

2 Corinthians Chapter 13

2 Corinthians 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 informed the Corinthians that he would deal biblically with any sin he found in Corinth.

This is a statement that Jesus had spoken of as being true with the Jews, as well as the Christians. This is one of the reasons that we are not to take everything in Corinthians as doctrine for the general church. Everything must be established by two different witnesses, or else it is a custom, or tradition, instead of a law.

In many of the statements made in Corinthians, Paul is the only one who said it.

Deuteronomy 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."

In the following Scripture, we read what the Lord Jesus had to say about this very thing.

John 8:17 "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true." The number two means agreement.

2 Corinthians 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:"

Paul is saying to those who think he is not coming and are continuing in their sin, that when he comes in person, he will take care of the problem.

As we had found (in chapter 12:21), that Paul did not want to find the Corinthians in the same sorry spiritual condition as on his last visit, the one called the "painful visit". If he came and found them practicing the same sins that he mentions in that scripture, he would have had to discipline them.

2 Corinthians 13:3: "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you."

Paul is saying, I may appear in the flesh to weak, but Christ speaking in me is very strong. Even though they had strayed, The Lord Jesus Christ had not abandoned them. They were but babes in Christ who needed further training in the things of God. Paul was just the one who could give this training, because of the power of Christ which worked in him.

Those Corinthians still seeking proof that Paul was a genuine apostle would have it when he arrived. They may have gotten more than they bargained for, for Paul was going to use his apostolic authority and power to deal with any sin and rebellion he found there.

Christ's power was to be revealed through Paul against the sinning Corinthians. By rebelling against Christ's chosen apostle, they were rebelling against Him.

2 Corinthians 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."

It appeared to the world that the Lord Jesus Christ was weak, because he was crucified. What Satan thought to be his greatest victory, was actually his defeat. The greatest victory of all time was the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross. He defeated Satan and sin for all of mankind on the cross.

He defeated death, when He rose from the grave. Paul is saying, we may appear to be weak, but that is our flesh you are looking at. The power of the living God (Jesus Christ), in Paul made him stronger than anything that could be thrown against him. Our lives and Paul's life is hid in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

Paul was to come to Corinth armed with the irresistible power of the risen, glorified Christ.

2 Corinthians 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?"

Paul turned the tables on his accusers. Instead of presuming to evaluate his apostleship; they needed to test the genuineness of their faith (James 2:14-26). He pointed out the incongruity of the Corinthians' believing as they did, that their faith was genuine and his apostleship false.

Paul was their spiritual father and if his apostleship was counterfeit, so was their faith. The genuineness of their salvation was proof of the genuineness of his apostleship.

"Reprobates", in the verse above, means unapproved, rejected, worthless, or castaway. All true Christians have Jesus within them. The reprobate is those who totally reject Jesus as their Savior.

2 Corinthians 13:6 "But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates."

There was no question that Paul was not a reprobate. He was so full of the Lord Jesus that many miracles were performed by him in the name of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 13:7 "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 is not saying he is reprobate, he is saying, that the false teachers there at Corinth think he is reprobate. Paul's concern is for his church, and not for himself. Paul prayed to God for his churches all the time.

His deepest longing was for his spiritual children to lead godly lives, even if they persisted in doubting him. Paul was even willing to appear “disqualified,” as long as the Corinthians turned from their sin.

2 Corinthians 13:8-9 "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." "For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, [even] your perfection."

Lest anyone think Paul's reference to being disqualified in verse 7 was an admission of wrongdoing on his part, Paul hastened to add that he had not violated “the truth” of the gospel. The apostle may also have meant that he needed to take no action against the Corinthians if he found them living according to “the truth”.

In that case, he would rejoice in his “weakness”, that is, his lack of opportunity to exercise his apostolic power, because that would mean that the Corinthians' were spiritually “strong”.

The Word of God is Truth. I have said, over and over, the 2 great powers in the world are the spoken and the written Word. Paul's power and, in fact, our power is in the Truth of God. The only way to accomplish anything is with the Truth. When we operate in the power of the Word of God, it is Truth.

Paul is much more concerned for those he led to the Lord than he is for himself. He says, I do not need to be elevated up. Paul wishes that they will be perfect in all their deeds.

2 Corinthians 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."

This is a one sentence summary of Paul's purpose in writing this letter to the Corinthians.

Paul is afraid if he were with them and they had not repented of their sins, that he would get harsh with them, and possibly even run them off from God. The Lord has given him power and authority to rule over these churches that he started. Paul would rather build them up, instead of destroy them. This is why he is writing, instead of coming to them in person.

2 Corinthians 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."

Paul's last words to them is speaking a blessing on them. He wants them to feel his love for them in these last few words of his letter to them. He rebuked them for their sin, which he had to do as their leader, but he wants them to know that he has not stopped loving them.

This was written as an encouragement to the Corinthians to carry out the exhortations in the first part of the verse. Only here in the New Testament is God called “the God of Love”.

He has high hopes for the way they will conduct their lives from here on in. Just as a loving parent, his last words are instructions on how to live peaceful lives. He says, I know you will do these things. Do not fuss and fight. Be of one mind and one accord.

2 Corinthians 13:12 "Greet one another with a holy kiss."

This was a sign of greeting in biblical times, much like the modern handshake. For Christians, it further expressed brotherly love and unity.

2 Corinthians 13:13 "All the saints salute you."

Those in Macedonia, possibly Philippi, from where Paul wrote 2 Corinthians are most likely the saints being referred to here.

While encouraging unity within the Corinthian church, Paul did not want the Corinthians to lose sight of their unity with other churches.

2 Corinthians 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."

The Trinitarian benediction reminded the Corinthians of the blessings they had received: “grace” from the Lord Jesus Christ, “love” from God the Father and “communion” with God and each other through the Holy Spirit. Jesus was mentioned before the Father because His sacrificial death is the ultimate expression of God’s love.

2 Corinthians Chapter 13 Questions

1. In the mouth of how many witnesses shall every word be established?
2. Where, in the Old Testament, do we find this same statement?
3. What did Jesus have to say about this?
4. If there are not two witnesses, it is a _____, and not a _____.
5. What did Paul warn them of in verse 2?
6. They were seeking proof of _____ in Paul.
7. What was their real problem?

8. Who was just the one to give them the training they needed?
9. Why did it appear to the world that Christ was weak?
10. What is the greatest victory the world has ever known?
11. What did Jesus defeat on the cross?
12. What did He defeat, when He rose again?
13. What made Paul stronger than anything they could send against him?
14. Where is the life of the Christian hid?
15. Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be _____.
16. What does "reprobate" in verse 5, mean?
17. Who are the reprobates?
18. Who had called Paul reprobate?
19. What is Truth?
20. What are the 2 great powers in the world?
21. Who is Paul more concerned for than for himself?
22. What was Paul afraid he would do, if he were with them?
23. What things did Paul tell them to be in verse 11?
24. What did Paul say to them in his last words to them?
25. How were they to greet each other?
26. What is the benediction that Paul spoke here, that is used in many churches today?