to error. 2Co 11:6 But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things. They accused him of being rude in speech in chapter 10:10. They really held that against the Apostle Paul because he was not a great speaker. The world today is looking for that kind of speaker and it doesn't make any difference what they say just as long as they are a great speaker. Paul says, though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge. What Paul was saying is proper and it is the deep things of God and he was not behind in anything as far as knowledge is

concerned. But we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things. This means that Paul lived the Gospel before them. We didn't just preach the message and go on our merry way and do our own thing. The Gospel that we preach is actually manifest in actual deeds.

We did exactly what we said. It was manifest in our own lives. 2Co 11:7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? 2Co 11:8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. They were giving the money to these other teachers and did not support Paul. 2Co 11:9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. This is a rather shocking verse when we know the truth of it. When I was present with you, and wanted; walking around in flesh and blood probably with tattered cloths and perhaps even hungry. He was actually standing there in front of them and he was in need and lacked the necessities of life. Then he says, I was chargeable to no man; I still did not demand of you that you would buy the things that I needed. Every Gospel minister has to learn this because it is so important that we do not get our eyes off on the channel that God uses, but rather keep our eyes on the Lord Himself. God does not want us to become so addicted to one particular person or persons in order to get money or our needs met. Paul realized that if one person does not give as he should, God has amazing ways of making it up somewhere else.

So Paul says here that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. 2Co 11:10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. The boasting that he is talking about is preaching the Gospel. His boasting was that he was going to preach this message regardless whether you support me or not. 2Co 11:11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. He lets God answer that question and so indeed we have to do the same thing in our lives. These other false teachers were whispering to the church: Paul won't take your money because he doesn't want to be obligated to you. He's keeping his distance. He doesn't actually love you like we do, and we love you enough to let you pay us! When Paul asks, Wherefore? because I love you not? He is putting their unspoken thought into words. He is saying, Do you think my refusal to be on your payroll is because I don't care about you? Paul's answer is short and solemn. By saying God knoweth. Paul is appealing to the only witness who can see his heart. That is the Lord Jesus. His refusal to take their money isn't a lack of love; it's a safeguard for the Gospel.

They were trying to trap Paul. If he took money, they'd call him a mercenary (like the false teachers). Since he didn't take money, they called him cold and unloving. Paul was not chargeable to no man. He did not demand anything from them and he was going to preach the Gospel message regardless if they supported him or not. 2Co 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. The reason they are #1 false apostles is because their primary goal is not to preach the Gospel but to get something else. A real true Apostle is one who has a burden to preach the truth for the truth's sake. They are #2 deceitful workers which are those that will say anything and do anything in order to get something. #3 Transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ. Who is the father of such things? Satan himself; 2Co 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel

of light. What do many religious leaders boast in today? The flesh! They seek and boast in their own ease and glory. Those tactics Paul traces back to Satan himself.

2Co 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. When Paul talks about “his minister” he isn’t talking about unsaved people. He is talking about people who have adopted the ways and the tactics of the enemy and many Christians have done that. And they are not really ministers of righteousness as God intends. Notice; whose end shall be according to their works. In other words their end is going to be what their works demand. And it is not necessarily a reward of righteousness that they are going to get. 2Co 11:16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. Paul says I am no fool, but if you think that then well alright, receive me, that I may boast myself a little. Paul says, just bear with me, if you think I am being a fool and an idiot anyway; just bear with me and hear what I have to say.

2Co 11:17 That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. Paul says this is not the proper way of doing things; this is not the way that I want to do things. He said I am speaking here foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. The reason he says this is that God’s way is never for us to boast in anything. Paul is performing a spiritual surgery on the Corinthians’ perspective. He is essentially saying, I am going to step out of the character of a humble apostle for a moment and speak the language of your false leaders, which was the language of boasting just to show you how absurd it is. When Paul starts listing his pedigree, he is saying, This isn't how Jesus talks. Jesus doesn’t brag about His resume, and neither should I. Paul considers boasting to be a mark of spiritual folly. In Christ, a person’s worth is given by God’s grace, not earned by their achievements. Bragging about what God gave him is as foolish as a pipe bragging about the water it carries. Paul is mocking the confidence of the prideful leaders. They were confident in their self; Paul was confident in his weakness.

## **II Corinthians 11:18 – 12:9 February 26, 2026**

2Co 11:18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. This is the boasting that he is talking about here. He is using this to illustrate a point and it does not mean that he is out of the will of God. 2Co 11:18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. 19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. 20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. 21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. 22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Paul did not glory after the flesh. Any time we allow fools to minister to us then we are going to suffer for it. To be wise in our own conceit is a very dangerous place to get into. If we just assume that we have all of this wisdom as the Corinthians did wise in our own conceits we open ourselves up to fools. We open ourselves up to be instructed by those that are fools. That is what the Corinthians did.

They thought they were so wise and they knew so much that they actually allowed fools to come in. As a result of that it was the Corinthians that suffered. 2Co 11:20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man

smite you on the face. #1 people are brought into horrible bondage to so many things and to men. A man is just a vessel! The grace of God is a message of liberty. It sets us free. If we are not listening to the message of divine grace then we are going to be bound. Paul says when we allow the fool to reign, he will bring you into bondage. #2 if a man devour you; the word means to plunder and basically this is what had happened to the Corinthians. They allowed all of these other false preachers and teachers in there and they had taken them for everything they could. The Corinthians had given them of their substance and they were devoured by them. Then #3 if a man take of you; that means to rob you, and these people had been robbed from the Gospel. Because the preachers and teachers they were listening to were not preaching and teaching the message of the Gospel of divine grace. If we are not hearing the depth of that message today, then we are being robbed. So the Corinthians were robbed of what they could have had.

Christendom today is being robbed, because they simply will not step out and believe God to reveal truth to them. Then #4 if a man exalt himself; This is the Nicolaitan condition that is mentioned in the book of Revelation. It means the clergy over the laity. It is those in the ministry; those in authority, they began to exalt themselves over the people that they are preaching to. The #5 if a man smite you on the face. That is if he insults you. This is what happened when these Corinthians suffered this foolishness to come in on them. This is one of the greatest tragedies in the Church today is that people are brought into horrible bondage. 2Co 11:21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. Paul warned them when he would come to them; I will not come as weak as you think I am. 2Co 11:22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. They had accused Paul of not even being a Jew. 2Co 11:23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. These Corinthians were making all of these boasts as though none of them were true of him. The labors that Paul talked about here were in ministry and what he did working for his living. He was a tent maker by trade.

Then he says in stripes above measure. These stripes were many and not just the literal stripes that he mentions in v25. They were also the stripes that the enemy would bring against him. Then he says, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. A good commentary on this is 1Co 15:31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 2Co 11:24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. This is in persecution because he preached the Gospel. There were those that actually followed Paul around from town to town trying to tear down what he was building up. Paul was building with the Gospel and the enemy does not like that. Paul lived the Gospel. His very life was a testimony of living the Gospel. He had the care of all the Churches. Paul's credentials, were his sufferings. 2Co 11:25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 2Co 11:26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among **false brethren**; Paul's labor was in the ministry.

It was Satan himself who was trying his best to stop the furtherance of the Gospel message. Satan still comes against those today who are preaching the Gospel of divine grace. In the Roman world (and even within some Jewish circles), success was seen as a sign of God's favor. Even today people gage by what you have. Paul argued the opposite: True apostleship is proven

by how much one is willing to endure for the Gospel. Paul's point was that the power of God is made perfect in weakness. If a man survives many beatings, any one of which could be fatal, and keeps preaching the same message, it's a powerful testimony that the message is true and the power sustaining him is supernatural. But the Lord told Paul, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:9 Note this: In V 26, Paul also says here, in perils among **false brethren**. These are ones who are saved but they are not true brethren. We have friends today and some are true friends and some that are not. They are still friends but they are not really loyal friends. That is what Paul is saying. These brethren were not loyal brethren.

Brotherhood implies a bond of trust and a shared life, while false signifies a betrayal of that very principle. Paul uses Greek word meaning plastic brotherhood. It is someone who wears the uniform but serves a different general. A false brother isn't just someone who disagrees with you; it is someone who infiltrates the people under the guise of shared faith to cause harm. Why was it a peril? Unlike a physical shipwreck or a desert thief, you don't see a false brother coming. The danger is internal. It is the pain of a Judas kiss. Note these other perils of Paul. 2Co 11:27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. This word watchings means sleeplessness and often this is in regard to prayer. All of these things could have been alleviated if the Corinthians had supported Paul. 28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I **burn** not? 30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. These are twenty three sufferings of Paul. I think Paul understood people better because of the things that he went through. Then we see the word **burn**. The anger was stirred up within Paul because of the inequalities. We hear things today on the news that burns us up inside, but we are not to be controlled by that.

Paul felt the peril of false brethren so deeply because he lived his life according to the standard of "Friendship" that Jesus set. Paul was completely transparent and vulnerable, which made him an easy target for those who were false. Note what Jesus considered a true friend. Jesus said in Joh 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Jesus was telling them that everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. I have told you all the shared secrets. A servant just does what he's told; he doesn't need to know why. A friend is brought into the inner circle. By calling them friends, Jesus was giving them the insider access to the heart and plans of God. In ancient royal courts, there was a specific title called the Friend of the King. This person had the highest level of closeness. He would be able to enter the King's private chambers without a formal summons. Jesus was awarding that status upon His followers. Then we see the contrast of the friend in the Garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26:50 when Judas arrives in the garden to betray Jesus. Jesus looks at him and says: friend, do what you came for.

Jesus uses the Greek word meaning companion/associate rather than beloved friend that He used with His disciples. He was acknowledging the bond that they should have had, which made the betrayal extremely more piercing. While true friends love one another, they love the same thing, the Gospel. When Paul experienced this friendship, it was because he was yoked together by the

Gospel. This is why false brethren hurt so much. False brethren pretend to look at the same truth as you, but their eyes are actually elsewhere. In 2 Corinthians, Paul's heartbreak over the false brethren was there was no love for the Gospel. Paul offered them the intimacy and the love of a friend, and they responded with the coldness of a spy. A friend is someone you share your secrets and your burdens with. We see this in Genesis 18 when God is about to judge Sodom: Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? (Genesis 18:17). Abraham is the only person in the Old Testament specifically called God's friend (2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, James 2:23). Jesus invites all his disciples into this Friendship. When Paul dealt with false brethren, he was grieving the loss of this Abrahamic model. He wanted the church to be a place where a stranger becomes a friend.

When people use the Church for their own power like what Paul saw here, they were destroying the very "Friendship of God" that we saw with Abraham and God. Beside all these physical sufferings, Paul carried the burden of the care of all the churches. 2Co 11:31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. 32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: 33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands. The ways that God delivers sometimes are not so fabulous looking, but we must accept His deliverance however it comes. This is an example of what he went through in Ac 9:25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. This basket was a garbage basket and sometimes God doesn't deliver us the way we would think or want to. The ways that God delivers can be sometimes humiliating ways. Note this: Instead of Paul pointing to a glorious throne or a miraculous fire from heaven that could have delivered him, he points to a garbage basket. What a contrast here between human pride and God's methods of deliverance. In Rome at this time, there was a prestigious military honor called the Mural Crown. It was given to the first soldier to scale a city wall during a siege.

It was a mark of supreme bravery and physical glory. Paul stands that image on its head. He didn't scale the wall to conquer; he was lowered down the wall to escape. He wasn't a conqueror in the eyes of the world; he was a fugitive. The basket was likely a large, woven hamper used for hay, fish, or refuse. Paul says in verse 31 God knows I lie not. He is emphasizing that this embarrassing story is the absolute truth. He isn't trying to look cool; he's trying to be real. When deliverance doesn't look fabulous, because we often expect God to deliver us through the parting of the Red Sea, or some grand, cinematic miracle where our enemies are crushed and we walk through on dry land. But God often chooses the basket method which is a quiet, humiliating, way requiring the help of others. Why the basket method? It humbles the ego. We cannot boast about being lowered in a garbage basket. It reminds us that we are not the heroes of our own stories; we are the subjects of God's mercy. Then get this, it requires **false brethren** protection. Remember Paul's perils among **false brethren**? In Acts where Paul was let down in this basket was a city where the **false brethren** were looking for a high-profile target. These false brethren expected Paul to act like a typical great leader bold in public.

Because there were so many people claiming to be brethren, some true, some false, the community became a confusing haystack. God hid Paul in plain sight. By using a humiliating, low-profile method like a garbage basket, he did the one thing a false brother wouldn't expect, he acted like a nobody. So, God used these false brethren as a protection for Paul. Then, for this

escape to work, Paul had to trust true brethren to hold the rope. He was completely at their mercy to preserve the work of the Gospel, not the reputation. God's priority was keeping Paul alive so he could write the Epistles that we have today. In Acts 9, Luke gives us the news report of the event. But in 2 Corinthians, Paul gives us the heart of the event. Sometimes we pray for a door to open, and God opens a window. Sometimes we pray for a chariot, and God gives us a basket. If Paul had been too proud to get into the garbage basket, he would have been executed in Damascus. His survival depended on his willingness to look foolish. Sometimes the humiliating way is actually a test to see if we love our reputation more than we love our calling.

## Chap 12

It's no coincidence that the Holy Spirit places the basket story at the very end of Chapter 11 and immediately transitions into Paul's thorn in the flesh in Chapter 12. God's strength is best seen when we are at our lowest. From Basket to Thorn. In the original letter, there were no chapter breaks. Paul finishes the story of being lowered like garbage and immediately says: 2 Cor 12:1 It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. He is showing the two extremes of his life. The high point of being caught up to the third heaven and seeing paradise. Then the low point of being stuck in a basket and having a messenger of Satan buffet him. Paul links them by saying the thorn was given to him specifically to keep him from being exalted above measure because of the revelations. The humiliation of the basket and the pain of the thorn serve the same purpose. They kept him dependent on God. This is where Paul's commentary becomes radical. Most people want to get out of the basket and get the thorn removed. Paul prayed three times for the thorn to be taken away, but Jesus said: 2 Corinthians 12:9 My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Why is the humiliating way the better Way. Paul concludes that he will actually glory in his infirmities because when Paul is strong, people see Paul. But when Paul is in a basket, or when Paul is limping through a thorn, people see the Power of Christ resting upon him.

If Paul had walked out of Damascus with a sword and a golden shield, he would have looked like any other Roman hero. By leaving in a basket, Paul looked like a man who was entirely sustained by God who saves the lowly. This is the key to Paul's endurance. If we demand a fabulous deliverance, we might reject the very basket God has sent to save us. If we demand a life without thorns, we might miss the sufficient grace that only comes through the struggle. 2Co 12:1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. The man in Christ was Paul as a New Creation. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. If men today would have such an experience, they would be all over every TV show across the country. Yet Paul didn't even divulge this until 14 years after it happened. He did that on purpose because he did not want to focus attention or glory on himself rather than the depths of the Gospel.

Then he says, 2Co 12:6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. He said that before in Chapter 11. It is just foolishness for me to glory in

the manner that I am doing. He says further I do not want to divert all of the attention to me and take the spotlight off of Christ and the Gospel. We must not be guilty today of anything that would rob Christ of the glory that He so richly deserves. He did not want to be put on a pedestal and undoubtedly wanted to put emphasis on the Word of God rather than experience. He did not want to glory after the flesh. He is talking about himself but he speaks of himself in the third person. Paul did not want people getting their eyes on him. He said, I knew a man in Christ. He levels himself with every other Christian because we are all in Christ. He was not making a claim to fame here as if no one had the opportunity to do such a thing. It is Christ who puts up whom He will. He did not want to put himself up head shoulders above everyone else. 2Co 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. That means that Paul suffered something in the body that was very uncomfortable. I don't think you can narrow it down to one particular thing.

The infirmity of his eyes was one part. He describes a number of things in the closing of Chapter 11, the care of all the Churches and so forth. These caused Paul great pain even in the body. The thorn in the flesh was and could have been a great number of things. Then he says, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. Satan has a multitude of ways to buffet us and God gives him permission to do it. We can refer to Job as an example of that. Because of all of these revelations that God had given to him, God also allowed the enemy to come in so that Paul would not be lifted up with pride. If a person is lifted up with pride, it is one of the greatest adversaries that we are ever going to have. It is one of the greatest robbers that we will ever have. These verses here capture the tension between human weakness and divine strength. Paul describes being caught up to the third heaven and receiving surpassing greatness of revelations. To ensure he didn't become arrogant because of these supernatural experiences, Paul explains: The Problem: It was a thorn in the flesh was given to him. He calls it a messenger of Satan sent to buffet (torment or strike) him.

Paul's Prayer: He pleaded with God three times to remove it. God's Answer: God did not remove the thorn but gave him a promise: My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Why? The text offers a profound look at how spiritual growth often requires uncomfortable boundaries. There have been many thoughts over the centuries on what the thorn actually was. Could it have been physical ailments such as eye disease, malaria, or a speech impediment or psychological struggles or persistent persecution. However, the Bible leaves it vague. I believe it is likely intentional. It allows every believer to see their own thorn, whatever it may be, in Paul's experience. God can use the very things intended by the enemy to harm us as tools for our refinement and protection against pride. 2Co 12:8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 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. After God said, my grace is sufficient for you; I think Paul quit praying for God to remove the thorn. The rule for us is that we continue to pray until we get an answer.

So, Paul finally got his answer, and it wasn't the one that he would have liked to have. And it was not the one that he really longed for. He would have liked to have been rid of this thorn in the flesh. But God did answer it this way. He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: **Then he also told him why. For my strength is made perfect in weakness. That means that God**

**cannot complete His strength in us until we discover what real weakness is. We don't even know what weakness is until the Lord leads us through it.** We are seeing the saints of God today going through some things that we didn't think we would ever see. But at the same time, it is plain from scripture, God is bringing us down into that strength-less condition in order that His strength might be made perfect in our lives. So Paul says, My grace is sufficient for you and we emphasize the word **My**, because it is God's grace and not any other. It is His grace; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. And that is the only time that God's strength can be made perfect in us is during our weakness. The core takeaway is a reversal of worldly logic. In Paul's view, weakness is not a liability; it is a capacity. When Paul is empty of his own strength, he has more room for divine grace. One of the greatest robbers and adversaries is pride.

Scripturally and psychologically, pride functions as a spiritual cataract that blinds a person. It blinds them of the reality of their true need of Christ and the reality of others need of Christ. When we came to Christ, we admitted our spiritual bankruptcy. Pride, however, is a master of spiritual accounting. It makes the individual believe their good works outweigh their debt of sin. They count how many times they do good works. Pride whispers that we are the captain of our soul. If we believe we are doing just fine on our own strength, the idea of a Savior feels like an insult rather than a lifeline. That's what pride does. Pride rebrands sin by refusing to see the depth of our own brokenness. Pride in a person cannot see the height of the Cross. Pride says, as long as I am looking down on others, I cannot see something that is above me. We need to see the Cross. Paul highlights his thorns and scars instead of prizing his pedigree of success. Paul warned against human strength which often acts as a barrier to divine power. When a leader is full of their own talent, there is no room for God's grace to operate. We don't need to be like the world to be used by God; we need to be available. Humility isn't thinking less of ourselves; it's thinking of ourselves less. It's admitting that without the vine, the branches can do nothing. Paul didn't hate the prideful leaders because they were talented; he opposed them because their pride created a different gospel that relied on human effort rather than the sufficiency of Christ's grace.

## **II Corinthians 12:10 –21 March 5, 2026 The Pride of False Teachers**

When we came to Christ, we admitted our spiritual bankruptcy. Pride, however, is a master of spiritual accounting. It makes the individual believe their good works outweigh their debt of sin. Pride whispers that we are, the captain of our soul. If we believe we are doing just fine on our own strength, the idea of a Savior feels like an insult rather than a lifeline. That's what pride does. Pride rebrands sin by refusing to see the depth of our own brokenness. Pride in a person cannot see the height of the Cross. Pride is, as long as I am looking down on others, I cannot see something that is above me, which is the Cross. Pride looks horizontally rather than vertically, where grace resides. Instead of looking at the holiness of God, the proud person looks at the flaws of their neighbor and thinks, at least I'm not like them. This false sense of moral superiority that is a barrier to repentance. Pride blocks grace! If one believes they are full, they feel no need to be fed. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Pride is the great robber because it steals the person's ability to learn and grow. No one can teach a proud person. Pride will keep a person believing they have already arrived; they will stop moving forward.

Pride believes we have already reached the goal; we're married. Pride acts as a seal on the mind. To teach someone, there must first be a vacancy. There has to be an admission that there is something they do not yet know or possess. Pride, by its very nature, claims to be full and to

have already arrived. To a proud person, admitting ignorance feels like a loss of status or power. Therefore, they treat new information as a threat to be managed rather than a gift to be received. They don't listen to understand; they listen to find a gap in the argument so they can defend their existing position. When a proud person receives correction, even if it is delivered with love, they perceive it as an attack on their identity. Scripture, particularly in Proverbs makes a sharp distinction between the wise man and the scoffer or the proud. Pr 9:8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. The difference isn't their intelligence; it's their receptivity. The wise person receives correction to become better. The proud person views correction as an insult that must be punished. So, what is the remedy of the proud? Paul's messenger of Satan was, ironically, a gift of mercy. This is what Paul faced with these false teachers; their pride. In his chapter, and in contrast to these false teachers, Paul tells us how God kept him.

God kept Paul grounded so that his spiritual height wouldn't lead to a catastrophic fall. By embracing the thorn, Paul and God protected his ministry from the one thing that could truly destroy it: his own ego. The tragedy of pride is that it usually takes a crash to break the seal. This is why the thorn in the flesh was so vital for Paul. Pain is often the only teacher a proud person will listen to, because pain is an undeniable reality that pride cannot explain away. It takes the buffeting of life to create a crack in the armor that pride has developed, and only through that crack can a new lesson of the grace of Christ finally enter. Brokenness is the involuntary collapse of the self that pride has spent years constructing. If pride is a fortified wall that keeps instruction out, brokenness is the breach or crack in that wall. It is the specific antidote because it restores a person's capacity for reality. Brokenness, whether through failure, loss, or the thorn in the flesh creates an undeniable void. We move from saying "I have the answers" to "I am at the end of myself." Like the Parable of the Sower, pride is like hard-packed ground where the seed of truth cannot penetrate. Brokenness acts like a plow. A plow doesn't ask the soil to open; it tears it open.

This is painful, but it exposes the soft, nutrient-rich earth underneath that has been hidden for years. The person becomes tender-hearted. Truth that was once rejected suddenly becomes nourishing and life-saving. Pride survives when a person looks at others faults to feel superior because they have all the truth and no one else has it. Brokenness makes us willing to learn because we realize that truth is more important than knowing we are right. Brokenness is growth. Humility in brokenness is the realization that being right matters less than getting it right. When we stop defending our image, we finally have the hands free to hold the truth. We stop pointing the finger, that you are wrong and realize we need the very grace we've been withholding. Growth begins where the need to look perfect ends. A shattered ego creates a clear window into reality. The ego is too proud to admit a flaw, so it projects that flaw onto someone else to make that person feel superior or cleaner by comparison. Pride convinces us that we are the standard and others are the ones failing to meet it. But the humble person looks at another's fault and thinks, I am capable of that same mistake. A proud person looks at another's fault and thinks, I would never do that. The more we judge a specific trait in others, the more likely we are trying to suppress that very trait within ourselves.

Refer to: Mt 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the

mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Pride makes us eye surgeons for others while we are blind patients ourselves. Pride allows us to see the truth briefly, but we lack the brokenness or humility to let that truth of God's word change us. Brokenness realigns our ear to God's voice. Pride, makes a person's own internal voice so loud they cannot hear the still, small voice of the Lord. Brokenness brings a profound silence that we need the Lord. When our own plans have failed and our own wisdom has led us into a ditch, we finally become quiet enough to listen to the voice of wisdom which is Christ. Brokenness doesn't fix the person in the way the world thinks, by making them strong again. It fixes the person by making them receptive. Most people view fixing like a broken bone: you want it to knit back together so it's hard, rigid, and strong enough to withstand pressure again.

But in a spiritual character-building sense, brokenness isn't about regaining our armor of pride; it's about losing the need for it. Pride is like a sealed jar. Nothing can get in, no new ideas, no correction, no grace; because it is full of its own ego. Brokenness is like a cracked jar. The cracks allow the light of truth of God's word to enter, and they allow the person to finally soak up wisdom from outside themselves. As the Psalmist wrote, Ps 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. God doesn't despise it because it is the only state in which a human is actually capable of being led. We know for sure that from the road to Damascus, Paul had a change of heart. Rather than pleading with the Lord, to remove that thorn once he got this answer that My grace is sufficient for thee. We notice how he changed. He said, 2Co 12:9 ... Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. That word infirmities means feebleness; it means malady; it means frailty; and it includes sicknesses. God changed Paul's whole spirit. If we have a victorious spirit, then that is victory that we are looking for, despite the fact that he did not experience deliverance in his body. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, and notice why? That the power of Christ may rest upon me.

He discovered a real revelation that when he was in this very weakened condition, he was actually experiencing the very power of Christ resting upon him. 2Co 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches,(or insults) in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses (distresses simply means narrowness of room; or calamity; it seems that so many of God's people are experiencing that today). Then he sums it up when he says, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. We can say it like this; when I am weak, then and only then, am I strong. This was the secret or the revelation that Paul learned. The further we go with the Lord, the more we learn of the strength of Christ because if not our own so-called strength will try to exalt us. This is the very contrast to pride and the healing that these Corinthian leaders needed. Paul was explaining what God had revealed to him in the Gospel, but they refused it. Further Paul says in 2Co 12:11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. These Corinthian people forced Paul into the avenue that he took. He says, for I ought to have been commended of you. He doesn't mean they should have put him on pedestal.

He meant they should have commended him as an Apostle of Christ. They actually denied him of that place that God had given to him and they had given it to others. 2Co 12:12 Truly the signs

of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. Note what Paul starts with: #1 Patience; James says let patience have her perfect work. This refers to our character. Paul says, my character, my inward character was manifest among you during all of these different times. #2 signs; #3 wonders; he had done great wonders among them and it didn't seem to faze them. #4 and in mighty deeds; Paul does not exactly elaborate on what all these things were, but what we do know is that it was the spectacular manifestation of the power of God. God gave witness that He was indeed with the Apostle Paul. It was their lives and not their substance that Paul wanted them to have. Paul did not want to be a burden to these Corinthians. Paul says, I seek not yours but you. 2Co 12:14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. This has to be the burden of every gospel minister; I seek not yours but you.

He must be seeking the good of the people and not what he can get out of them. Paul says I didn't come down here to get rich off of you. I came down here to enrich you with the Gospel. Paul certainly didn't have any money to pass along to them and they didn't need it anyway. But Paul was this loving father wanting to lay up and impart this spiritual treasure for them. Paul would gladly give everything that he had and he had done that. 2Co 12:15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. The people that you do the most for are those that seem like they reward you the least. They are not as grateful. Sometimes they think you owe it to them. That was Paul's meaning here. 2Co 12:16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. 17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? 18 I desired Titus, and with him I sent **a brother**. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps? Undoubtedly, he is talking about this brother that had come down to collect that offering. Paul testifies of Titus that he walked in the same spirit and the same steps as Paul. These were following in the steps of the Gospel.

2Co 12:19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. Paul simply leaves his defense to the Lord. Paul did not try and trick them to give to him, but he left it to the Lord. The only thing that Paul was interested in was their edification. This is the purpose of all true Pauline ministers. 2Co 12:20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: 21 And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed. Paul was afraid that he would not see all of the changes that he would have loved to see. Then he says, I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: In other words when I come down to you and these things are not corrected, you are going to find a very bold person. As we would say someone who would bring down the hammer on you and you are not going to like that. Then Paul says further, lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, **swellings**, tumults:

These are the conditions that Paul feared still existed in Corinth. Even after all of his instructions and all of the things that he had told them about, he was still afraid that these things were still here. When you look closely at these eight specific behaviors, you can see how they all sprout

from the same root (pride): a preoccupation with self-importance and a refusal to be broken or humble. This is essentially a symptom of a church infected by pride. Note this word, **swellings**. It literally means to be puffed up or inflated. This is the core of pride. It is a heart that has blown up like a balloon, taking up too much space and becoming fragile and sensitive. The pride in the Corinthian church was not a random accident; it was a cultural infection that was being actively fed by specific leaders. They were learning pride because their new leaders were modeling it. These other leaders of pride were everything Paul was not. They were polished, eloquent, wealthy, and distinguished. They boast of their high-level connections and credentials, and how many they lead in their error. They use professional speech filled with error to dazzle their audience, making Paul's plain-speaking look contemptible or shameful by comparison. Refer to 2Co 10:10 For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

Would Paul find those same conditions in many churches of today? Absolutely Yes! Jesus is judging among the candlesticks today. But one day it is going to be manifest, that the façade or the cover-up that the Church as a whole is putting up will be revealed. It is really hiding a great deal of misery and wickedness behind its pretense, that has never been repented of. Much of it, men are trying to justify and God is not going to permit that. We started Chapter 11 with the bride of Christ and if these things spoken of at the end of this chapter be, can she be called a virgin? If these things exist, can we call the Church as a whole a chaste virgin to be presented to Christ? The answer is no. But there is a rib portion out of this body of the Church that is going to have that virgin character and they are going to be presented to Christ. It is the ones who maintain a virgin character and are not disqualified by the pride and swellings that Paul warned about. Scripture points to a specific path of sanctification and humility. Paul explicitly uses the words chaste virgin when writing to the Corinthians, but he connects it directly to mental and spiritual purity. How are we to be part of this: Guard your simplicity. Pride complicates the Gospel; humility keeps it simple. You must stay focused on Christ alone, refusing to let your mind be corrupted by the so-called super-leader style of boasting and self-exaltation.

To be presented without spot or wrinkle, a person must undergo a continuous washing. Ephesians 5:26-27: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. We must stay under the washing of the Word of God. This isn't just reading; it is allowing the Truth of the scriptures to scrub away the spots and any of the wrinkles of worldliness. The rib portion is composed of those who allow the Word of God to correct them. Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. A proud person uses the Word to judge others. The virgin company lets the Word of God judge them. They allow the sword of the Word to separate them. 2Co 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. Paul explicitly states that the function of the Word of God doesn't just to comfort us, but it straightens us. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. If a person rejects reproof or correction, they are effectively rejecting the tools God uses to fashion the Bride. Paul gives us instructions to withdraw from such leaders that were leading these Corinthians astray into pride. Further Paul says: 1Ti 6:4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. Perverse disputings refers to constant, friction against the truth by error. These aren't people seeking truth. Their thinking process is warped. Because their minds are puffed up as Paul mentions in verse 4, proud, knowing nothing. They can no longer process reality correctly. This is identical to the debates, strifes, and tumults Paul feared in 2 Corinthians 12:20. Pride makes people argumentative because they value being right. To be part of that rib portion and to be the full-overcomers who make up the Bride requires a deliberate departure from the super leader culture of self-promotion and a deep dive into the separated life with Christ. Being a full overcomer isn't about working harder; it's about surrendering sooner.

Here is the scriptural basis in Paul's epistles on how to remain in that company. 1. Exchange Self-Confidence for Christ-Confidence. The so-called super leaders of pride live by their credentials. The Bride lives by her oneness with Christ. Paul gives us the secret to this transition in Philippians 3:3: For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. To be a full overcomer, we must treat our own achievements as loss. Php 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. This is so that Christ's life is the only thing visible. Then we must embrace the thorn as a protective hedge. What do we have that Christ has not given us? Absolutely nothing; He has given us everything we have right now. The thorn was Paul's insurance policy against pride. Full overcomers don't just endure their thorn; they understand their purpose. When we face buffeting or weakness, do not view it as a sign of God's abandonment. View it as God's sanctifying hand keeping us small enough to fit through the strait gate.

Mt 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Maintain a Single-Eye of Devotion to the things of Christ which is the secret to the Virgin Character. The world and the puffed-up church will try to distract us with complex debates, status, and theological gain. The Bride is defined by a singular focus. Col 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Guard your simplicity! The Bride's beauty is our focus on Christ, not on our crown. What is the Path of the Full Overcomer? **Paul's instructions to the faithful:** 2 Cor 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate. Withdraw from prideful systems. Then mortification: Col 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth. Kill the ego before it kills our witness.

Submission: Eph 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. The proud cannot submit; the Bride delights in Sanctification: 1 Thess 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. Again we must allow the Word of God to scrub the soul. Endurance: 2 Tim 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If there is no cross, then no crown. Humility: Phil 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Watchfulness: 1 Thess 5:6 Let us not

sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. Remain alert to the subtlety of the serpent. Then one of the Final Marks of Paul's instructions: The ultimate sign of the "rib company" is that they have stopped pretending. They are broken and contrite. They don't have a private face and a public face. 2 Corinthians 4:2: But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. How do we start today if that is what we need? Invite the Surgery! Ask the Holy Spirit to use the Word of God as a discernor of our thoughts. We can immediately go to the Cross and find comfort there. The Bride is not a group of perfect people; she is a group of yielded people.

## **II Corinthians 13 March 19, 2026 The Final Call to Spiritual Integrity**

In this closing chapter, Paul is issuing a final warning to a church he loves deeply but which has been split by rebellion and false influence from false teachers. 2Co 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. Paul takes this verse from De 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. He isn't acting on hearsay; he is bringing formal charges against unrepentant sin. There were still problems because they had not really appropriated the message. Paul wanted them to be established in the Gospel. Even after all of Paul's visits to them, their attitude toward him was they still thought he was weak. 2Co 13:2 I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare: They still did not accept Paul nor the message he brought to them. 3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. Note also, how Christ was weak. He depended upon His Father; He did not use force. He could have called 12 legions of angels Matthew 26:53.

God's glory is His Son, who was crucified in weakness, but raised in power. No man can instruct the Lord; but believers are instructed by Him. And more; as Christ is our life, so also is He our mind. We should seek the mind of Christ. We should take Him for all things. This is weakness; but this is also reliable strength. 2Co 13:4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you. This is the heart of the Gospel. The world saw the Cross as ultimate weakness, but it was God's greatest display of power. Paul aligns his ministry with the Crucified Christ. He is willing to be seen as weak so that the resurrection life of Jesus is the only thing the Corinthians see. There is but one gathering center, even Jesus Christ, and only one gathering power, even the Holy Spirit, who worketh all things in all; For though He was crucified thru weakness; that is, though Christ used none of His strength to resist the enemy, to deliver Himself; but was wholly left to the persecution and cruelties of the wicked, both by Himself and by His Father: yet He lived by the dynamite of God. Christ's weakness is expressed in Matt. 11:11 - He that is least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than John the Baptist.

It is Jesus, the greatest by virtue of His holy nature, who became the least by taking the place of abject weakness, and dependence upon His Father. The Corinthians were obsessed with power and outward eloquence. They doubted Paul's authority because he seemed weak. Paul points out that if they want to see Christ's power, they should look at how that power transformed them.

Christ's power is often hidden in a humble vessel. 2Co 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. Christ is our enabling to live and walk uprightly. "Christ liveth in men," a life of victory over all. This was Paul's life. He lived for Christ. And no one can have victory over the world, the flesh and the devil except by means of Paul's Gospel; and none will reign with Christ until Paul reigns with Him. The adversary pressed Paul out of measure, above strength, and made him to despair even of life. Even a premature death, at Satan's hands, the Apostle Paul resisted; for that would rob him of the prize which shall fall to the full-overcomers. How did Paul gain the victory? He trusted the God of resurrection; and God met his faith, delivering him even from so great a death. This was Paul's argument in favor of the resurrection.

Paul had the glory of Christ's resurrection in his spirit; but he also experienced the resurrection power in his body. Ac 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. This is how we feed sheep. The food for sheep is the word of His grace. Why? Because that is able to build up and will give us our inheritance. How much of the word of His grace have we taken in? What we have laid hold of; that is the degree of our inheritance. We must lay hold of it. Paul knew he would not see them much longer, so he commends them to God. It was God that was going to keep the Church and to the word of His grace. 2 Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? They should have been examining themselves and let the word of God and let that be their judge. For they were babes in Christ, carnal and walking as men (Chapter 3:1-3) to sit in judgment over his work, or to weigh it on the scales of the men of this age.

Also the candlestick Examiner, Jesus Christ, of Rev. 1-3 is walking in the midst of the church with flaming eyes and burning feet and thundering voice, discovering even now the deserving's of each believer. What proof of Paul's apostleship could be found in each one of these Corinthians, if they were truly born again? It would be Christ in them. We are called to let Christ be the cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). If the building of our lives doesn't line up with the Stone, the problem isn't the Stone (Christ or Paul's Gospel); it's the building. Paul knew that he possessed overwhelming proofs of Divine approval of every kind; for he knew that he lived and moved in the will of God and altogether for His highest honor. We too, by the same Holy Spirit, may live the same life and have the same Divine approval. Paul announces the same thing of himself in Eph. 3:8 - to me, the less than the least of all saints, was this grace given. Then, He liveth by the dynamite of God. The chief channel for the mightiest dynamite power of God was also wrought in special miracles by the hands of Paul. Acts 19:11. 2 Cor 13:6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. 7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

Paul doesn't care about his reputation or looking like a super apostle. He would rather look like a failure (reprobate) if it meant the Corinthians were living holy lives. This is what we have in Philippians 2:7 the Self-Emptying of Christ, who made Himself of no reputation for our sake. Every man's work shall be tried by the fire of the truth. The Truth is Christ which will stand forever and ever. He alone is our head, our life, our light, our way, our truth, our resurrection, our prize. 2Co 13:8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. Paul's apostolic power

isn't a weapon he can use however he wants; it only works in alignment with God's Truth. Jesus is The Truth. Paul's entire existence is swallowed up in Christ's identity. 2Co 13:9 For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection. For indeed we are weak in Him; that is, Paul chose that place of utter helplessness and dependence upon God, persistently not relying on his own strength in every way. This is why some of his own spiritual children did not appreciate him. They wanted a father, a teacher, in whom they could boast as being strong - able bodied, good looking, eloquent in utterances, learned in language, of high repute among men. Paul learned to live, not by his own strength, but by the strength of God; therefore, he could exclaim, I can do all things (all the Father's will) thru Christ my Strength. Christ is our Strength? So that we can rejoice in the sufficiency of Christ.

2 Cor 13:10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction. The Word of God will fall upon those who do not judge their own flesh and submit to the work of the Holy Spirit unto edification with sharpness not to destruction. They are saved, for they are in Christ; but they are still babes. They are not able to bear meat; envying, strife and divisions among you; walk as men; and hold some other one as head instead of Christ. The purpose of spiritual sharpness and reproof was to correct them. These instructions are given to comfort the approved ones and to reprove and correct the erring ones. These Corinthian letters were written to set the Church in order, to correct all manner of errors and give direction as to the spiritual priesthood and ministry of her people. Many today will not receive these instructions from the Apostle Paul to set the Church in order, and to correct all manner of errors. Instead they are leading the sheep in the wrong direction. It is a sobering reality that the very issues Paul corrected in Corinth, moral compromise, and the elevation of personality over the Cross, and the error taught is prevalent in the Church today.

This is one of the most dangerous errors in the modern church. It is a passive or an inactive theology that confuses justification (being declared righteous by faith) with sanctification (the practical, daily walk of holiness). Many today preach a message that suggests because Christ finished the work of atonement, the believer has no responsibility to work out their own salvation. However, Paul's letters to the Corinthians and his other epistles paint a picture of a co-laboring relationship. We do not work for our salvation, but we certainly work because of it. Paul uses the picture of a construction site to show that while Christ is the only foundation, the believer is responsible for what they build on top of it. 1 Corinthians 3:9-10 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building... But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. Paul calls us laborers together with God. This implies interaction and cooperation. If we do nothing, we aren't resting in grace; we are leaving the foundation bare. Paul warns that our practical walk (the wood, hay, stubble vs. gold, silver, precious stones) will be tried by fire (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). A believer who does nothing may be saved, but they will suffer the loss of all rewards, appearing before Christ.

If the practical walk required no effort, Paul's frequent use of athletic and military metaphors would be meaningless. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain... I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection... Then Paul describes bringing the body into subjection. This is an act of the will. It is a practical,

physical, and mental effort to align one's lifestyle with Christ's holiness. Christ is our High Priest who gives us the strength to run, but He does not run the race instead of us; He runs it through us as we yield our members to Him. This error suggests that because Christ is in you, you are a passive or an inactive passenger. Paul teaches the exact opposite: because Christ is in you, we now have the power to move. Wherefore, my beloved... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13) Notice the order. God works in (provision), so you must work out (practice). You cannot work out what God hasn't worked in, but if we never work out, the inward gift remains stagnant and invisible. Telling the sheep they do not need to anything stops the working out process. It leads to spiritual withering and reprobate or depraved behavior.

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. This is a direct command to look at your practical walk. If there is no doing, no building, and no submission of the body. Paul suggests the person might not even be in the faith. Christ is the Master Builder, but we are His hands on the earth. To tell the hands they have nothing to do is to paralyze the Body of Christ. In Romans, Paul explains that the practical walk is a daily decision of who owns our hands, eyes, and feet. Romans 6:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God... and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. The word yield or present is an active verb. You are the one who must present your body as a living sacrifice in Romans 12:1. Christ provided the altar and the fire, but we must provide the sacrifice of our daily conduct. To claim that the specific word practical doesn't appear in the King James Bible we have no responsibility to do anything is a classic case of semantic gymnastics. Semantic gymnastics refers to the cunning use of language, or wordplay, or redefinition of terms to obscure the truth. It avoids accountability, or twists the meaning of a statement to serve a specific agenda. It is often described as a form of gross dishonesty.

It focuses on steering words rather than addressing the truth. It ignores the thousands of action verbs, commands, and walk representations that fill the New Testament. In the Bible, "Truth" is never just an idea to be thought about; it is a reality to be lived. Here is the scriptural and logical fallacy of the no-doing doctrine. Just because the word practical isn't in a 17th-century translation of the Bible doesn't mean the concept isn't there. The word "Trinity" isn't in the Bible either, but the reality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the foundation of our faith. The Bible uses the word "Walk" to describe the practical life. Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should **walk in them**. If God ordained (pre-arranged) works for us to walk in, and we refuse to walk, we are out of step with His design. We cannot walk while standing still or being passive. James, the brother of Jesus, directly addresses the fallacy of a faith that doesn't do anything. He calls it dead. James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. Paul agrees with this in Romans 2:13 For not the hearers of the law are justified before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

Jesus ended the Sermon on the Mount by saying the man who "heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them" is like a man who built his house on a rock. The man who hears but doesn't do them is a fool whose house collapses (Matthew 7:24-27). We mentioned the spiritual priesthood. In the Old Testament, a priest who did nothing was a priest who failed his office. They had to wash, sacrifice, carry, and intercede. 1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual

house, an holy priesthood, **to offer up** spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. To **“offer up”** is an action. Paul calls our practical walk our reasonable service. Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. If we don't do anything with our body (present it), we are not exercising our priesthood. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. So, do we follow Paul as he followed Christ? So do we labor? Paul worked harder than anyone! Was he a legalist? No. He was fueled by grace. Grace is not the absence of activity; it is the source of activity.

To say I have grace, so I do nothing is to receive grace in vain. How this relates to 2 Corinthians 13 When Paul tells the Corinthians to Examine yourselves, he isn't telling them to check their feelings. He is telling them to check their fruit. If you are in the faith, Christ is in you. If Christ is in you, He will be doing the works of the Father through you. If nothing is being done, Paul's conclusion is blunt: you are reprobates (v. 5). This means we failed the test. It means rejected as worthless, unapproved, or unfit. While the word practical may not be in our concordance, the following words are: Occupy (Luke 19:13); Work (Philippians 2:12); Run (Hebrews 12:1); Fight (1 Timothy 6:12); Follow (Matthew 16:24); Cleanse (2 Corinthians 7:1); A faith that does not translate into a practical walk is a faith that does not possess the Life of Christ. Christ was always about His Father's business, and if He is in us, we will be about our Father's business. When leaders reject Paul's instructions, they aren't just rejecting a man; they are rejecting the apostolic order established by Christ Himself. When leaders ignore 1 & 2 Corinthians' call to set the church in order, they trade the sharpness of the Word for the approval of the world. By refusing to correct error, they allow leaven to permeate the whole lump (1 Corinthians 5:6).

Leaders who lead the sheep in the wrong direction often rely on enticing words. If a leader's authority is based on their charisma rather than their conformity to the Image of Christ through Paul's Gospel, the sheep are being anchored to a human anchor that will eventually drag them down. Setting the church in order requires the courage to “mark” error. When leaders refuse to draw these boundaries, they are not being loving; they are being negligent. Christ, the Chief Shepherd, corrects those He loves (Hebrews 12:6). A leader who refuses to correct does not reflect the heart of Christ. Paul warned Timothy that a time would come when people would no longer endure sound doctrine. In Corinth, this is what was happening when they were following false leaders who preached a different Jesus. Today, it often looks like therapeutic or satisfying preaching that avoids the call to repentance and a practical sanctification. Paul gives a fourfold admonition in this final exhortation. He says, 2 Cor 13:11 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. 12 Greet one another with an holy kiss. Paul wanted the best for them.

#1 Be perfect, thoroughly complete and the gospel would do this #2 be of good comfort (have the right desire); #3 be of one mind (the mind of Christ) #4 greet one another with a holy kiss (affectionate toward one another as Christ is). In Paul's absence, they could rely on the God of love and peace. (The Holy Spirit) to be with them. It was through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. The benediction is unique and this is the only place it occurs this way. V14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Anointed and the love

of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. This book ends by boldly and clearly declaring, as if for the last time, the three distinct personalities of the Godhead. How good and wonderful is our God! 2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen! In these verses, we see the Father's love, the Son's grace, and the Holy Spirit's fellowship working as one.