

Live in the Power of God

Second Corinthians 13

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • November 20, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2019

Prelude:

- I. How will Paul end this last letter to the Corinthians?**
- II. He had presented to them a vision that he had, showing him to be an apostle.**
 - A. However, that vision was not for the purpose of exalting himself.
 - B. The Lord allowed a messenger of Satan to buffet Paul to keep him humble.
- III. He reminded them that the signs of an apostle had been done among them.**
- IV. He then stated how he wished to see them on his next visit, and he continued to talk about that visit in his closing words.**

Persuasion:

I. 13.1a • Another Visit to the Congregation

1a This will be the third time I am coming to you.

- A. Why did Paul need to let them know of the number of times he had visited?
- B. I can tell you why I have had to remind people of my number of visits:
 1. After being criticized, as Paul had been, I had to show people the efforts that I had made at showing them love.
 2. I am persuaded Paul was doing the same.

II. 13.1b • Establishing Every Word

1b “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.”

- A. From where did Paul quote?
 1. Numbers 35.30
 2. Deuteronomy 17.6
 3. Deuteronomy 19.15
 4. Matthew 18.16

5. John 8.17

6. Hebrews 10.28

B. How does this fit in the context?

1. Someone has been accusing Paul of not being a genuine apostle.
2. Yet, he had demonstrated to them when he was there before that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ.
3. Therefore, whatever charges his accusers have against him, they needed to follow the Scriptures, having two or three witnesses.

III. 13.2-4 • Live in the Power of God

2 I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare— 3 since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. 4 For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.

A. He got bold in verse 2,

1. revealing that when he arrived,
2. if necessary,
 - a) he would not spare, because
 - b) he would confront and rebuke the false apostles.
 - (1) He represented Christ, and
 - (2) since his critics were false teachers,
 - (a) Paul would do as Christ would, and
 - (b) not spare them but rebuke and refute them.

B. According to verse 3, what did the Corinthians want from Paul?

1. They wanted proof that Christ was speaking in him.
2. The false teachers influenced the congregation
 - a) to think that Christ had not spoken through Paul.

C. How or to what degree was Christ toward or in the Corinthians?

1. He was not weak toward them.
2. He was mighty in them, so
 - a) an apostle would work with the congregation in that same power.
 - b) Paul would not go there and be weak.
 - (1) He would handle the situation in mighty,
 - (2) just as Jesus would.

D. Notice how Paul brings Christ into the picture.

E. Christ was crucified in what?

1. In weakness.
2. If this refers to Christ Himself,
 - a) then it would refer to the fact that He took on flesh,
 - b) which enabled Him to die.
3. If this refers to the people who crucified Him,
 - a) then Paul intended to contrast the weakness of men
 - b) with the power of God.
 - (1) Men through weakness because of their sin,
 - (2) crucified Christ, but
 - (a) God overcame that weakness and
 - (b) through power raised Christ so that He now lives.

F. What did Paul mean that he and his team were weak in Christ?

1. Since Christ was crucified in weakness,
2. this must refer to how people treated the preachers because of preaching Christ.

G. What then did Paul mean that they would live with Christ?

1. Although they suffered abuse for preaching Christ, but

2. they would live with Christ through the power of God, and
 - a) this was for the benefit of the Corinthians.
 - b) Did the false apostles speak in this manner?

IV. 13.5–6 • Are You in Christ?

5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. 6 But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

- A. Paul spent much time proving that he was an apostle of Christ.
- B. Did the congregation have any obligation to show that they were in Christ?
 1. If it is “once saved, always saved,”
 - a) why would we need to examine ourselves?
 - b) There would be no need for it.
 2. People like to hammer away at preachers and teachers, but
 - a) they often do not like answering questions about their beliefs.
 - b) I have had this experience many times.
- C. How can we examine or test ourselves to see whether we are in the faith?
 1. Putting it in the context of the Corinthian congregation,
 2. we can look to see whether someone has led us astray.
- D. Why Paul ask them whether they knew that Jesus Christ was in them?
 1. Some of them questioned whether Christ was in Paul,
 2. could he not also ask them whether they knew Christ was in them?
- E. If Christ was not in them, what did that make them?
 1. Paul had given them enough information
 2. that they should have known that he and his team were not disqualified.

V. 13.7–10 • Do What Is Honorable

7 Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved,

but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified. 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. 9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete. 10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

A. What do you make of Paul's sentence in verse 7?

1. What does it show you?
2. It shows that Paul's focus
 - a) was not on himself, but
 - b) on the spiritual welfare of the congregation,
 - (1) even if it meant that he was disqualified in their eyes.
 - (2) After this letter I do not believe that they saw him in that way.

B. According to verse 8, for what did Paul work?

1. We might attempt to do something against the truth, but
2. our efforts will fail.
 - a) Therefore, he said that he could only work for the truth.
 - b) Again, what were the false apostles doing?

C. Verse 9 also shows Paul's outward look even if it meant that he was weak.

D. For what did he also pray?

1. He prayed for their completion or
2. the Greek can also mean maturity.

E. Did Paul want to be sharp with the brethren in person?

1. No, that is why he wrote to them before he arrived.
2. He had authority from the Lord, but for what did the Lord give that authority?

VI. 13.11 • How the God of Love and Peace Will Be with You

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

- A. Paul prayed that they would be complete, but did they have an obligation to become complete?
1. What does a Christian need to do to become complete?
 2. What are the signs of completion?
- B. What did they have to do that the God of love and peace would be with them?
1. They had to be of good comfort.
 2. They had to be of one mind.
 3. They had to live in peace.
 - a) God would then be with them, but
 - b) in particular He would show them His love and peace.

VII.13.12-13 • Greet One Another

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. 13 All the saints greet you.

- A. Why is greeting one another important?
- B. Is greeting something that only the preacher needs to do?
- C. If you find it difficult to greet others,
1. tell yourself that this is what Jesus,
 2. whom you have confessed is the Lord,
 3. wants you to do.

VIII.13.14 • When the Godhead Is with You

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

- A. These three often appear together.

1. What does that show you?
 2. They have something in common, their deity.
- B. Normally we would expect Paul to say God, Jesus, and the Spirit.
1. Why do you think he used a different arrangement this time?
 2. Do not all three traits of grace, love, and communion (fellowship), come from all three?

Exhortation:

- I. What did you learn from the Book of Second Corinthians?**
- II. Are you willing to suffer for the benefit of others?**
- III. In the church, do you seek a benefit or do you seek to benefit?**
- IV. Do you pray for the maturity of the members of the church here?**
- V. Are you of one mind with the congregation, and do you live in peace with the members?**