

2 CORINTHIANS – The Ministry

Introduction and background

It's infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake (2Cor 12:10)

2nd Corinthians is a description of the **trials, tests** and **tribulations** that await for any man wanting to enter the ministry for the Lord as a Pastor, preacher, evangelist and teacher. God will put you through such trying circumstances such that you will be able to speak personally of his **comfort** and **deliverance** not from your head, but from your heart - from experience and not just out of a book.

You will know, that you know, that you know, that you know ...
the comfort and consolation that only comes from the Lord.
This comes from throwing yourself 100% in utter dependence on God the Father in crippling circumstances. **WHY? THAT GOD MAY GET ALL THE GLORY NO MATTER WHAT THE OUTCOME!!!**

Forty five (45) words that Paul uses in 2nd Corinthians are "**anguish, perplexity, devour, smite, bondage, weak, despair, forsaken, faint, persecuted, sorry, grieved, down, perish, burden, cast down, groaning, poor, chastened, hunger, beaten, perils, pain, infirmity, stoned, reproaches, offended, weariness, mourning, trembling, fear, poverty, affliction, despair, necessities, imprisonments, distressed, destruction, tumults, killed, tribulation, dying, suffering, terrified, death.**"

Welcome to the Christian ministry! And furthermore, you will thank and praise the Lord from the bottom of your heart that he has seen fit to destroy any form of self support or confidence you may have in yourself, in order for him to get all the glory.

As Paul states "*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. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.***" 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (King James Bible).

Indeed, "...that **the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.**" 2 Corinthians 4:7 (KJB)

WONDERFUL SCRIPTURE VERSES TO PRAY FROM THE HEART

With the following scripture verses and quotes, God shows us how to pray.

He knows what we need before we even ask.

But most people just keep bashing on God's door for health and wealth and anything they need, as though God is ignorant of their needs.

What he wants to hear is our praise and thanks for all our situations and his solutions, in his time, when and where he sees fit. But whatever the situations, God's grace will be sufficient.

*And we know that **all things work together for good to them that love God**, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28
Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Ephesians 5:20*

***Be careful for nothing**; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Philipians 4:6*

***Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God** in Christ Jesus concerning you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of **power**, and of **love**, and of a **sound mind**. 2 Timothy 1:7*

QUOTES from other Christians

"If anyone could tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and perfection, he must tell you to make it a rule to yourself to **thank and praise God for everything that happens to you**. For it is certain that whatever seeming **calamity happens to you**, if you **thank and praise God** for it, **you turn it into a blessing.**" – William Law, clergyman, 18th century "**I thank God for my handicaps**, for through them I have found myself, my work and my God." – Hellen Keller. (Blind from a medical mishap when very young, but able to write hundreds of hymns for the Lord)

"**Blessed is he that submits to the will of God**; he can never be unhappy. Men may deal with him as they will ... he is without care; he knows that **'all things work together for good to them that love God**,

to them who are the called according to his purpose.” – Martin Luther
Christian minister 19th Century

And will people be thankful? Probably not!

As Paul says *And I will very gladly **spend and be spent for you;** though **the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.*** (2 Cor 12:15)

BACKGROUND to 2nd Corinthians

In 1st Corinthians, Paul says he is coming direct to Corinth via Macedonia (1Cor 16:5).

But God changes his plans so he travels through Troas to save others.

He writes 2nd Corinthians about one year after writing 1st Corinthians.

Have you ever felt disappointed and hurt, and jumped to the wrong conclusions, because a friend said they would visit you ... and they didn't turn up? Until you found out the reasons for their not coming, your mind was flooded with false accusations against that person?

Of course, the end result was that this non-visit was being used by God to **once again** expose your lack of trust toward God and **once again** being reminded that you haven't believed Proverbs 3:5-7.

5. *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶ In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

7. *Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.*

This sums up Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth. With fear and trembling, his first letter had shocked them into action, with the man committing incest (having sex with his father's wife) being quickly and severely dealt with. They were now looking forward to a visit from Paul as having followed his instructions. But God had other plans.

Because he didn't visit them right away, certain people and the Jews at Corinth had false accusations against Paul. They were charging him with the following: 1. Guilty of lightness and levity 2. Insincerity 3. Hypocrisy (saying one thing and doing another) 4. Cowardice at not showing up 5. Lying 6. No letters from Jerusalem commending him 7. Dishonesty 8. Sneaky 9. Self interest 10. Insanity by calling him a fool

Now Paul couldn't care less whether he defended himself or not, but as the saying goes "To push back against lies, slander and scorn is often our duty, not because of injury to us, but other Christians of lesser faith, may be discouraged and affected." Paul follows the scripture which says "Smite the scorner and the simple will beware." (Proverbs 19:25)

Paul's apostleship, in their eyes, is under question, but as he points out in the first verse, his apostleship is by the will of God. His commission comes directly from the Lord, so in this second letter, he outlines his responsibility to God and others in this regard. Paul writes without fear and favour to the Corinthian church, refuting their lies and false accusations against him. His duty is to the Lord first and foremost and then to other Christians.

HIS SELF-DEFENCE RELIES ON TWO THINGS

First, his badges of honour, his battle scars proving his experience in serving the Lord, by reminding them of his infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions and distresses. **Second**, his visions and revelations from the Lord.

It is against this backdrop, we commence our study of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians at Corinth.

Different churches required different encouragement and correction.

The Philippians needed **joy**.

The Colossians needed to rely on **Jesus Christ himself** and not secret knowledge.

The Thessalonians needed **hope**.

The Romans were given **justification by faith**

alone without works. The Corinthians need a description of **the difficulties of the ministry**

PAUL'S TWO PRESSING ISSUES

1. The restoring of the 'incest' man who has repented, has suffered enough and needs to be brought back into the congregation (chap 2, 7)

The collection of money for the saints at Jerusalem (chaps 8-9)

OTHER MAIN TOPICS ARE

1. Paul's many sufferings that he and his fellow workers had (1, 4, 6, 7, 11)

2. Paul's labours and successes in preaching the gospel in various places (chap 2)

Paul compares the liberty in Christ to the bondage of Moses (chap 3)

4. Paul's true home is in heaven. On earth he has a ministry of reconciliation (chap 5)

Paul warns them of mixing with unbelievers (chap 6)

A very strong defence against false accusations and lies (chap 10-12)

BRIEF CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Chap 1 Paul's authority established, but not for dominating. **As he has been comforted by the Lord, he is able to comfort others.**

Chap 2 Paul's authority & correction come from love, help and joy for them. **Paul's service out of love and joy for their benefit**

Chap 3 The liberty that comes from being in Christ and having his indwelling Spirit (the Holy Ghost). **Are you saved or still under Moses? Liberty in Christ.**

Chap 4 Our behaviour is open to examination by the world. We are not crafty or deceitful.

The body perishes (a light affliction) but we look for a far more exceeding glory. **Don't be deceitful and crafty.**

Chap 5 **The Christians true home is with Christ in heaven.**

Ministry of reconciling others to Christ.

Chap 6 **Prove yourselves as true ministers of God.** Be not unequally yoked.

Ch 7 We must have **Godly, not worldly sorrow.** We must live holy lives in the fear of God.

Ch 8 **Cheerful giving**

Ch 9 **Cheerful giving**

Ch 10 Paul **strongly re-asserts his authority.**

Ch 11 **Watch out for false and deceitful workers.** Paul's labours and sufferings **Ch 12** Paul's **visions and revelations**

Ch 13 **Examine yourselves** – Are you just fooling yourself. Are you just a pretend Christian?

BASICALLY - THERE ARE THREE MAIN DIVISIONS

Chapters 1-7: **Personal and encouraging advice** along with an 'apology' for their sakes

Chapters 8-9: **The absolute importance of giving to other Christians**

Chapters 10-13: **A commanding and robust self-defence** against his critics

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PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER 1

What you will learn:

In spite of Paul not going to Corinth when he said he would (read 1Corinthians 16:35), Paul reminds the Corinthian church of his authority and his decision not to go there. Paul says his ministry is not to dominate them but to help them and be a comfort to them.

6. Address and greeting (verses 1-2)
7. Paul thanks God for the comfort sent to him by God for his afflictions. The Corinthians were also sympathetic to him (verses 3-11)
8. He has earned a right to their sympathy by his sincerity (verses 12-14)
9. His change of purpose regarding his visit to Corinth plus a brief outline of the gospel (verses 15-21)
10. Explanation of his reasons (verses 22-24)

1. Address and greeting (verses 1-2)

To get a good understanding of the Bible, we need to understand **the meanings of the words and terms** and **who are the people** that are mentioned. So in the first two verses **we will explain the following:**

Who is Paul? What is an apostle? Who is Jesus Christ? What do we mean by God's will? Who is Timothy? What is a brother? What is the church? Who is God? Where is Corinth? What is a saint? Where is Achaia? What is grace? What is peace from God mean? Who is God the Father? Who is the Lord Jesus Christ?

Who is Paul? Paul was that young man, his name was Saul then, who stood by and watched Stephen being stoned (John 7:58-59). He persecuted the Christian churches, killed Christians and threw people into prison. God miraculously confronted him on the way to Damascus one day and he became a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, thereby becoming a Christian himself. Paul has written 14 of the 27 books of the new testament, which are the doctrine (teaching) for all Christian churches today. Paul has his ministry to the uncircumcised (the Gentiles – these are all the people of the world that are not Jews) and Peter had his ministry to the circumcised (Jews) (Galatians 2:7)

What is an apostle? An apostle is a messenger who delivers messages. Sort of like a postman with a letter. The word is almost the same (**a-postman-le**). So God had special men who were his chosen apostles to

help teach, preach and guide his church here on earth. Jesus Christ chose 12 of them (Matthew 10:2).

Now there are no apostles or prophets here on earth today (Ephesians 2:19-20). There is no more foundation to be laid and there is no prophecy (telling the future) to be had.

As the scriptures say, they were the foundation of the church (with Christ as the cornerstone. When a building is built, there is always one point on the corner, from which all measurements are taken).

So the only titles for Christian men today are evangelists, preachers, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is God himself come down from heaven in the form of a man.

In heaven he is called "the Word of God".

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.*** (Jesus is God).

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (He created and made everything)

And **the Word was made flesh,** and dwelt among us, John 1:1, 2, 3, 14 (KJV) (He came down from heaven and lived here on earth)

The first verse in the Bible also says that Jesus Christ made the universe. *In the beginning **God crested the heaven and the earth*** (this is Jesus Christ) (Genesis 1:1)

Thomas calls Jesus his God (John 20:28)

God the Father calls Jesus Christ God (Hebrews 1:8)

What do we mean by God's will? We all have a will. "I will do this!" or "I will do that!". Now people you live with also have a will that may not agree with your will. They want to do something that you don't. So God the Father is like this. Because he is all powerful, knows everything and can do anything, it's always a good idea when we pray to God about things, that we be very humble and say to God "Now I have asked you for this and that, but only if it agrees with your will." The Bible says *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 1 John 5:14 (KJV).* Often when we pray we ask for things that would seem good to us, but God knows better, so he doesn't give it to us. We bow to his superior knowledge. Paul says that he is an apostle because God willed it. He has a commission from God himself.

Who is Timothy? Timothy was one of Paul's helpers. Paul led him to the Lord and he got saved (1 Timothy 1:2). Paul called him his son in the faith.

What is a brother? You may have an actual brother or sister in your family here on earth. Now when we get saved we are put into God's family. So we have **spiritual brothers** and sisters, because we have the same heavenly Father who lives in heaven.

What is the church? There are churches and the church. When you get saved you are spiritually put into (baptised) Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost. This is not water baptism. Now **all those in Jesus Christ are called the church**. Where is Jesus Christ now? He lives in heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father (Hebrews 1:3). **Where is the church? It is in heaven**. The church therefore is **invisible**. Now there are churches here on earth and these are the true Christians who get together for prayer, preaching, teaching and worship. **The church building is not the church**. The Christians who get together are the church. So when Paul writes to the **church** at Corinth, he is writing to those in Christ wherever they may be. These are called the churches in Corinth. Just like he writes to the churches in Galatia (Galatians 1:2). So for example, one Christian is a church. Two Christians are a church and so on. No buildings are needed.

Who is God? Who is God the Father? God is a Spirit and he lives in heaven (John 4:24). There are many things we do not know about God. As God says *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. Isaiah 55:8 (KJV)*. However, Jesus Christ is God in the flesh and the Holy Ghost is God as well. All we need to know about God, he has shown us in his scriptures. So we can know much about the nature, character and operations of God as revealed in his scriptures. As Jesus is God and the Holy Ghost is God, what we know about these two also is a description of God himself.

There is only one God but he has three persons (Hebrews 1:3). A good way to imagine God is an apple.

There is only **one apple** but it has **three parts** – the skin, the flesh and the core. Is the skin the apple?

Yes. Is the core the apple? Yes. Is the flesh the apple?

God is called the Godhead – God has three 'heads' if you like. There is God the Father, God the Son Jesus Christ and God the Holy Ghost (Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9).

Where is Corinth? Where is Achaia? Corinth is a main city in Greece. It is on the left side of the Aegean Sea. Achaia is the general region surrounding these cities.

What is a saint? A saint is a person who is **saved** – saved from the wrath of God. This is also called having **salvation**. When Adam sinned in the

garden of Eden, that sin was passed onto everyone that has ever been born. We are born sinners and that is why we sin. Because God's standard is perfection and sinlessness, he will not let sin or sinners into heaven. That is why God became a man, Jesus Christ, and lived a perfect life on our behalf. As in the old testament, when God saw sin, he called for blood of animals to be shed. This only gave them short term and temporary relief from the wrath of God.

Those who have Jesus Christ as their Saviour are called saints because they have trusted in the shed blood of Jesus. They now have permanent security and protection from the wrath of God.

(Hebrews 10: 12,14)

What is grace? Grace is a gift. It's something you can't work for, you can't earn it and you can't buy it. When God sends himself, in the form of Jesus Christ, down to earth from heaven to pay the penalty for our sins, that is the best gift anyone can have. The scriptures say *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJB).*

What is peace from God mean? People misunderstand by thinking that God will bring peace on earth between people and nations. No, this will not happen (Luke 12:51). It means we can only have peace with him to escape his wrath (Luke 12:14). There will be no peace between men and nations, (in fact it's only going to get worse) till the Prince of Peace returns to rule and reign here on earth at the end of the 7 year tribulation coming very shortly. Now when Jesus Christ returns to earth to rule and reign, then there will be peace on this earth.

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:

Right from the start Paul establishes his office of being an **apostle** and that it had come by **the will of God**. He says this that all may know, especially the Jews that were opposing him at Corinth.

He calls Timothy 'our' brother to let the Corinthians know that they were members of the household of faith as well. Achaia was a country that surrounded the city of Corinth in Greece.

1:2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace is something that God gives you which we don't deserve. For example, God sends Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us. This is grace.

Mercy is being 'let off' and not getting the punishment you do deserve for something you have done wrong.

Now we have peace with God the Father because Jesus has taken the punishment for our sins.

8. Paul thanks God for the comfort sent to him by God for his afflictions. They were also sympathetic to him (verses 3-11)

1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

When you are saved, God in the form of the Holy Ghost, comes to live in you. He is called the Comforter (John 14:26). This means that no matter what, you know God is comforting you when under persecution and distress. Sometimes you may not feel this, but you can trust the words of God that he will never leave you nor forsake you in times of trouble (Hebrews 13:5). Furthermore we are reminded that 'all things work together for good for them that love God' (Romans 8:28).

Now the meaning of the word 'mercy' is covered above. Mercy is not getting what you deserve. It's like if you have done wrong, you deserve to be punished but you get let off. That's mercy. So God is merciful to us all the time isn't he?

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.

Sometimes you might wonder why God lets you go through trouble and hard times? The reason is that you will be a blessing to others by comforting them when they are tried and tested. So because of our afflictions, we can be an example to others. God gives us comfort that we might comfort others.

Now when we see a word with "-eth' on the end of it – like "comforteth" that means the comfort never stops for one second forever more. It goes on and on and on. If someone is just a 'comfort' to you, that can mean it can stop and start. They might comfort you for a day or two, but then you might never see them ever again. But when God comfort**eth** us he never lets up. He is with us every second of the day forever.

1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. Yes, if you are a Christian, you will suffer many things for Christ's sake. You may be attacked and your body may be harmed with cuts and bruises and broken bones. Christ also suffered on the cross for us and paid the penalty, with his actual shed blood, for our sins to God the Father. But we are consoled (comforted) by Christ, because when

he left this earth, he sent the Holy Ghost to come and live in us. This is called the Spirit of Christ which comes and dwells in us (Romans 8:9).

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.

If you are a minister or pastor and have never had any trouble, you won't know how to comfort anyone. God will send you trouble and he will comfort you with his grace, You are then able to know how to comfort others in trouble.

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.

So Paul says "Dear Corinthians, I have endured many things for your sakes, so that I can comfort you. There is nothing that is happening to you that I haven't already experienced." The words that Paul uses to describe these sufferings all through his second letter to the churches at Corinth are "anguish, perplexity, devour, smite, bondage, weak, despair, forsaken, faint, persecuted, sorry, grieved, down, perish, burden, cast down, groaning, poor, chastened, hunger, beaten, perils, pain, infirmity, stoned, reproaches, offended, weariness, mourning, trembling, fear, poverty, affliction, despair, necessities, imprisonments, distressed, destruction, tumults, killed, tribulation, dying, suffering, terrified, death.

Paul said he was steadfast (absolutely sure) that just as they have had sufferings, they will also be consoled and comforted by him and God himself.

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:

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:

Paul then tells them about his trouble when he travelled in Asia (over in Ephesus and surrounding region). They had no hope of getting out of trouble. They thought they were going to die. They were 'pressed out of measure' this means they were like something that had been squashed so flat, that you couldn't measure the height of it. It was so thin because so much pressure had been applied to it. They were pushed down so flat and beyond measure above and beyond the strength of the common man or that any ordinary man could endure. But they knew that even if they were

killed God could raise them up anyhow if he wanted to. God did that to his own son Jesus Christ didn't he (see Galatians 1:1).

1:10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

In case you didn't know dear Corinthians, Paul says, we had no strength left, our lives were in great danger and the only one who could deliver us was God himself. And I suspect, that should we have died, God could bring us back to life again if he wanted to.

Now dear people in Pakistan, you may be wondering why the Lord is putting you through many trials and tests? Good question. Look at it this way. When you throw yourselves totally on the Lord to save you, you will give him all the glory won't you? Of course you will! It's like Moses at the Red Sea when the Egyptians were chasing the people of Israel through the desert. They had no hope of saving themselves. Imagine all the praise and glory God got from that when they got to the other side? You see, in the West here, in Australia, England and America, we can rely on many things to get us out of trouble. So God can be a bit of an 'add on' in our lives. Nice to have him hang around a bit and give us a lift at Sunday services for an hour. So a lot of Christians forget about him the rest of the week. God hates this.

You see, this is why the church grows in places like Pakistan, because you are totally dependent on him for food, work and security. There is a verse that says *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15 (KJV)*. Be absolutely convinced dear Christians in Pakistan, that God just loves you very much and you are very precious. You are the apple of his eye (Zechariah 2:8). Great are your rewards in heaven and for all eternity because of the tests you are undergoing at the moment.

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.

Thank you for helping us by praying for us. On the behalf of many others we send you their thanks as well. The Corinthians had heard about his trouble in Asia and many of them had gotten together in prayer for him. The result was that a lot of people had thanked God for what he had done. It's like when Peter was in prison. (Read Acts chapter 12 when Peter was in prison and many were praying for him as well). The important thing is that God gets all the glory and he gets all the thanks.

3. He has earned a right to their sympathy by his sincerity
(verses 12-14)

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 was able to look back with joy about the things he taught the Corinthians with a clear conscience. In fact Paul had dealt with the world in this way also. He had done his best. He had used the right methods. He had no regrets or a bad conscience. He had used "simplicity and godly sincerity, and not with any of his own fleshly wisdom. He was not being wise in his own eyes. He had not tried to trick them in any way but had been open and honest with them.

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;

In this verse Paul says that the first letter he has written to them (1st Corinthians) was indeed from him. Some of the Corinthians had read the 1st letter to them, but had not realised that he was speaking with the authority of God as an apostle sent by the will of God and did not appreciate what he had said. So he refers back to 1 Corinthians 14:37 which says *If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.***

1:14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of the Lord Jesus.

For they had recognized him in part only, from a human point of view – Paul had a part in their being saved, he had lead them to the Lord and they rejoiced that God had sent him.

'The day of the Lord Jesus' is the rapture when very shortly all true Christians shall be taken home to heaven to be with the Lord forever. When *"... the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then **we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**"* 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

At the rapture Paul said we will rejoice in each soul that has been saved. *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.* 1Thessalonians 2:19-20.

2. His change of purpose regarding his visit to Corinth plus a brief outline of the gospel (verses 15-21)

1:15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit;

Paul went to them first in Acts 19:1 and formed the church. This was their first benefit (gain, good, profit) in that he taught them and got them saved and so on. After he leaves, he then writes to them with 1st Corinthians. Paul then says that he is planning, and is confident, on going to them again in (1st Corinthians 16:3-7). But he doesn't make it. (So when we get to 2nd Corinthians 13:1, Paul says that he is coming to them a third time.

In summary: He went to them the first time. He was going to them the 2nd time but he didn't make it. But he is coming to them the 3rd time.

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.

Paul would leave you then travel North to Macedonia and then return to Corinth again and then return across the Aegean Sea to Judea.

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?

Paul says "Was I joking or being light-hearted when I said these things about coming to you?" Paul then asks the question "Was it just my flesh talking? Did I just promise to come to you on the spur of the moment? Was it off the top of my head?" You can hear him say under his breath "God forbid it was not!" He goes on to say "Look dear Corinthians, my 'yes' is a 'yes' and my 'no' is a 'no'! I mean what I say and I say what I mean. There was no half-hearted promise to come to you. I WAS COMING!"

1:18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

Let God be true, that my promise was not a 'yes-no' or fifty-fifty." I wasn't being half-hearted when I said I was coming to you.

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.

When I, Paul, and Silvanus and Timotheus, who are my helpers, preached the gospel to you, we were not half-hearted about it. We were 100% committed and 100% sure about what we preached. It was not "Well, you know, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to save you, he might do it and he might not. No, it is a gold edged promise that Christ will, in no way, refuse or reject anyone who comes to him to be saved. We are sure of that just as I was sincere when I said I would come to you. I said 'yes' I was coming and before God, he knows that I am not lying."

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1:20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. When God promises something, he means 100% yes. Not 98% yes and 2% no. Paul says "When we say 'Amen', we say it in perfect faith and 100% grateful adoration, glory and worship to God the Father."

1:21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;

The Corinthians have been established by God in Christ through Paul. He has taught them many things on how to live the Christian life and so on. In addition God has anointed us all with the Holy Ghost. Our foundations are firm as concrete because we are children of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Explanation of his reason for not coming to Corinth (verses 22-24)

1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Just like you seal a glass jar with screw-on lid, God has sealed us. No-one can steal us from the jar and we can't get out either. And inside of us we have the Holy Ghost which can never leave us or 'get out the jar'. We have eternal security. But, much more than that, Paul uses the example of buying something. It's like someone goes into a shop but they don't have all the money for a certain item. So they put **a deposit** down of say 5%, 10% or 50% on that item they want. Now, the shopkeeper by law, can not sell that item to anyone else. **The person buying the item is earnest and serious and determined to get it** so much so, that he has given the shopkeeper some money to keep it for him. So they call it an 'earnest', because they are, determined to come back, pay what is owing and then take it home.

Now God the Father is earnest with us also. He has put the deposit of the Holy Ghost in us when we get saved (believe on the Lord Jesus Christ). We are his. No-one else can buy us. We are simply waiting for the rapture (being caught up), which will happen shortly. As stated before, the best scripture is as follows and you should learn it by heart.

² *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

³ **Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

⁴ *Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)*

1:23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

Paul says "God is my witness and I lie not, that when I first wrote to you in 1st Corinthians, about your church disorder of factions, immorality, incest, lawsuits, meats offered to idols, Lord's supper abuse, divisions, strifes, false apostles, marriage problems, disorderly conduct of assemblies, lack of ministry support, self-promotion, women's role in the church and resurrection heresies, I was so upset that I was afraid that I would be too harsh on you and give you a very stern talking to ('rip you to shreds'). This is why I didn't come the second time to you."

1:24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

Paul says "We (Paul, Silvanus, Timotheus) do not and will not dominate your faith. Yes, we rule over you (1Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24) but we are not dictators. We want to help your joy in the Lord because the joy of the Lord, and the joy that comes from the Lord, is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). You stand because of your faith not your works or our rules and regulations (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Questions to discuss/ things to learn:

5. What did you learn about in 1st Corinthians?
6. Trust in the Lord despite the circumstances that you find yourself in.
7. Don't jump to false conclusions
8. Grow up and be more mature Christians.
9. Stop listening to false teachers
10. Look to the Lord in all things and get your eyes off others

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER 2

What you will learn:

11. Paul continues his reason for not coming direct from Ephesus (verses 1-4)
 12. Their treatment of the man who committed incest (verses 5-11)
 13. Paul is thankful at the news that Titus brought from Corinth about his first letter (verses 12-17)
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1. Paul continues his reason for not coming direct from Ephesus (verses 1-4)

2:1 But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.

This was to be Paul's second visit to them. He didn't go. Paul was unwilling to arrive on their doorstep too soon and grieve them. This could have happened if they didn't deal with the case of incest in the proper manner. He had to give them the time to work this out and deal with the man in question. He didn't want to get to Corinth prematurely and before the correct time. He didn't want to get there and rebuke people and throw them out of the church. He was wanting them to fix this up themselves – which they did. He wanted to be a partaker of their joy in the Lord and have cheerful meetings with them rather than disagreements that could have happened.

He didn't want to be a 'wet blanket' as the saying goes by being 'heavy' with them. But Paul was very sad over the sin that happened in the church there. And Paul had a heavy feeling in himself about it all.

Paul is stopped by God in going to them straight away after he sent them the first letter.

He goes North to Troas and then Macedonia where he meets Titus in Macedonia who gives him the good news they had repented.

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?

Paul says that if he made them sorry and caused them grief, who would make him happy? Answer? Nobody. He wanted to have a cheerful get together with them all, and not to be correcting and rebuking them

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.

Paul says that his joy would come from them being joyful and vice versa. If they are sorrowful, then he would be sorrowful as well. In fact, Paul's joy are the saints at Corinth.

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.

Sometimes children misbehave because no-one will correct them. They are wanting discipline. So it is the same with ministers and Pastors. People, when corrected, know that the Pastor cares for them even if they don't like it. Now even with correcting and sternly righting the wrongs that happen in a church with acts of discipline, faithful ministers show their love. However, the discipline needed for correcting offenders is often hurtful and grievous to faithful ministers and is often given with heaviness of heart.

2. Their treatment of the man who committed incest (verses 5-11)

2:5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

Paul says that he is only partly grieved and sorrowful. He says they were a puffed up church and had not mourned over this incest case (1Corinthians 5:2). But seeing they had fixed up the problem under his previous instructions in his first letter to them, he wouldn't be too hard on them as a whole congregation. The punishment of being put out of the church till the man repented and was humbled, was the clearing action needed.

2:6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.

The man's punishment was just enough and sufficient which was brought about by the many people of the whole church. They all agreed to do this.

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 Paul says that having put this man out of the church as punishment, the church should forgive him and comfort him. Charity (love from one Christian to another) covers many sins (1Peter 4:8).

Truly sorrowful people shouldn't be left to themselves to wallow in their grief. They shouldn't be left to fall into despair. This can make you unfit for other duties. This is godly sorrow, a sorrow toward God and not sorrow of the world. Godly sorrow is good (2 Corinthians 7:10). You know the sort of sorrow that people have when they have just been found out? They are just sorry they got caught. This is simply worldly sorrow.

2:8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.

Paul urges them as a congregation, to all prove their love to this man. Confirm = con + firm. Con = together. Be firm in your love to this man. Do this together.

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.

He wrote his first epistle to them with a severe tone to 1. Avoid the necessity for a painful visit (verse 3)

2. To show his special love for them (verse 4) 3. To test their obedience in disciplining the man in question and know whether they would pass the test. Their faithfulness was proved.

2:10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;

If you have forgiven the man, then I do too for your sakes. Also for the sake of Christ and in his name, and in his presence, because I Paul, and indeed yourselves, are to be examples of kindness and tender mercy to all those who truly repent.

2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. Another reason to forgive is so Satan will not get hold of the mind of the man and drive him to despair, all because you wouldn't forgive him. This is one of the ways that Satan works in separating Christians from other Christians.

3. Paul is thankful at the news that Titus brought from Corinth about his first letter.

2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

Now in addition to my not coming to you straight across the sea from Ephesus, God opened up a door for evangelising when I went North to Troas to preach the gospel. People got saved as a result of this.

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.

I thought that Titus would meet me there having come from you at Corinth, but that didn't happen. He was going to tell me all about how you had received my first letter to you. So I continued further North to Macedonia.

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.

Now this is the place, in Macedonia, he met Lydia the seller of purple cloth. You see, he tells the Corinthians, that even though he didn't go and visit them, God used him to get people saved at Troas and indeed at Philippi, the main city of Macedonia.

(He later writes to the Philippian church (churches) in his letter to the Philippians).

So he thanks God that no matter what the circumstances, God will always cause us to triumph by being in Christ. Our triumphs are always in Christ, In ourselves we are weak and don't have joy or victory, but in Christ we do! Now a savour is a smell or a taste. In this case it is the wonderful 'smell' and 'taste' of leading people to the Lord with the knowledge that he died for

all of man's sins – past, present and future. Nothing more to pay or do to make up for our sins to God, but believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as he did it for us. He washes away all our sins (Revelation 1:5) and puts his right standing with God the Father into our spiritual bank account. He exchanges his goodness for our badness. So God the Father accepts me just as if I'd never sinned. Get it? **Justified = just – as - if – I'd** never sinned.

It's like a judge in a court of law. The criminal being tried is found guilty. The punishment is death. But the judge takes off his robes and goes to the gas chamber instead of the criminal. The criminal is set free. Someone has paid the penalty for his crime. So Jesus sets us free such that we don't have to go to hell and suffer the fires of punishment forever more.

2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

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?

To the person who gets saved, they have the sweet smell of the Lord Jesus Christ in their life because he has given them eternal life. To the person who will not accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, all they have to look forward to is death, physical death, which becomes a living death in the fires of hell. Oh yes, we all live forever – some in heaven but most in hell. Paul goes on to say, that apart from the grace of God, he would not be able to perform such a duty in his own strength. All our sufficiency comes from God. The work is so great but of ourselves we have no strength at all. He is definitely not capable or sufficient.

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.

But we are not like many of the churches and Pastors which twist and change the word of God, the holy scriptures. Here he refers to those in Corinth that have turned their hearts away from Paul by teaching false and incorrect doctrine. These were the Jews that had come into the church and started whispering lies about Paul. He deals with these liars and fraudsters in the next chapter of 2 Corinthians.

Paul has taught the Corinthian church nothing but the truth in sincerity before God. He speaks the truth that is to be found in Christ and Christ alone. As we shall see, these Jews were saying to the church that they should start paying more attention to the law of Moses and all that it commanded people to do.

This happening in the churches today as people who are sympathetic to Moses and his laws and the feasts of Israel, are urging people to start acting out things like the Festival of Booths, the Passover, Pentecost and so on.

Indeed, they are saying that keeping the law of Moses give you good favour in the sight of God. In fact, they are saying that you can lose your salvation if you don't. You know, like the Seventh Day Adventists who say you can't be saved unless you worship on Saturday, which is the Jewish Sabbath. These are people who corrupt the word of God. There are the Roman Catholics that say you can never have eternal security in Christ. Why? Because their Jesus is the little wafer biscuit they eat at the Lord's supper. They say it is the actual, body of Christ. Can you imagine that? Some priest mutters some magic words like 'Abracadabra' and the bread is supposed to be turned into the actual body of Christ. Furthermore, the Pope in Rome says the priest has the power to turn the grape juice into the actual blood of Christ! What blasphemy! What lies!

Anyhow, as Paul says, the law of Moses is holy and glorious. However it is far exceeded and surpassed in glory and holiness with the liberty to be found in Christ alone. This is in chapter 3.

Questions to discuss:

- 14. Do you have any questions on chapter 1 or chapter 2?**
- 15. What did you learn in studying 2 Corinthians chapter 2?**

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 3

What you will learn:

3. Paul makes an apology for seeming to defend himself. Paul does not need any recommendation (verses 1-3)
4. Paul's sufficiency comes from God (verses 4-6)
5. God has made Paul a minister of the New Testament which is to be found in Christ. This new testament is far more glorious than that given to Moses with the ten commandments (verses 7-11)
6. Paul's ministry needs no vail upon his face unlike Moses, who had to wear one, after meeting with God on Mt Sinai (verses 12-13)
7. To this very day in March 2020, the Jews still have darkened hearts toward Christ because they are still under the veil of Moses (verses 14-15)
8. However one day this veil shall be removed off Israel (verses 16-18)

9. Paul's purpose in this chapter is to compare the bondage that Moses stood for against the freedom found in Christ. Paul's critics and opposition in Corinth was coming from some Jews there. They were trying to bring the Christians back under obeying the law like worshipping on Saturday, not eating certain foods, washings and rituals, the feast and celebrations, and all the laws, rituals and ceremonies found in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy that governed the whole lives. Paul said "Christ has done all them on your behalf. You have been set free. There is liberty and freedom in Christ."

9. Paul makes an apology for seeming to defend himself. Paul does not need any recommendation (verses 1-3)

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?

Paul doesn't have to commend himself to them. He thought it necessary to protest his sincerity to them, because there were some at Corinth who were trying to undermine him and his reputation. Generally when strangers come into a church they have with them letters and credentials from others that recommend them. Paul treats this as absurd to suppose that he or Timothy should need such letters from them or from those at Jerusalem. Paul defends himself by his being sincere toward them.

3:2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

But Paul says if they wanted any such letters, they should look at themselves. The very name and existence of the Corinthian church was sufficient proof enough. Indeed they were written on Paul's heart and he could appeal and refer to them whenever he wanted to in conversation with others. In fact, they were known among all men. Nothing is so satisfying or delightful for a minister or Pastor, than the success of their ministry with the changed lives of those in the church and who work with them.

3:3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly (obviously) 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.

The Corinthians were themselves were the letters of recommendation. They were written on his heart. Christ was the founder and Paul was the minister who looked after them. The Corinthians were the letters themselves, not written on paper with ink, or engraved upon stone, but were written on

Christ's heart and Paul's heart. They were not written upon stone like the laws of Moses, but written by the finger of God, as it were, upon Paul's heart. He utterly refuses to take any credit for this but gives all the glory to God.

16. Paul's sufficiency comes solely from God (verses 4-6)

3:4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:

Paul says that the trust he has in all this is toward God through Christ. That is in the direction to God all because of Jesus Christ.

3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

All true pastors, teachers and preachers know that their strength, effectiveness and success is all of God and his grace and his mercy. Only what God can give will make us sufficient.

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.

The new testament is to be found in Christ. The letter refers to the letters on the table of the two stones that Moses brought down from the mountain. These had the law on them. These were the ten commandments. Trying to act out the ten commandments to impress God can't be done. You see, the law was given not to save us, or indeed the Jews under the old testament, but to show we are sinners and cannot keep God's high standards. God did this deliberately to show how pathetic we really are in his sight. *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

Galatians 2:16

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. Galatians 3:24-25

Do you know what a schoolmaster says all the time? "You are not good enough! You can do better!" So the law says "You can't be good enough. You are not good enough. You need the goodness of Christ". Now when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Saviour, we have the Spirit put into us in the form of the Holy Ghost. So the Spirit gives life.

5 God has made Paul a minister of the new testament which is to be found in Christ. This new

testament is far more glorious than that given to Moses with the ten commandments (verses 7-11)

3:7 But 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 for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

The two tables of stone with the laws of God written on them, were God's way of ministering to Israel under the old testament. Now because God is pure, sinless and perfect, his laws are pure, perfect and glorious. No-one can possibly keep them. They couldn't even stand the glory of them. That's why when Moses came down off Mt Sinai after having spent time with God alone, Moses' face shone like a very bright light that blinded the eyes. That's why he had to put a cloth (veil) over his face, because they could not bear to look on his face. The countenance of Moses was his face. But this glory of God's laws that were reflected in Moses' face was to be replaced by the glory of Christ. Why? Christ was better than the law because he fulfilled every demand of it. He beat it. He conquered it. He subdued it as a man of flesh. Christ came to fulfil the law in the flesh, such that we can have his victory of 'beating/fulfilling' the law, put into our account.

3:8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

Our soul gets saved and our spirit becomes born again by God's Spirit. So God's Spirit (God's Spirit always has a capital "S") ministers to our spirit (our spirit always has a small "s"). See the difference?

Yes, God's Spirit that ministers to us in the form of the Holy Ghost, comes inside of us and attends and cares for our little human spirit. "This is a glorious thing" says Paul.

3:9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

Paul says the law was glorious. Paul says that the law which was given to condemn us and show us we are sinners, was glorious. Why? It shows that we are not God. God's laws are glorious. The mere fact that we can't keep them doesn't mean they aren't glorious.

Now, Paul says that having Christ's right standing with God, his righteousness, is more glorious than the law. Why? Christ was better than the law. It couldn't and didn't defeat him. Christ not only defeated the law. We say he fulfilled it. Christ did everything that the law wanted of him. So Christ's righteousness in fulfilling the law is more glorious than the law.

3:10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

God's law had no glory compared to Christ's glory. Christ glory exceeded and surpassed what the law demanded.

3:11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. The law was put aside or done away with when Christ fulfilled it. The law was glorious, but what was left was Christ's glory of fulfilling the law. The condemnation of the law (which was glorious) was done away with when Christ did what it demanded. Therefore what Christ did was more glorious than the law.

11. Paul's ministry needs no veil upon his face unlike Moses, who had to wear a veil over his face after meeting with God on Mt Sinai (verses 12-13)

3:12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

So Paul doesn't have to cover up like Moses. Paul speaks very plainly. Good ministers do this. Bad ministers don't. They talk in complicated ways and no-one can understand them. Because what Christ has done is open to all and very plain to see, we can tell people exactly where they will be after they die. God's love is Jesus Christ. Have him as Saviour and you will go to heaven. If you don't, then God must send you to hell because you have unforgiven sins that have not been washed away by the blood of Christ.

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:

No matter how hard they tried in keeping the law, they could only have temporary forgiveness of sins by the blood of animals. The old testament Jew could not see Jesus Christ in the future. They could not see a time when they would have eternal security once and for all, by the blood of Christ. Their eyes were blocked. Moses face blocked out the light of the law that made his face shine. Christ is called the Light that lighteth every man that comes into the world (John 1:9).

5. To this very day in March 2020, the unsaved Jews still have darkened hearts toward Christ because they are still under the veil of Moses (verses 14-15)

3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

As the saying goes "The old is in the new revealed and the new is in the old concealed." Jesus Christ is hidden in the old testament but is revealed in the new testament.

The modern day Jew still have blocked and blinded minds. The old veil of trying to impress God with their keeping the law (which they could never do) needs to be removed from them. It is a spiritual blindness.

3:15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

Because most Jews today have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour, a veil is on their heart and they have blinded minds that will not accept the fact that they need Jesus Christ's perfect keeping of the law put into their account, so that they may get to heaven. They are still with Moses who has a veil over his face.

6. However one day this veil shall be removed off Israel
(verses 16-18)

3:16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

Now sometime in the 7 year tribulation, Israel will have their blindfold over their eyes and minds, taken away by God himself. It won't be the result of their efforts either. It will be by remote control from God. He will just do it one day when the time is right. *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **the spirit of grace** and of supplications: **and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.***
Zechariah 12:10

And all Israel shall be saved in that day.

3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God. God the Father is God. The Holy Ghost, which is the indwelling Spirit of God, is God as well. We are no longer under the bondage and the curse of the law to keep it. We are set free. The law has done it's work. Without the law, we would not know we are sinners and we could not be saved by Christ. So the law was wonderful to reveal sin in us that Christ could save us and set us free. Give us liberty.

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.

The more we clean up our lives by obeying what God wants from us today, the more we see clearly who Christ was, is and shall be. We are being changed every day from glory to glory and hopefully becoming more like Christ. The Jew in the old testament in the desert only saw the glory of God in the cloud that led them around and the fire at night. But we have, as it were, a more clear picture of Christ as in a mirror. The more we examine ourselves and prove we are in the faith, we are changed from glory into more glory (2 Corinthians 13:5; Philippians 2:12).

Question: "What did you learn from this chapter?"

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 4

What you will learn:

1. Paul outlines the glory of his gospel ministry (verses 1-6)
10. This preaching of the gospel sustains the hearts and minds of Christ's ministers through all their weaknesses and trials (verses 7-15)
This is especially true by their faith in things that are unseen (verses 16-18)

People who are still trying to get saved by works are still under the works of the old testament law. The ministry that Paul sets out in this chapter is as follows: "You are sinners and don't deserve to be saved. You can't earn your salvation by doing the works of the law because God's standard is 100% perfection. Just supposing you could keep the outward aspects of the law, it still wouldn't be right, because God demands that you have a love of the law and a desire of the heart to fulfil it. Not just going through the outward motions. Therefore no-one can keep the law. But God will save you if you come to him as a sinner and trust that Jesus Christ not only kept the law on your behalf but also he had the right heart attitude to it because he loved it. You can trust in the perfect work of Jesus and not your own works."

1. Paul outlines the glory of his gospel ministry (verses 1-6)

4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

Paul has the ministry of reconciliation which means that he brings people to know Jesus Christ. He brings them together. He introduces the sinner to Christ. "Dear sinner, have you ever met Christ? Why don't I tell you about him and what he has done for you. Why don't you shake his hand, become friends by having him as your Saviour. Yes, only Jesus can save you from God's wrath of sending you to hell because you are a sinner." That is what is called the ministry of reconciliation. *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 2 Corinthians 5:18*

Now we have been given God's mercy and been saved, we will work for him. We will not faint because of the task ahead of us with this ministry.

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.

False teachers are dishonest, they are cunning and crafty, and they destroy God's words and their meanings, found in the King James Bible, The Authorized Bible. Such as: 1. They add words 2. They subtract words 3. They remove a verse from the Bible 4. They change and substitute words for others in the Bible. These false Bibles are the NIV, the NASB, the Good News and so on. In other words, there are over 300 Bibles that differ from The King James Bible. All these other so called 'bibles' have been corrupted and most of them come out of Rome and their scholars. Paul says "We will clearly show you by our actions that we have the truth. We will not lie to you. We will tell you, that you don't have to mix the works of the law of the old testament with Christ having completed and fulfilled these works for you on your behalf." The minister has to "*provide things honest in the sight of all men.*" (Romans 12:17). Let people think what they like about you, but be honest and genuine. Don't pretend, no "put-ons", no calculated and controlled speeches to produce the right impression or get the desired results. DON'T BE A HYPOCRITE.

4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

The question we often ask ourselves is this "Why don't all people get saved?" Answer: "They are lost because of the reason found in the next verse.

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.

Satan blinds the minds people. How does he do this? Easy. He whispers in their ears and says things like "You aren't as bad as the next person. They

are really bad sinners. They need to get saved before you do." Or he says "Look, you have done a lot of good things for others. Surely this will impress God and he'll let you into heaven." Or Satan will say "You are a politician and have helped many people with passing good laws for them." Or "You have given a lot of money to help others" You have fasted twice a week." Does this remind you of anyone? That's right the Pharisee.

17. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

*18. I **fast twice in the week, I give tithes** of all that I possess.*

*19. And the **publican**, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Luke 18:11-14 (KJB).*

There was another man wasn't there? The publican (tax-gatherer. He collected taxes for a living). Satan blinds the minds of people by "puffing them up". You are a really good person. There are a lot of others worse than you. You are top of the tree." And so on.

But as the Bible says "All the good things we do are nothing but filthy rags in God's sight" (Isaiah 64:6).

Satan blinds us to how 100% perfect Christ is. The glorious gospel of Christ is this "You are a sinner, blind to your own sin but Christ was perfect. To get into heaven you must have Christ's works put into your account." It's like a bank account you have at the bank, however this is God's bank and you must have a spiritual account with him. Now in that spiritual account, when God looks into it, he must see "Ah good. This man has Christ's works in it. This man has Christ's works as a substitute instead of his own. Well done my son, please come into heaven."

You see Satan works on the flesh and on the mind and says "Your works are better than Christ's. You can reject what he has done for you. You have done enough and in your heart you really are a good person even though you sin and are not perfect." As the scriptures say *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and **comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.** 2 Corinthians 10:12 (KJV)*

4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

Why do ministers want to preach about themselves all the time? They shouldn't. Go back to the gospels and preach Jesus – his life, his works, what he did, his perfect works, his death, his burial, his resurrection and so

on. Paul says we are your helpers and servants for the sake of Jesus. In other words as he has saved us and guided us, we are here to likewise for you.

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.

Christ appeared physically on the earth and was the bright shining light. *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Isaiah 9:2.* Israel have seen Jesus Christ in the flesh. They were in darkness and Jesus was sent to them as a bright shining light. In fact, the star that came from the East and guided the wise men to the manger showed that Christ was the light that had come unto, and onto, the earth (Matthew 2:2).

Now even as we know no more Christ in the flesh *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. 2 Corinthians 5:16,* we can have Christ shine in our hearts by the Holy Ghost as Christ now sits in heaven at the right hand of God the Father (Hebrews 10:12; 12:2). Christ not only is the Light that lighteth every one that is born (we all have conscience), but for those who are saved, we have him in our hearts. He is the treasure in earthen vessels.

Christ is the brightness of God's glory as the scriptures say **Who** (Jesus) **being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Hebrews 1:3** (King James Bible)

6 This preaching of the gospel sustains the hearts and minds of Christ's ministers through all their weaknesses and trials (verses 7-15)

4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

What is this treasure we have in ourselves? Our physical bodies are the vessels made for the earth. Adam was formed from the earth and the dust (Gen 2:7). It is Christ himself in our hearts. It is the Holy Ghost in us. It is God himself in us. These three are one. *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and **these three are one.** 1 John 5:7.* Furthermore, *In the beginning was the Word (Jesus Christ), and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.** John 1:1* (KJV).

Many people go through life 'under their own steam' as the saying goes. They get through life under their own power. They won't let God control their life and be as a branch that gets its life from the tree (John 15:4-5).

4:8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

4:9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

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.

What we have here, is a comparison between what is happening on the outside of the body in the flesh and the state of the treasure on the inside. In the natural and the physical, there was all sorts of trials and tribulations, but the Lord was on the inside taking care of them. *As Paul says I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20 (KJV).* You can praise God through all the mess you are going through at the moment on the outside, but not complain and murmur.

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.

As Paul says elsewhere As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Romans 8:36-37. Victory comes through dying to self.

4:12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

So Paul summarizes by saying, that all the trouble that he had been through back in verse 8-11, was for the benefit of the Corinthians. It was to help the spiritual life of them and work for their good.

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;

This is Psalm 116:10. Paul says that although some may be of weaker faith, it is still the same Holy Ghost, himself, that works his power in us. As David said in the old testament, that he spoke as he believed, then Paul says he can do no better than follow David in that what Paul believes he speaks. I don't believe one thing and then speak another.

4:14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

Just as Christ was raised from the dead by God the Father, when the Lord comes for us in the rapture (1Thessalonians 4:16-18) it will be just the same. Those that have already died as Christians (they are called dead in Christ) shall be brought back to life and we all shall meet the Lord in the air.

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.

Paul says that everything that has happened to him is for the sake of the Corinthians and they can then grow further in the Lord. They then can give the Lord more thanks for this. The more people that give the Lord thanks, the more glory God gets.

3. This is especially true by their faith in things that are unseen (verses 16-18)

4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

Isn't that true! We all die eventually from our bodies rotting away and slowing down. Our hearts eventually stop beating. But our souls never die. They live forever. What is our soul? It's like a person in car that crashes. The car may be destroyed but the person gets out and walks away. This is a good description of the soul. The real you is not your body, but your soul. That is why we say that our soul gets saved and our spirit becomes born again. We have a new spirit. Do you know anyone like that? Of course. Before they received Jesus Christ as their Saviour, they were grumpy, depressed and angry. But God gave them a new spirit. Their old spirit became born again, just like a little baby that is happy all the time.

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 calls everything that happens to us down here as a light affliction. Sort of like a mosquito bite that goes for a second. But how we handle it, is the thing that is important. Whatever you can do for the Lord down here which includes a sweet spirit, that no matter what happens you are giving thanks to the Lord for the power he has put in you. In spite of your personal difficulties, did you work for the Lord? These are the rewards in heaven that await you.

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.

We keep our eyes on Jesus and he is in heaven right now. We say "Dear Jesus I am coming home one day to be with you. I can hardly wait."

'Temporal' means 'not lasting long' or 'temporary' or 'short lived'. What happens on earth goes quick but heaven is forever.

So we don't dwell on our bodies as they will not last forever. They rot. As they say "Muscles come and go, but flab lasts forever."

The real you is your soul and that is not what you can see.

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER 1

What you will learn:

In spite of Paul not going to Corinth when he said he would (read 1Corinthians 16:35), Paul reminds the Corinthian church of his authority and his decision not to go there. Paul says his ministry is not to dominate them but to help them and be a comfort to them.

1. Address and greeting (verses 1-2)
2. Paul thanks God for the comfort sent to him by God for his afflictions. The Corinthians were also sympathetic to him (verses 3-11)
3. He has earned a right to their sympathy by his sincerity (verses 12-14)
4. His change of purpose regarding his visit to Corinth plus a brief outline of the gospel (verses 15-21)
5. Explanation of his reasons (verses 22-24)

1. Address and greeting (verses 1-2)

To get a good understanding of the Bible, we need to understand **the meanings of the words and terms** and **who are the people** that are mentioned. So in the first two verses **we will explain the following:**
Who is Paul? What is an apostle? Who is Jesus Christ? What do we mean by God's will? Who is Timothy? What is a brother? What is the church? Who is God? Where is Corinth? What is a saint? Where is Achaia? What is grace? What is peace from God mean? Who is God the Father? Who is the Lord Jesus Christ?

Who is Paul? Paul was that young man, his name was Saul then, who stood by and watched Stephen being stoned (John 7:58-59). He persecuted the Christian churches, killed Christians and threw people into prison. God miraculously confronted him on the way to Damascus one day and he became a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, thereby becoming a Christian himself. Paul has written 14 of the 27 books of the new testament, which are the doctrine (teaching) for all Christian churches today. Paul has his ministry to the uncircumcised (the Gentiles – these are all the people of the world that are not Jews) and Peter had his ministry to the circumcised (Jews) (Galatians 2:7)

What is an apostle? An apostle is a messenger who delivers messages. Sort of like a postman with a letter. The word is almost the same (**a-postman-le**). So God had special men who were his chosen apostles to help teach, preach and guide his church here on earth. Jesus Christ chose 12 of them (Matthew 10:2).

Now there are no apostles or prophets here on earth today (Ephesians 2:19-20). There is no more foundation to be laid and there is no prophecy (telling the future) to be had.

As the scriptures say, they were the foundation of the church (with Christ as the cornerstone. When a building is built, there is always one point on the corner, from which all measurements are taken).

So the only titles for Christian men today are evangelists, preachers, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is God himself come down from heaven in the form of a man.

In heaven he is called "the Word of God".

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.*** (Jesus is God).

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (He created and made everything)

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, John 1:1, 2, 3, 14 (KJV) (He came down from heaven and lived here on earth)

The first verse in the Bible also says that Jesus Christ made the universe. *In the beginning **God crested the heaven and the earth*** (this is Jesus Christ) (Genesis 1:1)

Thomas calls Jesus his God (John 20:28)

God the Father calls Jesus Christ God (Hebrews 1:8)

What do we mean by God's will? We all have a will. "I will do this!" or "I will do that!". Now people you live with also have a will that may not agree with your will. They want to do something that you don't. So God the Father is like this. Because he is all powerful, knows everything and can do

anything, it's always a good idea when we pray to God about things, that we be very humble and say to God "Now I have asked you for this and that, but only if it agrees with your will." The Bible says *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 1 John 5:14 (KJV)*. Often when we pray we ask for things that would seem good to us, but God knows better, so he doesn't give it to us. We bow to his superior knowledge. Paul says that he is an apostle because God willed it. He has a commission from God himself.

Who is Timothy? Timothy was one of Paul's helpers. Paul led him to the Lord and he got saved (1 Timothy 1:2). Paul called him his son in the faith.

What is a brother? You may have an actual brother or sister in your family here on earth. Now when we get saved we are put into God's family. So we have **spiritual brothers** and sisters, because we have the same heavenly Father who lives in heaven.

What is the church? There are churches and the church. When you get saved you are spiritually put into (baptised) Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost. This is not water baptism. Now **all those in Jesus Christ are called the church**. Where is Jesus Christ now? He lives in heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father (Hebrews 1:3). **Where is the church? It is in heaven**. The church therefore is **invisible**. Now there are churches here on earth and these are the true Christians who get together for prayer, preaching, teaching and worship. **The church building is not the church**. The Christians who get together are the church. So when Paul writes to the **church** at Corinth, he is writing to those in Christ wherever they may be. These are called the churches in Corinth. Just like he writes to the churches in Galatia (Galatians 1:2). So for example, one Christian is a church. Two Christians are a church and so on. No buildings are needed.

Who is God? Who is God the Father? God is a Spirit and he lives in heaven (John 4:24). There are many things we do not know about God. As God says *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. Isaiah 55:8 (KJV)*. However, Jesus Christ is God in the flesh and the Holy Ghost is God as well. All we need to know about God, he has shown us in his scriptures. So we can know much about the nature, character and operations of God as revealed in his scriptures. As Jesus is God and the Holy Ghost is God, what we know about these two also is a description of God himself.

There is only one God but he has three persons (Hebrews 1:3). A good way to imagine God is an apple. There is only **one apple** but it has **three parts** – the skin, the flesh and the core. Is the skin the apple? Yes. Is the core the apple? Yes. Is the flesh the apple?

God is called the Godhead – God has three 'heads' if you like. There is God the Father, God the Son Jesus Christ and God the Holy Ghost (Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9).

Where is Corinth? Where is Achaia? Corinth is a main city in Greece. It is on the left side of the Aegean Sea. Achaia is the general region surrounding these cities.

What is a saint? A saint is a person who is **saved** – saved from the wrath of God. This is also called having **salvation**. When Adam sinned in the garden of Eden, that sin was passed onto everyone that has ever been born. We are born sinners and that is why we sin. Because God's standard is perfection and sinlessness, he will not let sin or sinners into heaven. That is why God became a man, Jesus Christ, and lived a perfect life on our behalf. As in the old testament, when God saw sin, he called for blood of animals to be shed. This only gave them short term and temporary relief from the wrath of God.

Those who have Jesus Christ as their Saviour are called saints because they have trusted in the shed blood of Jesus. They now have permanent security and protection from the wrath of God.

(Hebrews 10: 12,14)

What is grace? Grace is a gift. It's something you can't work for, you can't earn it and you can't buy it. When God sends himself, in the form of Jesus Christ, down to earth from heaven to pay the penalty for our sins, that is the best gift anyone can have. The scriptures say *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJB).*

What is peace from God mean? People misunderstand by thinking that God will bring peace on earth between people and nations. No, this will not happen (Luke 12:51). It means we can only have peace with him to escape his wrath (Luke 12:14). There will be no peace between men and nations, (in fact it's only going to get worse) till the Prince of Peace returns to rule and reign here on earth at the end of the 7 year tribulation coming very shortly. Now when Jesus Christ returns to earth to rule and reign, then there will be peace on this earth.

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:

Right from the start Paul establishes his office of being an **apostle** and that it had come by **the will of God**. He says this that all may know, especially the Jews that were opposing him at Corinth.

He calls Timothy 'our' brother to let the Corinthians know that they were members of the household of faith as well. Achaia was a country that surrounded the city of Corinth in Greece.

1:2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace is something that God gives you which we don't deserve.

For example, God sends Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us. This is grace.

Mercy is being 'let off' and not getting the punishment you do deserve for something you have done wrong.

Now we have peace with God the Father because Jesus has taken the punishment for our sins.

2. Paul thanks God for the comfort sent to him by God for his afflictions.

They were also sympathetic to him (verses 3-11)

1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

When you are saved, God in the form of the Holy Ghost, comes to live in you. He is called the Comforter (John 14:26). This means that no matter what, you know God is comforting you when under persecution and distress. Sometimes you may not feel this, but you can trust the words of God that he will never leave you nor forsake you in times of trouble (Hebrews 13:5). Furthermore we are reminded that 'all things work together for good for them that love God' (Romans 8:28).

Now the meaning of the word 'mercy' is covered above. Mercy is not getting what you deserve. It's like if you have done wrong, you deserve to be punished but you get let off. That's mercy. So God is merciful to us all the time isn't he?

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.

Sometimes you might wonder why God lets you go through trouble and hard times? The reason is that you will be a blessing to others by comforting them when they are tried and tested. So because of our afflictions, we can be an example to others. God gives us comfort that we might comfort others.

Now when we see a word with "-eth" on the end of it – like "comforteth" that means the comfort never stops for one second forever more. It goes on and on and on. If someone is just a 'comfort' to you, that can mean it can stop and start. They might comfort you for a day or two, but then you might never see them ever again. But when God comforteth us he never lets up. He is with us every second of the day forever.

1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

Yes, if you are a Christian, you will suffer many things for Christ's sake. You may be attacked and your body may be harmed with cuts and bruises and broken bones. Christ also suffered on the cross for us and paid the penalty, with his actual shed blood, for our sins to God the Father. But we are consoled (comforted) by Christ, because when he left this earth, he sent the Holy Ghost to come and live in us. This is called the Spirit of Christ which comes and dwells in us (Romans 8:9).

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.

If you are a minister or pastor and have never had any trouble, you won't know how to comfort anyone. God will send you trouble and he will comfort you with his grace, You are then able to know how to comfort others in trouble.

1:7 And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.

So Paul says "Dear Corinthians, I have endured many things for your sakes, so that I can comfort you. There is nothing that is happening to you that I haven't already experienced." The words that Paul uses to describe these sufferings all through his second letter to the churches at Corinth are "anguish, perplexity, devour, smite, bondage, weak, despair, forsaken, faint, persecuted, sorry, grieved, down, perish, burden, cast down, groaning, poor, chastened, hunger, beaten, perils, pain, infirmity, stoned, reproaches, offended, weariness, mourning, trembling, fear, poverty, affliction, despair, necessities, imprisonments, distressed, destruction, tumults, killed, tribulation, dying, suffering, terrified, death.

Paul said he was stedfast (absolutely sure) that just as they have had sufferings, they will also be consoled and comforted by him and God himself.

4

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:

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:

Paul then tells them about his trouble when he travelled in Asia (over in Ephesus and surrounding region). They had no hope of getting out of trouble. They thought they were going to die. They were 'pressed out of measure' means they like something that had been squashed so flat, that you couldn't measure the height of it. It was so thin because so much pressure had been applied to it. They were pushed down so flat and beyond measure above and beyond the strength of the common man or that any ordinary man could endure. But they knew that even if they were killed God could raise them up anyhow if he wanted to. God did that to his own son Jesus Christ didn't he (see Galatians 1:1).

1:10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

In case you didn't know dear Corinthians, Paul says, we had no strength left, our lives were in great danger and the only one who could deliver us was God himself. And I suspect, that should we have died, God could bring us back to life again if he wanted to.

Now dear people in Pakistan, you may be wondering why the Lord is putting you through many trials and tests? Good question. Look at it this way. When you throw yourselves totally on the Lord to save you, you will give him all the glory won't you? Of course you will! It's like Moses at the Red Sea when the Egyptians were chasing the people of Israel through the desert. They had no hope of saving themselves. Imagine all the praise and glory God got from that when they got to the other side? You see, in the West here, in Australia, England and America, we can rely on many things to get us out of trouble. So God can be a bit of an 'add on' in our lives. Nice to have him hang around a bit and give us a lift at Sunday services for an hour. So a lot of Christians forget about him the rest of the week. God hates this.

You see, this is why the church grows in places like Pakistan, because you are totally dependent on him for food, work and security. There is a verse that says *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15 (KJV)*. Be absolutely convinced dear Christians in Pakistan, that God just loves you very much and you are very precious. You are the apple of his eye (Zechariah 2:8). Great are your rewards in heaven and for all eternity because of the tests you are undergoing at the moment.

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.

Thank you for helping us by praying for us. On the behalf of many others we send you their thanks as well. The Corinthians had heard about his trouble in Asia and many of them had gotten together in prayer for him. The result was that a lot of people had thanked God for what he had done. It's like when Peter was in prison. (Read Acts chapter 12 when Peter was in prison and many were praying for him as well). The important thing is that God gets all the glory and he gets all the thanks.

3. He has earned a right to their sympathy by his sincerity (verses 12-14)

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 was able to look back with joy about the things he taught the Corinthians with a clear conscience. In fact Paul had dealt with the world in this way also. He had done his best. He had used the right methods. He

had no regrets or a bad conscience. He had used "simplicity and godly sincerity, and not with any of his own fleshly wisdom. He was not being wise in his own eyes. He had not tried to trick them in any way but had been open and honest with them.

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;

In this verse Paul says that the first letter he has written to them (1st Corinthians) was indeed from him. Some of the Corinthians had read the 1st letter to them, but had not realised that he was speaking with the authority of God as an apostle sent by the will of God and did not appreciate what he had said. So he refers back to 1 Corinthians 14:37 which says *If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.***

1:14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of the Lord Jesus.

For they had recognized him in part only, from a human point of view – Paul had a part in their being saved, he had lead them to the Lord and they rejoiced that God had sent him.

'The day of the Lord Jesus' is the rapture when very shortly all true Christians shall be taken home to heaven to be with the Lord forever. When *"... the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then **we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**" 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*

At the rapture Paul said we will rejoice in each soul that has been saved. *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy. 1Thessalonians 2:19-20.*

4. His change of purpose regarding his visit to Corinth plus a brief outline of the gospel (verses 15-21)

1:15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit;

Paul went to them first in Acts 19:1 and formed the church. This was their first benefit (gain, good, profit) in that he taught them and got them saved and so on. After he leaves, he then writes to them with 1st Corinthians. Paul then says that he is planning, and is confident, on going to them again in (1st Corinthians 16:3-7). But he doesn't make it. (So when we get to 2nd Corinthians 13:1, Paul says that he is coming to them a third time.

In summary: He went to them the first time. He was going to them the 2nd time but he didn't make it. But he is coming to them the 3rd time.

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.

Paul would leave you then travel North to Macedonia and then return to Corinth again and then return across the Aegean Sea to Judea.

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?

Paul says "Was I joking or being light-hearted when I said these things about coming to you?" Paul then asks the question "Was it just my flesh talking? Did I just promise to come to you on the spur of the moment? Was it off the top of my head?" You can hear him say under his breath "God forbid it was not!" He goes on to say "Look dear Corinthians, my 'yes' is a 'yes' and my 'no' is a 'no'! I mean what I say and I say what I mean. There was no half-hearted promise to come to you. I WAS COMING!"

1:18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

Let God be true, that my promise was not a 'yes-no' or fifty-fifty." I wasn't being half-hearted when I said I was coming to you.

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.

When I, Paul, and Silvanus and Timotheus, who are my helpers, preached the gospel to you, we were not half-hearted about it. We were 100% committed and 100% sure about what we preached. It was not "Well, you know, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to save you, he might do it and he might not. No, it is a gold edged promise that Christ will, in no way, refuse or reject anyone who comes to him to be saved. We are sure of that just as I was sincere when I said I would come to you. I said 'yes' I was coming and before God, he knows that I am not lying."

1:20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. When God promises something, he means 100% yes. Not 98% yes and 2% no. Paul says "When we say 'Amen', we say it in perfect faith and 100% grateful adoration, glory and worship to God the Father."

1:21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;

The Corinthians have been established by God in Christ through Paul. He has taught them many things on how to live the Christian life and so on. In addition God has anointed us all with the Holy Ghost. Our foundations are firm as concrete because we are children of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Explanation of his reason for not coming to Corinth (verses 22-24)

1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Just like you seal a glass jar with screw-on lid, God has sealed us. No-one can steal us from the jar and we can't get out either. And inside of us we have the Holy Ghost which can never leave us or 'get out the jar'. We have eternal security. But, much more than that, Paul uses the example of buying something. It's like someone goes into a shop but they don't have all the money for a certain item. So they put **a deposit** down of say 5%, 10% or 50% on that item they want. Now, the shopkeeper by law, can not sell that item to anyone else. **The person buying the item is earnest and serious and determined to get it** so much so, that he has given the shopkeeper some money to keep it for him. So they call it an 'earnest', because they are, determined to come back, pay what is owing and then take it home.

Now God the Father is earnest with us also. He has put the deposit of the Holy Ghost in us when we get saved (believe on the Lord Jesus Christ). We are his. No-one else can buy us. We are simply waiting for the rapture (being caught up), which will happen shortly. As stated before, the best scripture is as follows and you should learn it by heart.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

*17 Then **we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.***

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

1:23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

Paul says "God is my witness and I lie not, that when I first wrote to you in 1st Corinthians, about your church disorder of factions, immorality, incest, lawsuits, meats offered to idols, Lord's supper abuse, divisions, strifes, false apostles, marriage problems, disorderly conduct of assemblies, lack of ministry support, self-promotion, women's role in the church and resurrection heresies, I was so upset that I was afraid that I would be too harsh on you and give you a very stern talking to ('rip you to shreds'). This is why I didn't come the second time to you."

1:24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

Paul says "We (Paul, Silvanus, Timotheus) do not and will not dominate your faith. Yes, we rule over you (1Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24) but we are not dictators. We want to help your joy in the Lord because the

joy of the Lord, and the joy that comes from the Lord, is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). You stand because of your faith not your works or our rules and regulations (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Questions to discuss/ things to learn:

1. What did you learn about in 1st Corinthians?
2. Trust in the Lord despite the circumstances that you find yourself in.
3. Don't jump to false conclusions
4. Grow up and be more mature Christians.
5. Stop listening to false teachers
6. Look to the Lord in all things and get your eyes off others

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER 2

What you will learn:

1. Paul continues his reason for not coming direct from Ephesus (verses 1-4)
2. Their treatment of the man who committed incest (verses 5-11)
3. Paul is thankful at the news that Titus brought from Corinth about his first letter (verses 12-17)

1. Paul continues his reason for not coming direct from Ephesus (verses 1-4)

2:1 But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.

This was to be Paul's second visit to them. He didn't go. Paul was unwilling to arrive on their doorstep too soon and grieve them. This could have happened if they didn't deal with the case of incest in the proper manner. He had to give them the time to work this out and deal with the man in question. He didn't want to get to Corinth prematurely and before the correct time. He didn't want to get there and rebuke people and throw them out of the church. He was wanting them to fix this up themselves – which they did. He wanted to be a partaker of their joy in the Lord and have cheerful meetings with them rather than disagreements that could have happened.

He didn't want to be a 'wet blanket' as the saying goes by being 'heavy' with them. But Paul was very sad over the sin that happened in the church there. And Paul had a heavy feeling in himself about it all.

Paul is stopped by God in going to them straight away after he sent them the first letter.

He goes North to Troas and then Macedonia where he meets Titus in Macedonia who gives him the good news they had repented.

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?

Paul says that if he made them sorry and caused them grief, who would make him happy? Answer? Nobody. He wanted to have a cheerful get together with them all, and not to be correcting and rebuking them

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.

Paul says that his joy would come from them being joyful and vice versa. If they are sorrowful, then he would be sorrowful as well. In fact, Paul's joy are the saints at Corinth.

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.

Sometimes children misbehave because no-one will correct them. They are wanting discipline. So it is the same with ministers and Pastors. People, when corrected, know that the Pastor cares for them even if they don't like it. Now even with correcting and sternly righting the wrongs that happen in a church with acts of discipline, faithful ministers show their love. However, the discipline needed for correcting offenders is often hurtful and grievous to faithful ministers and is often given with heaviness of heart.

2. Their treatment of the man who committed incest (verses 5-11)

2:5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

Paul says that he is only partly grieved and sorrowful. He says they were a puffed up church and had not mourned over this incest case (1Corinthians 5:2). But seeing they had fixed up the problem under his previous instructions in his first letter to them (Titus had told Paul they had), he wouldn't be too hard on them as a whole congregation. The punishment of being put out of the church till the man repented and was humbled, was the clearing action needed.

2:6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.

The man's punishment was just enough and sufficient which was brought about by the many people of the whole church. They all agreed to do this.

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 Paul says that having put this man out of the church as punishment, the church should forgive him and comfort him. Charity (love from one Christian to another) covers many sins (1Peter 4:8).

Truly sorrowful people shouldn't be left to themselves to wallow in their grief. They shouldn't be left to fall into despair. This can make you unfit for other duties. This is godly sorrow, a sorrow toward God and not sorrow of the world. Godly sorrow is good (2 Corinthians 7:10). You know the sort of sorrow that people have when they have just been found out? They are just sorry they got caught. This is simply worldly sorrow.

2:8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.

Paul urges them as a congregation, to all prove their love to this man.

Confirm = con + firm. Con = together. Be firm in your love to this man. Do this together.

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.

He wrote his first epistle to them with a severe tone to 1. Avoid the necessity for a painful visit (verse 3) 2. To show his special love for them (verse 4) 3. To test their obedience in disciplining the man in question and know whether they would pass the test. Their faithfulness was proved.

2:10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;

If you have forgiven the man, then I do too for your sakes. Also for the sake of Christ and in his name, and in his presence, because I Paul, and indeed yourselves, are to be examples of kindness and tender mercy to all those who truly repent.

2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Another reason to forgive is so Satan will not get hold of the mind of the man and drive him to despair, all because you wouldn't forgive him. This is one of the ways that Satan works in separating Christians from other Christians.

3. Paul is thankful at the news that Titus brought from Corinth about his first letter.

2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

Now in addition to my not coming to you straight across the sea from Ephesus, God opened up a door for evangelising when I went North to Troas to preach the gospel. People got saved as a result of this.

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.

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2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

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?

To the person who gets saved, they have the sweet smell of the Lord Jesus Christ in their life because he has given them eternal life. To the person who will not accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, all they have to look forward to is death, physical death, which becomes a living death in the fires of hell. Oh yes, we all live forever – some in heaven but most in hell. Paul goes on to say, that apart from the grace of God, he would not be able to perform such a duty in his own strength. All our sufficiency comes from God. The work is so great but of ourselves we have no strength at all. He is definitely not capable or sufficient.

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.

But we are not like many of the churches and Pastors which twist and change the word of God, the holy scriptures. Here he refers to those in Corinth that have turned their hearts away from Paul by teaching false and incorrect doctrine. These were the Jews that had come into the church and started whispering lies about Paul. He deals with these liars and fraudsters in the next chapter of 2 Corinthians.

Paul has taught the Corinthian church nothing but the truth in sincerity before God. He speaks the truth that is to be found in Christ and Christ alone. As we shall see, these Jews were saying to the church that they should start paying more attention to the law of Moses and all that it commanded people to do.

This happening in the churches today as people who are sympathetic to Moses and his laws and the feasts of Israel, are urging people to start acting out things like the Festival of Booths, the Passover, Pentecost and so on.

Indeed, they are saying that keeping the law of Moses give you good favour in the sight of God. In fact, they are saying that you can lose your salvation if you don't. You know, like the Seventh Day Adventists who say you can't be saved unless you worship on Saturday, which is the Jewish Sabbath. These are people who corrupt the word of God. There are the Roman Catholics that say you can never have eternal security in Christ. Why? Because their Jesus is the little wafer biscuit they eat at the Lord's supper. They say it is the actual, body of Christ. Can you imagine that? Some priest mutters some magic words like 'Abracadabra' and the bread is supposed to be turned into the actual body of Christ. Furthermore, the Pope in Rome says the priest has the power to turn the grape juice into the actual blood of Christ! What blasphemy! What lies!

Anyhow, as Paul says, the law of Moses is holy and glorious. However it is far exceeded and surpassed in glory and holiness with the liberty to be found in Christ alone. This is in chapter 3.

Questions to discuss:

- 1. Do you have any questions on chapter 1 or chapter 2?**
- 2. What did you learn in studying 2 Corinthians chapter 2?**

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER 3

What you will learn:

1. Paul makes an apology for seeming to defend himself. Paul does not need any recommendation (verses 1-3)
2. Paul's sufficiency comes from God (verses 4-6)
3. God has made Paul a minister of the new testament which is to be found in Christ. This new testament is far more glorious than that given to Moses with the ten commandments (verses 7-11)
4. Paul's ministry needs no veil upon his face unlike Moses, who had to wear one, after meeting with God on Mt Sinai (verses 12-13)
5. To this very day in March 2020, the Jews still have darkened hearts toward Christ because they are still under the veil of Moses (verses 14-15)
6. However one day this veil shall be removed off Israel (verses 16-18)
- 7. Paul's purpose in this chapter is to compare the bondage that Moses stood for against the freedom found in Christ. Paul's critics and opposition in Corinth was coming from some Jews there. They were trying to bring the Christians back under obeying the law like worshipping on Saturday, not eating certain foods, washings and rituals, the feast and celebrations, and all the laws, rituals and ceremonies found in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy that governed the whole lives. Paul said "Christ has done all them on your behalf. You have been set free. There is liberty and freedom in Christ."**

1. Paul makes an apology for seeming to defend himself.

Paul does not need any recommendation (verses 1-3)

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?

Paul doesn't have to commend himself to them. He thought it necessary to protest his sincerity to them, because there were some at Corinth who were trying to undermine him and his reputation. Generally when strangers come into a church they have with them letters and credentials from others that recommend them. Paul treats this as absurd to suppose that he or Timothy should need such letters from them or from those at Jerusalem. Paul defends himself by his being sincere toward them.

3:2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

But Paul says if they wanted any such letters, they should look at themselves. The very name and existence of the Corinthian church was sufficient proof enough. Indeed they were written on Paul's heart and he could appeal and refer to them whenever he wanted to in conversation with others. In fact, they were known among all men. Nothing is so satisfying or delightful for a minister or Pastor, than the success of their ministry with the changed lives of those in the church and who work with them.

3:3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly (obviously) 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.

The Corinthians were themselves were the letters of recommendation. They were written on his heart. Christ was the founder and Paul was the minister who looked after them. The Corinthians were the letters themselves, not written on paper with ink, or engraved upon stone, but were written on Christ's heart and Paul's heart. They were not written upon stone like the laws of Moses, but written by the finger of God, as it were, upon Paul's heart. He utterly refuses to take any credit for this but gives all the glory to God.

2. Paul's sufficiency comes solely from God (verses 4-6)

3:4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:

Paul says that the trust he has in all this is toward God through Christ. That is in the direction to God all because of Jesus Christ.

3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

All true pastors, teachers and preachers know that their strength, effectiveness and success is all of God and his grace and his mercy. Only what God can give will make us sufficient.

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.

The new testament is to be found in Christ. The letter refers to the letters on the table of the two stones that Moses brought down from the mountain. These had the law on them. These were the ten commandments. Trying to

act out the ten commandments to impress God can't be done. You see, the law was given not to save us, or indeed the Jews under the old testament, but to show we are sinners and cannot keep God's high standards. God did this deliberately to show how pathetic we really are in his sight. *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Galatians 2:16*

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. Galatians 3:24-25

Do you know what a schoolmaster says all the time? "You are not good enough! You can do better!" So the law says "You can't be good enough. You are not good enough. You need the goodness of Christ". Now when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Saviour, we have the Spirit put into us in the form of the Holy Ghost. So the Spirit gives life.

3. God has made Paul a minister of the new testament which is to be found in Christ. This new testament is far more glorious than that given to Moses with the ten commandments (verses 7-11)

3:7 But 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 for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

The two tables of stone with the laws of God written on them, were God's way of ministering to Israel under the old testament. Now because God is pure, sinless and perfect, his laws are pure, perfect and glorious. No-one can possibly keep them. They couldn't even stand the glory of them. That's why when Moses came down off Mt Sinai after having spent time with God alone, Moses' face shone like a very bright light that blinded the eyes. That's why he had to put a cloth (veil) over his face, because they could not bear to look on his face. The countenance of Moses was his face. But this glory of God's laws that were reflected in Moses' face was to be replaced by the glory of Christ. Why? Christ was better than the law because he fulfilled every demand of it. He beat it. He conquered it. He subdued it as a man of flesh. Christ came to fulfil the law in the flesh, such that we can have his victory of 'beating/fulfilling' the law, put into our account.

3:8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

Our soul gets saved and our spirit becomes born again by God's Spirit. So God's Spirit (God's Spirit always has a capital "S") ministers to our spirit (our spirit always has a small "s"). See the difference?

Yes, God's Spirit that ministers to us in the form of the Holy Ghost, comes inside of us and attends and cares for our little human spirit. "This is a glorious thing" says Paul.

3:9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

Paul says the law was glorious. Paul says that the law which was given to condemn us and show us we are sinners, was glorious. Why? It shows that we are not God. God's law are glorious. The mere fact that we can't keep them doesn't mean they aren't glorious.

Now, Paul says that having Christ's right standing with God, his righteousness, is more glorious than the law. Why? Christ was better than the law. It couldn't and didn't defeat him. Christ not only defeated the law. We say he fulfilled it. Christ did everything that the law wanted of him. So Christ's righteousness in fulfilling the law is more glorious than the law.

3:10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

God's law had no glory compared to Christ's glory. Christ glory exceeded and surpassed what the law demanded.

3:11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

The law was put aside or done away with when Christ fulfilled it. The law was glorious, but what was left was Christ's glory of fulfilling the law. The condemnation of the law (which was glorious) was done away with when Christ did what it demanded. Therefore what Christ did was more glorious than the law.

4. Paul's ministry needs no veil upon his face unlike Moses, who had to wear a veil over his face after meeting with God on Mt Sinai (verses 12-13)

3:12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

So Paul doesn't have to cover up like Moses. Paul speaks very plainly. Good ministers do this. Bad ministers don't. They talk in complicated ways and no-one can understand them. Because what Christ has done is open to all and very plain to see, we can tell people exactly where they will be after they die. God's love is Jesus Christ. Have him as Saviour and you will go to heaven. If you don't, then God must send you to hell because you have unforgiven sins that have not been washed away by the blood of Christ.

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:

No matter how hard they tried in keeping the law, they could only have temporary forgiveness of sins by the blood of animals. The old testament Jew could not see Jesus Christ in the future. They could not see a time when they would have eternal security once and for all, by the blood of

Christ. Their eyes were blocked. Moses face blocked out the light of the law that made his face shine. Christ is called the Light that lighteth every man that comes into the world (John 1:9).

5. To this very day in March 2020, the unsaved Jews still have darkened hearts toward Christ

because they are still under the veil of Moses (verses 14-15)

3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

As the saying goes "The old is in the new revealed and the new is in the old concealed." Jesus Christ is hidden in the old testament but is revealed in the new testament.

The modern day Jew still have blocked and blinded minds. The old veil of trying to impress God with their keeping the law (which they could never do) needs to be removed from them. It is a spiritual blindness.

3:15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

Because most Jews today have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour, a veil is on their heart and they have blinded minds that will not accept the fact that they need Jesus Christ's perfect keeping of the law put into their account, so that they may get to heaven. They are still with Moses who has a veil over his face.

6. However one day this veil shall be removed off Israel (verses 16-18)

3:16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

Now sometime in the 7 year tribulation, Israel will have their blindfold over their eyes and minds, taken away by God himself. It won't be the result of their efforts either. It will be by remote control from God. He will just do it one day when the time is right. *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **the spirit of grace** and of supplications: **and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.***
Zechariah 12:10

An all Israel shall be saved in that day.

3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God. God the Father is God. The Holy Ghost, which is the indwelling Spirit of God, God as well. We are no longer under the bondage and the curse of the law to keep it. We are set free. The law has done it's work. Without the law, we would not know we are sinners and we

could not be saved by Christ. So the law was wonderful to reveal sin in us that Christ could save us and set us free. Give us liberty.

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.

The more we clean up our lives by obeying what God wants from us today, the more we see clearly who Christ was, is and shall be. We are being changed every day from glory to glory and hopefully becoming more like Christ. The Jew in the old testament in the desert only saw the glory of God in the cloud that led them around and the fire at night. But we have, as it were, a more clear picture of Christ as in a mirror. The more we examine ourselves and prove we are in the faith, we are changed from glory into more glory (2 Corinthians 13:5; Philippians 2:12).

Question: "What did you learn from this chapter?"

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

CHAPTER 4

What you will learn:

1. Paul outlines the glory of his gospel ministry (verses 1-6)
2. This preaching of the gospel sustains the hearts and minds of Christ's ministers through all their weaknesses and trials (verses 7-15)
3. This is especially true by their faith in things that are unseen (verses 16-18)
4. **People who are still trying to get saved by works are still under the works of the old testament law. The ministry that Paul sets out in this chapter is as follows: "You are sinners and don't deserve to be saved. You can't earn your salvation by doing the works of the law because God's standard is 100% perfection. Just supposing you could keep the outward aspects of the law, it still wouldn't be right, because God demands that you have a love of the law and a desire of the heart to fulfil it. Not just going through the outward motions. Therefore no-one can keep the law. But God will save you if you come to him as a sinner and trust that Jesus Christ not only kept the law on your behalf but also he had the right heart attitude to it because he loved it. You can trust in the perfect work of Jesus and not your own works."**

1. Paul outlines the glory of his gospel ministry (verses 1-6)

4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

Paul has the ministry of reconciliation which means that he brings people to know Jesus Christ. He brings them together. He introduces the sinner to Christ. "Dear sinner, have you ever met Christ? Why don't I tell you about him and what he has done for you. Why don't you shake his hand, become friends by having him as your Saviour. Yes, only Jesus can save you from God's wrath of sending you to hell because you are a sinner." That is what is called the ministry of reconciliation. *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 2 Corinthians 5:18*

Now we have been given God's mercy and been saved, we will work for him. We will not faint because of the task ahead of us with this ministry.

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.

False teachers are dishonest, they are cunning and crafty, and they destroy God's words and their meanings, found in the King James Bible, The Authorized Bible. Such as: 1. They add words 2. They subtract words 3. They remove a verse from the Bible 4. They change and substitute words for others in the Bible. These false Bibles are the NIV, the NASB, the Good News and so on. In other words, there are over 300 Bibles that differ from The King James Bible. All these other so called 'bibles' have been corrupted and most of them come out of Rome and their scholars. Paul says "We will clearly show you by our actions that we have the truth. We will not lie to you. We will tell you, that you don't have to mix the works of the law of the old testament with Christ having completed and fulfilled these works for you on your behalf." The minister has to "*provide things honest in the sight of all men.*" (*Romans 12:17*). Let people think what they like about you, but be honest and genuine. Don't pretend, no "put-ons", no calculated and controlled speeches to produce the right impression or get the desired results. DON'T BE A HYPOCRITE.

4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

The question we often ask ourselves is this "Why don't all people get saved?" Answer: "They are lost because of the reason found in the next verse.

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.

Satan blinds the minds people. How does he do this? Easy. He whispers in their ears and says things like "You aren't as bad as the next person. They are really bad sinners. They need to get saved before you do." Or he says

“Look, you have done a lot of good things for others. Surely this will impress God and he’ll let you into heaven.” Or Satan will say “You are a politician and have helped many people with passing good laws for them.” Or “You have given a lot of money to help others” You have fasted twice a week.” Does this remind you of anyone? That’s right the Pharisee.

*11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I **fast twice in the week, I give tithes** of all that I possess. 13 And the **publican**, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Luke 18:11-14 (KJB).*

There was another man wasn’t there? The publican (tax-gatherer. He collected taxes for a living). Satan blinds the minds of people by “puffing them up”. You are a really good person. There are a lot of others worse than you. You are top of the tree.” And so on.

But as the Bible says “All the good things we do are nothing but filthy rags in God’s sight” (Isaiah 64:6). Satan blinds us to how 100% perfect Christ is. The glorious gospel of Christ is this “You are a sinner, blind to your own sin but Christ was perfect. To get into heaven you must have Christ’s works put into your account.” It’s like a bank account you have at the bank, however this is God’s bank and you must have a spiritual account with him. Now in that spiritual account, when God looks into it, he must see “Ah good. This man has Christ’s works in it. This man has Christ’s works as a substitute instead of his own. Well done my son, please come into heaven.” You see Satan works on the flesh and on the mind and says “Your works are better than Christ’s. You can reject what he has done for you. You have done enough and in your heart you really are a good person even though you sin and are not perfect.” As the scriptures say *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and **comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 2 Corinthians 10:12 (KJV)***

4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

Why do ministers want to preach about themselves all the time? They shouldn’t. Go back to the gospels and preach Jesus – his life, his works, what he did, his perfect works, his death, his burial, his resurrection and so on. Paul says we are your helpers and servants for the sake of Jesus. In other words as he has saved us and guided us, we are here to be likewise for you.

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.

Christ appeared physically on the earth and was the bright shining light. *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Isaiah 9:2.* Israel have seen Jesus Christ in the flesh. They were in darkness and Jesus was sent to them as a bright shining light. In fact, the star that came from the East and guided the wise men to the manger showed that Christ was the light that had come unto, and onto, the earth (Matthew 2:2).

Now even as we know no more Christ in the flesh *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. 2 Corinthians 5:16,* we can have Christ shine in our hearts by the Holy Ghost as Christ now sits in heaven at the right hand of God the Father (Hebrews 10:12; 12:2).

Christ not only is the Light that lighteth every one that is born (we all have conscience), but for those who are saved, we have him in our hearts. He is the treasure in earthen vessels.

Christ is the brightness of God's glory as the scriptures say **Who** (Jesus) **being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;** Hebrews 1:3 (King James Bible)

2. This preaching of the gospel sustains the hearts and minds of Christ's ministers

through all their weaknesses and trials (verses 7-15)

4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

What is this treasure we have in ourselves? Our physical bodies are the vessels made for the earth. Adam was formed from the earth and the dust (Gen 2:7). It is Christ himself in our hearts. It is the Holy Ghost in us. It is God himself in us. These three are one. *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and **these three are one.** 1 John 5:7.* Furthermore, *In the beginning was the Word (Jesus Christ), and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.** John 1:1 (KJV).*

Many people go through life 'under their own steam' as the saying goes. They get through life under their own power. They won't let God control their life and be as a branch that gets its life from the tree (John 15:4-5).

4:8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

4:9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

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.

What we have here, is a comparison between what is happening on the outside of the body in the flesh and the state of the treasure on the inside. In the natural and the physical, there was all sorts of trials and tribulations, but the Lord was on the inside taking care of them. *As Paul says I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20 (KJV).* You can praise God through all the mess you are going through at the moment on the outside, but not complain and murmur.

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.

As Paul says elsewhere *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Romans 8:36-37.* Victory comes through dying to self.

4:12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

So Paul summarizes by saying, that all the trouble that he had been through back in verse 8-11, was for the benefit of the Corinthians. It was to help the spiritual life of them and work for their good.

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;

This is Psalm 116:10. Paul says that although some may be of weaker faith, it is still the same Holy Ghost, himself, that works his power in us. As David said in the old testament, that he spoke as he believed, then Paul says he can do no better than follow David in that what Paul believes he speaks. I don't believe one thing and then speak another.

4:14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

Just as Christ was raised from the dead by God the Father, when the Lord comes for us in the rapture (1Thessalonians 4:16-18) it will be just the same. Those that have already died as Christians (they are called dead in Christ) shall be brought back to life and we all shall meet the Lord in the air.

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.

Paul says that everything that has happened to him is for the sake of the Corinthians and they can then grow further in the Lord. They then can give

the Lord more thanks for this. The more people that give the Lord thanks, the more glory God gets.

3. This is especially true by their faith in things that are unseen (verses 16-18)

4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

Isn't that true! We all die eventually from our bodies rotting away and slowing down. Our hearts eventually stop beating. But our souls never die. They live forever. What is our soul? It's like a person in car that crashes. The car may be destroyed but the person gets out and walks away. This is a good description of the soul. The real you is not your body, but your soul. That is why we say that our soul gets saved and our spirit becomes born again. We have a new spirit. Do you know anyone like that? Of course. Before they received Jesus Christ as their Saviour, they were grumpy, depressed and angry. But God gave them a new spirit. Their old spirit became born again, just like a little baby that is happy all the time.

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 calls everything that happens to us down here as a light affliction. Sort of like a mosquito bite that goes for a second. But how we handle it, is the thing that is important. Whatever you can do for the Lord down here which includes a sweet spirit, that no matter what happens you are giving thanks to the Lord for the power he has put in you. In spite of your personal difficulties, did you work for the Lord? These are the rewards in heaven that await you.

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.

We keep our eyes on Jesus and he is in heaven right now. We say "Dear Jesus I am coming home one day to be with you. I can hardly wait."

'Temporal' means 'not lasting long' or 'temporary' or 'short lived'. What happens on earth goes quick but heaven is forever.

So we don't dwell on our bodies as they will not last forever. They rot. As they say "Muscles come and go, but flab lasts forever."

The real you is your soul and that is not what you can see.

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 5

What you will learn:

1. Paul says that hope is the chief support of the preacher of the gospel of Christ. Paul gives the reasons why they did not faint under their afflictions.

These reasons were their expectations, desire and assurance of happiness after death (verses 1-5)

2. Paul then tells them that they can have the same comfort as well (verses 6-8)

3. He gives another reason to help them in their service for the Lord (verses 9-11)

4. Paul then makes an apology for seeming to commend himself and gives a good reason for his zeal and diligence (verses 12-15)

5. Paul then mentions two things that are necessary for our living in Christ – regeneration and reconciliation (verses 16–21)

Paul reminds those that oppose him in Corinth and the Jews, that their bodies are temporary dwellings for the Holy Ghost. Paul says it is far better to be with Christ in heaven. This is a warning to those who aren't saved and are just pretending to be Christians and secondly, words of encouragement to those that long for their home in heaven.

1. Paul says that hope is the chief support of the preacher of the gospel of Christ. Paul gives the reasons why they did not faint under their afflictions.

These reasons were their expectations, desire and assurance of happiness after death (verses 1-5)

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.

Paul calls his body a tabernacle. Now a tabernacle is a temporary dwelling. A tabernacle is a place in which a person lives for a while.

The old testament uses the word tabernacle for the Jews in the desert. This was the tent they easily put up and took down before they moved on. This was the short term stay for God in the desert. This is where he dwelt for short times. It was a temporary place to live for God. The Jews worshipped God in the tabernacle in the desert.

Christian's bodies are tabernacles for the Holy Ghost. Our body dies and rots. It is where the Holy Ghost lives – in us for a short time until the soul goes to heaven. Paul reminds them that the tent in the desert was made with hands and it didn't last. But Paul tells them that our real home is in heaven and that our bodies are merely temporary places for the Lord to live in till we get home to heaven.

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5:2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

Yes, it's like Christians are like two people in the same body. We have to live down here on earth but we are citizens of another country which is heaven. The body of flesh we have is a heavy burden because of all the sin and the corruptions we still have in us. This makes us complain. Paul says that Christians groan with desire wanting the happiness of another life. For a Christian, death is a blessing to look forward to, when we will pass into a glorious state in heaven. This is what prayer is. We talk to God who lives in this glorious country about which he keeps reminding us.

5:3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

Paul says that being naked or without clothes is not a good thing. It is not desirable for sinners. Just as Adam and Eve, when they sinned, God made them wear clothes to cover up their nakedness. So the real Christian has two sets of clothes – one is the body down here, and all the while, we are already clothed with our house in heaven. God has many mansions for us to live in heaven.

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.

But not only Christians groan in our temporary home in our earthly bodies but the whole of God's creation. *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. Romans 8:22*

For those that go to hell, they will have been unclothed. They will not have the earnest of the Holy Ghost protecting them. You see, while the unsaved are still alive, they are protected in a way. That is until they die. They will then be unclothed. For Christians, we have nothing to worry about. While we are still alive here on earth, we will not be in hell. After we die we will be in heaven because we are clothed with the Holy Ghost, and God the Father takes us to heaven, because he has put a down payment on and in us – the Holy Ghost.

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.

"Wrought" is a word that means 'made' or 'fashioned' or 'beaten into shape'. Men who work with iron make fancy and delicate patterns out of metal. The end product is a wrought iron piece of metal. Now, all those who are going to heaven, the Christians, are like metal and God works on us down here on earth doesn't he? We are being fashioned into shape. God calls us stones that must be made fit for his purpose for his building.

Now only God can do this, separate and save our soul from our body, and beat out all the corruptions and sin that still live in the body.

The 'earnest', as we have discussed previously, is the down payment that God has placed in us with the Holy Ghost. The present grace and comforts of the Holy Ghost are earnest of the everlasting grace and comforts that we will have in heaven.

2. Paul then tells them that they can have the same comfort as well
(verses 6-8)

5:6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

Paul reminds them that while they live here on earth, they are strangers that temporarily dwell in their earthly home, a tabernacle. But God is with us here by his Holy Ghost that lives in us. Although we cannot see God and be with him as we would like, he is with us.

5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

We are not seeing God face to face yet, but we know he is there because he has given us faith to believe. But when we are in heaven, we shall see as we are seen (1Peter 1:8)

5:8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Paul says "I know you will all agree with me, that you would rather be with the Lord in heaven and not down here on earth. You would rather leave your body and go to heaven and be with God than to stay here on earth with all it's troubles. Good bye to this temporary tabernacle!"

3. He gives another reason to help them in their service for the Lord
(verses 9-11)

5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

So we work on ourselves down here, that we might be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord.

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.

Yes, Christians will appear also before the Christ at his seat of judgment for rewards.

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.

Now this should produce terror in Christians, that we make sure that the work we do for the Lord is what he wants done and not our own plans. We convince others of this. Just as we are visible and obvious (manifest) to the Lord in all these things, Paul hopes that we will be a good witness to other Christians, and indeed to the unsaved.

4. Paul then makes an apology for seeming to commend himself and gives a good reason for his zeal and diligence (verses 12-15)

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.

Paul makes an apology for seeming to commend himself and his fellow labourers. The true reason was to put a reason, and a protest, in his critics mouths to stop them. There were those who gloried in appearances only, so Paul was giving all the reason not to look on the surface. So the best argument would be to have people convinced in their own consciences and in their own minds, when they are accused and made fun of (vilified). They would be able to give glory to God from their hearts.

5:13 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

Paul's accusers were treating him as some sort of madman. He was showing too much zeal and enthusiasm over what he was saying. Now, when someone get angry, or excited or worked up over something, it's like there is two of them. People say "Calm down will you? This is not your normal self!" So it's like there are two people – a person with two personalities as it were. This is what is called "being beside yourself". It's like another person jumps out of you with all this zeal or anger or excitement. There seems to be two of you.

Now Paul says "Look, I can't help this. If this is the case it's from God. Paul says "If it looks like I'm a madman, then so be it. I'm actually not, but if you want to believe it, it's from God for your benefit and good. To be sober is to be 'calm and normal' in the eyes of others. It's like when people have too much alcohol to drink, they are not sober anymore, and their personality changes and they 'become another person'. People say "You are a nicer person when you are sober.'" Anyhow, Paul says it is for their good and learning that he is like this because it comes from God.

Paul uses both approaches with his churches depending on the situations. Many times he uses calm reason and other times much zeal and fervour, depending on what the Lord wanted to come out.

5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

Paul says that his behaviour was under the constraint (the control) of Christ. Christ's love he showed for us, in dying on our behalf to take God's punishment for our sin, will have this effect on us.

Paul says we judge, that means we consider and ponder and come to the following conclusion. Because Christ died for all, that meant all were dead in trespasses and sins. When Adam sinned, sin was passed down to all. Sort of like when a virus hits a computer, this virus is then passed onto all other computers. So if all weren't dead in trespasses and sins then Christ didn't need to die for all. But he did! All were dead in sin because of Adam.

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.

"They which live" means those that get saved. So of course, if you are saved, you will not live for your plans, but live unto Christ. Christ saved you from hell, he owns you therefore you live for him and to him. He rose again and went to heaven. This means that is where we will be too. We have been baptised into Christ by the Holy Ghost – not water baptism. (1Corinthians 12:13).

5. Paul then mentions two things that are necessary for our living in Christ – regeneration and reconciliation (verses 16–21)

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.

This means we do not own anything of this world, and are not affected by any one in this world – in the flesh. We are not affected by this world but we live above it. Christ is in our hearts and the world is below our feet. Now although we have known Christ in the flesh, we know him no more. What does this mean? Simple, Christ in the flesh was a Jew who came to fulfil the works of the old Testament laws on our behalf. We absolutely thank him for that. We are eternally grateful that he did, because by so doing, he was perfect and never sinned. Now just as the Passover lamb had to be without defect for sacrifice, then Christ became our Passover lamb before God and was killed for our benefit.

So his time on earth was to show he was the Son of God and fit to be the lamb on the cross that turned away God's wrath toward us.

So we don't follow Christ the man anymore, as he was a Jew doing Jewish things. We know Christ in heaven as our Saviour.

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.

Being in Christ we are new creatures. (We are **not yet** new creations though. We become new creations when we lose this body and go to heaven after we die or in the rapture).

Becoming born again in our spirit because our soul has been saved, makes us new creatures. This is called being regenerated.

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;

Because we now have peace with God and no longer under his wrath because we are unforgiven sinners, we are reconciled to God. In addition, we can now witness to others that they may become reconciled to God as well, by trusting on the Lord Jesus Christ as well. We can now reconcile others to God.

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.

"To wit" is a legal term used by lawyers in courts of law. Have you heard of the phrase "keep your wits about you?" This means don't be stupid and dull but be alert. Use knowledge and wisdom. "Wit" is a shortened form of the word "wisdom" ie wit-dom. Be sharp, be alert, watch out, be of full knowledge.

So Paul says, to your wisdom and knowledge (your wits), we know that Christ died for the whole world that it might be reconciled (brought back to him as one.) It's like 2 groups of people who are opposed to each other, so someone steps in and tries to bring them back together as one group. So here were, separated from Christ, so he comes down and pays God's penalty for our sin, in order to bring us back to God the Father.

Christ took our sins (trespasses) out of our spiritual bank accounts and put his right standing with God in our accounts instead.

We are reconciled to God that we may then reconcile other because of Christ.

We have the Word (Jesus Christ himself) and his words (the Bible) and word (the Bible) to bring back people to God the Father so they don't go to hell forever.

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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.

An 'ambassador' is someone who represents another person. We represent Christ in this world. We are his ambassadors. We are his ministers to openly proclaim and preach God's terms of mercy as found in Christ and what he did for the whole world, and to persuade them to comply and agree with the terms. "Have Christ as your Saviour or you will burn in hell forever.'

God entreats you through us, to come back to him. We do this and ask you to be reconciled with God.

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.

Christ was made sin for us, but he did no sin, knew no sin and thought no sin. He was sinless. He was innocent but he went to the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. That is love. Who would lay down his life for another if they were guilty. Would you for a mass murderer lay down your life?

So the judge and executioner gets out of his chair and tells the guilty prisoner "You can go free even though you did the crime." The judge then goes to the gas chamber and gives up his own life.

So here it is – Christ takes all that God would send us to hell for, and Christ puts his right standing that he has with God, in it's place. It's like a bank account – Christ puts his goodness into our bank.

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 6

What you will learn:

1. Paul gives an account of his general ministry outlines the methods and conditions of an apostolic ministry
(verses 1-10)
 2. Paul appeals to the Corinthians to return his affection and separate from evil (verses 11-18)
-
1. Paul outlines the methods and conditions of an apostolic ministry
(verses 1-10)

6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

Paul says "Look we are all in the same boat and we beseech (be seeking you) that you really are saved. Are you? Or are you just pretending to be saved. If you are saved, we hope that you are doing something for the Lord and that your salvation has not been for nothing."

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.)

Now this verse comes from the old testament where God said to Israel *Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; Isaiah 49:8.*

God says to Israel "Look, I have heard you, I have saved you, I will keep you, because I have a covenant (an agreement) with you. What I now want from you is some action. I want you to inherit the earth and establish yourselves in the earth."

So God, through Paul, says the same thing to the Christians at Corinth. "Look, I have saved you, I have helped you, and I will keep you forever. This is my testament to you. Now, just like when you got saved and I helped you, let the time now, be like then. We don't have tomorrow. We don't know where we will be. Now is the time that I want the following to be put into practice by you Corinthians. As co-workers with me (God) I want you, just like Israel in the old testament, to establish yourselves in the earth with the following instructions in verses 3-10. You won't be like Israel that will take over the physical world and make war with nations, but as Christians, the following verses outline the war that you will fight."

6:3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

Mind your manners as Christians. Bring no disrepute on Christ because of what you do. Do not damage the reputation of Christ. Don't damage the reputation of the ministry as it is Christ's ministry.

6:4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

Let us first prove ourselves to Christ and let us prove ourselves in the eyes of others that watch us. We'll need a lot of patience when we suffer being afflicted by others and things and circumstances, and when we need things like food and shelter, and when we are distressed.

6:5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

'Tumults' are riots and unruly crowds.

In 'watchings' means that a Christian should watch his words, actions, thoughts, companions and friends and his heart. Also to watch out for wrong doctrine that would enter the church.

6:6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

'Pureness' means not to be attached to the world and to be separated. The world and its ways can contaminate and infect.

Get all the 'knowledge' that you can from the Bible with correct doctrine. Be led by the Holy Ghost who agrees with the word of God. Obey the word of God and you will be led by the Holy Ghost.

'Unfeigned' means genuine or real. Some people are two faced and are friends when they are with you but talk behind your back. They will tell you they love you but they don't really.

6:7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

By 'the word of truth' which is the Bible. The armour of righteousness as in Ephesians 6:13.

6:8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;

By 'honour and dishonour' means you will have people who love and respect you in your ministry and those who don't. Just be careful about who gives you honour. Be discerning.

6:9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

Don't go looking for publicity. People get to know who you are. As dying – yes, the outward man perishes but the inward man is renewed day by day. Yes, God will chasten you (not punish you) but correct you to get back on the right path.

6:10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

You will have heaviness of heart sometimes. But the joy from and of the Lord is our strength. You make people rich in the word and understanding – these are the real riches. Having money is not being rich. Yes, right now we are heirs with Christ. He owns everything and so do we. We have eternal life and that is all that matters.

2. Paul appeals to the Corinthians to return his affection and separate from evil (verses 11-18)

6:11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

Paul was telling them that his mouth was open to them. This means he was telling the truth and being completely honest with them. His heart was enlarged in that he loved them very very much. His heart was open to them.

6:12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

A 'strait jacket' is one that holds and restricts movement. The person can't run away or throw his arms about. Paul says that he loved them but they are having a hard time loving him. They felt controlled and restricted by Paul but Paul says "No. It is you that are causing your own problems with me. I am honest with you and tell you the truth, but this causes you to get all tight in yourselves. You are putting yourself in your own strait jacket. The strait jacket is of your own making." When we speak of the bowels of a ship we talk about the inside of the ship. They were twisted and tight inside of themselves and their feelings for Paul were narrow and bitter. They could find no love for Paul as they should have.

6:13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.

A 'recompence' is simply being paid back. If someone owes you money they are to recompence you, that is, pay you back.

There was no room in their hearts to love Paul. Paul had a large heart for them and all he wants in return is for his spiritual children to love him back in the same way.

Paul speaks to them as his children, he say that he wants them to enlarge their hearts toward him, that is to find in themselves the same love that he has for them.

6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Paul says "Don't hang around with unbelievers." Like two cows that get yoked together to pull a cart. Don't be that much joined to them. These are Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, people who pretend to be Christians, Hindus and so on. They have nothing to offer you. They are not saved. They will bring you back under the works of the law for your

salvation and to maintain your salvation. Two cannot walk together unless they be agreed (Amos 3:3)

6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

Paul sums it up with the following:

⁹ I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

¹⁰ Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

¹¹ But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

¹² For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

¹³ But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

Now in this world you will have to work with unsaved people, buy from them, talk with them. Put it this way, you can get so separated from unsaved people that you have no contact with anyone. No, you will mix with all sorts. Complete separation is not possible not desirable.

What you want to avoid is being joined to someone or group of people that that will cause you to sin. Furthermore, you want to avoid all ecumenical church services with people who seem to 'christian' but they are not.

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.

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.

6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

When you know what you believe as Christians, this is called having good doctrine, you can stand firm in the Lord and go to the Bible to show them what you believe. That is why Bible study is so important.

As Christians, we have no water baptisms, no church memberships, no speaking in so called tongues and so on. Refer to The Statement of beliefs of the King James Bible church for further information.

Up to Chapters 1 to 6 at this time.