

2 Corinthians

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Chapter 1

Part 1: 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

The congregation in Corinth was made up of both Jews and Gentiles. The city of Corinth, a port city, comprised of many different types of people. It was a city where people would pass through as they travelled from one place to another. Unfortunately, Corinth was a very wicked place - a place that focused upon self (the flesh) rather than upon the Spirit. Paul wrote two long epistles to this congregation to encourage them to base their lives on the truth of God – a truth that would help them to overcome wickedness, licentiousness, and the sin that was so prevalent around them (just like it is around us today).

In this first chapter Paul speaks about suffering, tribulation, persecution – the source of which is satanic. The Word of God warns faithful believers that we will suffer tribulation (tribulation and the wrath of God are two completely different things. Increasingly, End Time believers will suffer tribulation, but they will never experience the wrath of God). However, the Word of God also reveals that God will comfort us during the trials and worldly tribulations that we will go through. This epistle is very relevant for us today in the epoch of time that we are living in.

Verse 1: *“Paul, an apostle of Messiah Yeshua through the will of God, and Timothy the brother: To the church of God being in Corinth, with all the saints in all of Achaia:”*

Paul: The primary author of this epistle.

An apostle: Paul was not the only apostle of Messiah Yeshua, but he was one of the apostles. Paul does not emphasise his call here but, even though he was mightily used by God, he humbly puts himself on a par with all of the apostles.

An apostle ... through the will of God: Paul did not call himself to be an apostle but was made an apostle through the will of God.

Timothy: Co-authored this epistle with Paul.

The brother: This is a unique way to introduce someone in Paul’s writings and therefore stands out. Timothy was a young man who came from a mixed marriage. Timothy is a great example of what a brother in the Lord should be.

Church: Ecclesia. Those who are called out (called out of this world, and its way of living and thinking, into the Kingdom of God).

Verse 2: *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Messiah Yeshua.”*

Grace ... peace: These two things are uniquely connected – grace works in a believer's life so that God's will would be done in it. Peace comes as a fulfilment of God's will.

God our Father and the Lord Messiah Yeshua: A father is a provider. When God is revealed in the Scripture as ‘Father’ it is a reminder to us that He provides those things that we need to serve Him, to walk with Him, to live in this world. The way that we find access to these things is by recognizing Yeshua - not just that He is our Saviour, but that He is our Lord. We

need to recognise the authority of Yeshua in our lives, and we need to submit to it. When we recognize the authority of Messiah it brings God's provision into our lives.

Verse 3: *The Blessed God and Father of our Lord Messiah Yeshua, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort."*

The Blessed God: To translate this phrase 'blessed be God' would be grammatically incorrect. This is not a call to bless God (although we should), but this Scripture tells us that God is Blessed, in and of Himself. He is the Blessed God. It is within God's nature and character to bless. 2 Chronicles 16:9 tells us that God is looking to and fro throughout the earth seeking those to whom He can impart goodness and strength to. God wants to empower us and give us insight so that we can carry out His purposes and be an instrument of His glory.

Father of our Lord: This in no way detracts from the trinity – God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit are ONE. The ONE God has revealed Himself in three persons.

Lord: When we speak about the Lord, from a new covenant perspective, more often than not we are speaking about Yeshua.

Mercies...comfort: God provides comfort for us. His comfort enables us to endure and overcome all tribulations, to get through times of suffering. As believers, we all have a call to suffer – like Yeshua suffered.

Verse 4: *"The One who comforts us in all of our tribulation, so that we may be able to comfort those who in all tribulation also are suffering, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."*

We may be able to comfort: God works in our lives (He brings comfort to us) so that we can comfort others. Comforting others provides a testimony to them.

Verse 5: *"Because just as the sufferings of Messiah in us abound, so also through Messiah our comfort also abounds."*

Sufferings: Written in the plural.

The sufferings of Messiah in us abound: This should be the normal experience of a believer – that, like Messiah, we experience a lot of suffering. A true disciple of Messiah is going to be persecuted and is going to encounter much tribulation.

Our comfort also abounds: It is because of our faith in, and obedience to, Messiah that we suffer, but it is also through Messiah that we are comforted. We share in His sufferings but, as the sufferings abound, so too, in a proportional way, does our comfort or consolation abound. Therefore, we never have to be worried about what we may have to endure for Him – He will match what we must go through by giving us an equal measure of comfort.

Verse 6: *“But since we are afflicted, (it is) on behalf of your comfort and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. And since we are comforted, it is for your comfort and salvation.”*

Since: Some Bibles translate this word as ‘if’. The word ‘if’ introduces doubt into a text. It is not a question of ‘if’ we suffer, but it is a question of when...*since* we ARE going to suffer.

We are afflicted on behalf of your comfort and salvation: Like Paul, we have all received a call to obey God, and to be a blessing to others in every possible way. Many times, being a blessing to others involves personal sacrifice, enduring hardships for their sake etc.

Comfort and salvation: Paul is addressing believers. Believers have already received salvation. Therefore, here Paul is using the word ‘salvation’ as a word that refers to victory. This comfort that we receive causes us to persevere, endure, or move forward and overcome in a victorious way. What Paul is revealing here is this: Although he and his companions went through suffering, they also received God’s comfort. This comfort helped them to endure through the suffering. This testimony should have given the Corinthians assurance and comfort that in the same way that God worked in Paul’s life was the same way that He would work in their lives.

Since we are comforted, it is for your comfort and salvation: God works faithfully regardless of the circumstances. He moves in a way to keep His covenantal promises so that people are encouraged to remain obedient to Him. The way Paul suffered we will suffer, but the way Paul was comforted is an example to us of how we will be comforted.

Verse 7: *“Our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the comfort.”*

Hope: The reason why we endure is because we have hope. Biblical hope is ALWAYS related to the promises of God. We have faith that God will keep His Word, and His promises (when we endure and overcome) will become a reality in our lives.

Steadfast: Hope does not waver, because it is rooted in the Word of God.

Comfort: God-given Consolation. This word has been emphasised over and over again in this passage. Whatever we have lost, whatever we have endured, God will make up for it (Luke 6:38)

Verse 8: *“For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our tribulation which came upon us in Asia: that we were burdened down exceedingly beyond measure, beyond power, so that we despaired even of life.”*

We: Referring to himself, Timothy and all the saints in Achaia.

Brethren: Paul is addressing believers.

Our tribulation: Paul, and those who were with him, were faithful and obedient to the Word of God. They did not turn away from the commandments of God. This fidelity to the Word of God caused them to suffer.

Burdened ... exceedingly: Afflicted greatly.

Beyond measure: Beyond description. Paul, who had so much experience with God moving in his life, found the tribulation they had to endure in Asia beyond intense.

Beyond power: Paul did not see any power that could deliver him from this suffering, this burden that he was enduring.

Despaired: This tribulation was so intense that even Paul, a man of faith and for all intents and purposes a super apostle, was in despair. He was so full of discouragement that at that point he would have chosen death above life.

Verse 9: *“We had received upon ourselves the verdict of death, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.”*

Verdict of death: They had received the death penalty for serving God...and God allowed it to happen. God taught them something. That is why this epistle is so magnificent. Paul teaches us the principles he learnt through that suffering. We would do well to pay attention to these principles, as we are approaching a time where walking in faith, and being obedient to what God has called us to do, is also going to bring suffering, and perhaps even a death sentence upon us.

God who raises the dead: Resurrection is related to Kingdom victory. Believing in the promises of God (resurrection being one of those promises) will help us to endure, to persevere, to seek God’s comfort, so that we are able to continue on.

Note: Yeshua repeatedly told His disciples that He was going to Jerusalem, that He was going to be betrayed, that He was going to be delivered over to the chief priests and elders and that they were going to put Him to death (Yeshua had a death sentence placed on Him). He also emphasised to His disciples that He would rise from the dead on the third day. Even though everything happened exactly as Yeshua had told them it was going to, not one of them went to the tomb on the third day expecting it to be empty because He had risen. They went there in order to give Him a proper burial. They did not believe His promise of the resurrection. When we do not believe in the promise of the resurrection we will not walk in faithfulness. We will be like the disciples who locked themselves in a room because they were fearful. However, when we have faith in the resurrection it causes us not to trust in ourselves but to trust in God – the only God who raises the dead.

Verse 10: *“Who from such a great death He has delivered us, and He is delivering us, for whom we each have hope that He will still deliver us.”*

Great death: Paul is not talking about physical death – he is talking about something far greater than just losing our physical lives. He is talking about spiritual, eternal, death (God’s judgment) that we have been delivered from.

Delivered: Rescued. We can think of God as our rescuer. He rescued us in the past, He is still rescuing us today, and He will continue to rescue us into the future from ‘*such a great death*’. This is why Yeshua died – so that we could be delivered from this great spiritual death and eternal separation from God.

He will still deliver us: This is related to the final resurrection (still future).

Verse 11: (literally) *“Helping us together also you on behalf of us through your prayer, in order that from many faces for us the gift that has been provided, that thanks would be given on behalf of us.”*

Note: This is a difficult verse to translate and there is a great divergence on how people have understood it (see biblehub.com).

Helping (together): Working together or helping one another for a common purpose. We jointly share in the hope of deliverance, and so we should also jointly share in working together and helping each other.

Us: Paul is speaking about his, and his companion’s, need of help and how they were being helped by these people in Corinth (‘you’...‘your’) and other places – through *prayer* and through gifts.

Many faces: An idiom for many people.

Gift: We do not know exactly what *gift* Paul is referring to. This word (charisma) often refers to spiritual provision – what the Holy Spirit provides for us so that we can serve God. The context here is however probably not referring to this kind of gift.

Thanks would be given: Because of what Paul was doing with his life, the way he was suffering but also the way in which he was being comforted, and therefore able to endure, resulted in people giving thanks to God. Many people were providing gifts for, and praying for, Paul and his companions. These prayers and gifts helped and assisted Paul to keep on persevering. As Paul kept on persevering, his life continued to impact many, and these in turn would then give thanks to God, they would be encouraged, they would begin to endure and they too would be comforted.

Chapter 1

Part 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24

Paul did not make decisions rashly or frivolously, but he brought every decision under the authority of God, for His purposes. Paul did this because he wanted to be pleasing to God. This passage is rich in wisdom and insight, and it is relevant for our walk with God. In it, Paul speaks about the assurance that we have because we have received the Spirit of the living God, through our faith in the Son of God - Messiah Yeshua.

Verse 12: *“For our boasting this it is: the testimony of our conscience: that in Godly holiness and Godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, we behaved in the world, and all the more so with you.”*

Our: Paul is not speaking personally but is speaking on behalf of himself and others.

Boasting: This boasting is not rooted in pride. Paul is exalting God for His faithfulness in Paul’s life.

This it is: The word order is flipped in the Greek. This accentuates how important this is.

The testimony of our conscience: What we ‘instinctively’ know to be true. The conscience is a very important gift given to every single human being by God. Although the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a lot more powerful, a conscience is able to convict people, partially, or to a degree, of what is right and what is wrong. God is free to speak to anyone (those who are saved and those who are unsaved) through their conscience. An unbeliever can, for

example, read Scripture and fall under conviction. If a person is totally depraved it means that they are no longer able to understand anything from God – their consciences have been seared (1 Timothy 4:2).

Godly holiness and Godly sincerity: God bears witness that what they are doing is holy and sincere. **Note:** God, who He is, is the very definition of what holy, good and righteous is. God does not meet those standards (He is the standard), He sets the standards.

Grace: God's grace brings about salvation. It enables us to enter into His Kingdom - not based on our works but based on Christ's finished work at the cross. But God's grace is greater for even more than this. His grace works within us, after salvation, so that we are enabled to carry out God's will for our lives. His grace regenerates us. It changes us and transforms us into a people who are pleasing to God – a people who delight in doing His will (Titus 2:11-14).

We behaved in the world: Paul behaved with Godly holiness and sincerity toward all people.

All the more so with you: Paul invested a great deal in this congregation at Corinth. They lived in a place of perversion and unrighteousness. He wanted this congregation to have a powerful testimony in this location.

Verse 13: *“For we do not write other things to you except that which you have read and that which you understand. I hope even more so, until the end, that you will understand.”*

We do not write other things: If we put into action what we already know, our lives would be radically different - so much more powerful for the things of God. We need to take hold of what we have read, and what we have understood, and we need to act on it.

Until the end: Paul's desire was that what they had understood, and what they had read, would not only be for the there and then, but that it would continue on with them until the end (until the Day of the Lord Jesus...i.e. until the rapture).

Verse 14: *“Just as you know us in part, that we are your boasting, even as also you are ours, in the Day of our Lord Yeshua.”*

You know us in part: They understood, in part, the motivation of Paul (why he did what he did) and the motivation of those who were with him (Timothy, Silas etc). One day, in the Kingdom, they will know and understand this more fully.

We are your boasting: The Corinthians are going to exalt God for the ministry that they received from these men.

You are ours: Ministering to others (blessing, discipling, and leading them to salvation) has an eternal effect. God is not unjust to forget our works and He remembers all of our deeds (Hebrews 6:10-12). Paul and Timothy had led this congregation into faith by sharing the gospel with them. Based upon this, Paul knows that he is going to be thankful and exalt in God because of them. Paul will reap an eternal reward because of them.

The Day of our Lord Yeshua: This is a reference to the rapture, also called 'our Blessed Hope'. This is the day when believers are going to receive their reward – the outcome of their faith and faithfulness.

Note: There are two completely different days mentioned in the New Testament: The Day of the Lord and the Day of Messiah (as is mentioned here). The Day of the Lord refers to a Day of God's judgment, the outpouring of His wrath. The Day of Messiah, on the other hand, speaks of the Day of the rapture, our Blessed Hope. The Day of Messiah is specifically

related to believers, the Day of the Lord is not for believers – it is a day when the enemies of God, those who try to thwart His plans and purposes, receive their just dues (are judged).

Verse 15: *“And for this confidence I intended to you to come previously, that a second time a gift you would have.”*

Note: Paul now begins to reveal to us and to teach us about how he approaches life.

Confidence: Assurance. A word of security. Paul is sure. He is certain. God does not reveal things to us so that we are left in doubt about anything. He reveals things to us that leave us with no doubt. We can have absolute assurance regarding what He has said.

Intended: Wanted. Purposed. Planned.

To you to come: The word order is unique. The emphasis is not the journey, but the purpose of the journey is emphasised – Paul wanted to be with the Corinthian people.

Previously: Before now

Gift: This is a word that is often related to the word grace. Paul wanted to go to them and speak more about the grace of God to them (God’s plans and purposes for their lives).

Verse 16: *“And pass through you into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea.”*

Pass through you into Macedonia: Paul had planned to firstly visit the Corinthian congregation, and from there he intended to go into Macedonia.

From Macedonia to come to you: Paul intended to visit them a second time – on his way back from Macedonia.

Judea: The capital of Judea was Jerusalem. Paul’s intent was to do ministry and then he was going to complete this time of ministry by going to Jerusalem to worship God. Paul recognized that any good work that he did was through God in him. When good things happen in our lives, and in the lives of other people, God needs to get all the praise.

Verse 17: *“Therefore, this I was planning, not something with frivolity. What I planned I did not plan it according to the flesh, in order that from me the yes would be ‘yes’ or the no, ‘no.’”*

Frivolity: A word which means ‘to give little thought to’. Paul did not make this decision without considering everything that would be involved with it. He did not make his decision lightly but gave it careful consideration.

Yes would be ‘yes’ or the no, ‘no’: It is popular even today (especially in politics) to answer a question by saying “yes and no”. “Yes and no” is an answer that tries to please everybody. It is an answer that tries to accomplish everything while doing nothing. Paul was not this kind of person: a “yes and no” man. He did not want to leave people uncertain about his intentions, but he wanted everything to be clear. Paul did not make his decisions according to his flesh, but he made them in order that his ‘yes’ was actually ‘yes’ and his ‘no’ was indeed ‘no’.

Verse 18: *“Because God is faithful, our word did not come about Yes and No.”*

God is faithful: God was faithful to reveal His plans to Paul. Based on those plans, Paul was able to make the correct decision.

Our word did not come about Yes and No: Paul’s word was not uncertain. Paul was very dogmatic. What he said and did was with clarity and assurance because it came from God – who was faithful to lead him and give him wisdom and insight.

Verse 19: *“For the Son of God, Messiah Yeshua, the One who is among you, through us He was proclaimed – through me, Silvanus and Timothy – it was not Yes and No, but YES in Him it was, is, and will be.”*

The One who is among you: Yeshua was among them even in this very wicked city.

Proclaimed: First and foremost, Paul went to Corinth to proclaim that Yeshua was the Messiah.

It was not Yes and No: There was nothing uncertain about their preaching of Messiah.

‘Yes’ in Him: Certainty and clarity are found in Messiah (as we shall see in 2 Corinthians 1:20 this ‘yes’ is referring to the promises of God).

(YES in Him) It was, is, and will be: This is a unique Greek word and is written in the perfect tense. It is a word that usually speaks about something (an event or a happening etc) taking place or coming into being. By using this word here Paul is revealing to us that this ‘Yes’ has been accomplished in the past, it is still relevant right now and will continue to be relevant into the future.

Verse 20: *“For as much as the promises of God in Him are Yes and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”*

As much as: As many. To the degree or extent of. All.

Promises of God: These are not like the ordinary promises that we would make. Often, even with the best intentions, we cannot fulfil our promises. This never happens to God. He is always able to fulfil His promises. His promises give us assurance. He has promised us eternal life and He can deliver eternal life. His promises are true.

In Him: If we do not have a covenantal relationship with Messiah these promises, although God’s able to deliver them, are not going to be received by us, as God does not reward our disobedience. Disobedience can cancel out, delay or hinder the promises of God being a reality in our lives.

Amen: True. This is a word which means we can believe what is being said, we can trust it, as it is related to truth.

Glory: When we behave according to the mindset that what we are doing is for the glory of God, then we can be assured that God’s promises are going to be experienced by us. If we are not behaving for God’s glory, then we will not be in a place to take hold of His promises. They are still there, they are still available, but we would not be able to access them if we were in disobedience.

Verse 21: *“But the One who makes us steadfast with you for Messiah, and He anointed us.”*

The One who makes us steadfast: When we walk in truth, with our goal being His glory, the Holy Spirit works in our lives to make us steadfast, to edify us, to build us up, to establish us.
Makes us steadfast with you: Being made steadfast is not unique to Paul or a handful of leaders. God wanted to make the Corinthian congregation steadfast; He wants to make us steadfast.

For Messiah: Many Bibles will translate this ‘in Christ’ but here we have a different word. This tells us that we have been made steadfast for Messiah. How we behave should not be out of selfish motivation. It is not about us, but it is all FOR Him. We need to behave in a way to bring Him glory.

He anointed us: God anointed us. When we are for Messiah, we experience God’s anointing. Paul is not speaking here about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or about being filled with the Spirit. This is speaking about an anointing that comes in order to equip us to do God’s will.

Verse 22: *“And also He sealed us and gave to us a guarantee, the Spirit in our hearts.”*

He sealed us and gave to us a guarantee: Not only did God anoint us and establish us steadfastly but He has also sealed us and given us His Holy Spirit.

Guarantee: A down payment. The deposit of the Holy Spirit in our lives shows that God is sincere. It is evidence or proof that He will finish the work that He began in us.

The Spirit in our hearts: Every believer has the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Hearts: We should always think of ‘heart’ as being related to our mind, our thoughts etc (Proverbs 23:7).

Verse 23: *“But I call upon my soul the testimony of God: that I spared you that no longer would I come to Corinth.”*

I call upon my soul: Paul is letting us know that this is very serious.

The testimony of God: Some people interpret this to be that Paul is calling upon himself as a witness for God. Others interpret it to mean that God bears witness with Paul in what he is going to tell the Corinthian congregation.

No longer...come to Corinth: Earlier on, we were told that Paul had purposed to visit Corinth twice. He did not make this decision based on fleshly wisdom, and nor did he make it lightly. He made the decision thinking about the promises of God. He did it under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Now he is telling them that he is not going to come to them at this time.

Verse 24: *“That we would not lord over you in your faith, but we are fellow workers of your joy. For by faith you stand.”*

We: Paul, Timothy, Silas (also called Silvanus) and other leaders.

Would not lord over you in your faith: The Corinthian congregation were believers. They had the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. God could work in their lives to bring about change, even if Paul and his companions were not there. Paul was someone who believed greatly in the ministry of the Holy Spirit to bring about change, in the lives of believers, and to mature them – with or without great human leaders being present.

Your joy: Paul's motivation was that they would experience the joy of the Lord. It is very important to note that the joy of the Lord comes through working together, with other believers, for the purposes and glory of God to be realized.

Faith: Faith is foundational. Faith is related to truth. It is by the truth of God that we stand. When we are walking in faith, when we are embracing the truth of God, we will stand.

Stand: Written in the perfect tense which reveals to us that they stood in the past, they are standing now, and into the future they will continue to stand. As opposition to our faith becomes more regular, we have been called to stand.

Chapter 2

Verse 1: *"But I judged of myself this: that not again to come in sorrow to you."*

I judged of myself: Paul considered this and prayerfully brought it before the Lord. He sought God's instruction on this matter, as well as the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Not again: Paul is not saying that the previous time he had been with them had been filled with sorrow.

Come in sorrow: We do not know what caused Paul to write this letter, but, from textual clues, it appears as if someone had done something to grieve this congregation. This issue needed to be dealt with. Paul decided, after hearing the instruction of the Lord, that he would not go to the Corinthian congregation to personally deal with this issue. If Paul had gone to them, it would have caused additional grief within the congregation. Paul decided to write to them instead.

Verse 2: *"For if I bring grief to you then who is the one that I rejoice over? Is it not the one who is made sorrowful by me?"*

If I bring grief to you: If Paul had gone to them to deal with this matter personally, then he would have been an instrument bringing more grief to them. He did not desire to bring more grief to them.

The one that I rejoice over: This congregation was a cause of joy and gladness for Paul. He rejoiced over them.

Verse 3: *"I write to you this same thing, in order that I do not come having grief, but rather being necessary for me to rejoice, indeed my joy is all of you, having confidence in you."*

I write to you: Paul wrote to encourage them, and to let them know that he had confidence in them. He trusted them to deal with this issue in the right way. They did not need to have Paul there to set things straight. Paul was happy to keep his distance, but, at the same time, he sent this epistle to them to share some instruction and counsel with them.

I do not come having grief: Paul is emphasizing that his work, his influence, was to bring joy out of the obedience of this congregation for the things of God. He did not want to simply be an instrument of punishment that would bring grief.

Having confidence in you: Paul trusted that they had dealt with this issue in a proper way. He did not want to go there to have this matter retried, re-discussed, and then set in order

again. He feels that, for the most part, the punishment has fit the crime (Paul is not speaking here about an issue that requires discipline to be meted out among the congregation - something that is so important and often neglected today).

Verse 4: *“For out of much tribulation, affliction, and grief of the heart I write to you, through many tears, not that you should grieve, but that you should know the love that I have in abundance for you.”*

Affliction: That which is stressful and causes anxiety.

Grief of the heart: Paul was a loving man and a sensitive individual. He truly loved these people, and his heart was tender towards them.

Not that you should grieve: Paul’s motivation was not that they should be sterner with the person. The punishment, and how it had been dealt with, was sufficient. Many scholars believe that Paul had been contacted about this issue (word had arrived to him), and this congregation wanted him to come and personally deal with it. Paul wanted to go to them so that he could add to their understanding of God’s workmanship in a person’s life (how He moves to build up and edify that person), but after giving it serious thought he decided it was wiser to not go to them. If he went, this matter would continue to be rehashed and Paul deemed that unnecessary, as it would just add more grief and sorrow to the situation.

But: In contrast to that.

Love: Paul had an abundant love for them.

Verse 5: *“But since a certain one has brought grief - not to me has he grieved, but all of you to some extent – not to be too severe.”*

But since a certain one has brought grief: Paul is drawing this topic to a close, but he wanted to give them a few more words of counsel to lay the foundation of the lack of necessity that he went to them personally.

Not to me has he grieved: Paul had not been personally affected by this man’s actions. He was grieved that the congregation had had to go through this, but he had not experienced this sorrow in a first-hand kind of way.

But all of you: Although this man had grieved this congregation, he had not grieved Paul (Paul was acting as an outsider of this issue – in many judicial systems, around the world, if the one who is judging is connected in any way to the person over whom he needs to give judgement, then he is supposed to recuse himself due to a possible conflict of interest). Paul did not need to recuse himself, as he was not personally connected to this issue.

Not to be too severe: The punishment ought to fit the offense. Paul was warning the Corinthian congregation not to be too stern with this man. It was sufficient punishment for this man to know that this congregation were angry, mad and hurt by what he had done.

Verse 6: *“Sufficient to this one is the rebuke by the majority of the congregation.”*

This one: The offender

The rebuke: The punishment.

The majority of the congregation: Most of this congregation had come together to deal with this issue. Apparently, there were some, however, within the congregation who felt that the punishment the offender had received was insufficient.

This minority felt that Paul needed to personally come and deal with this issue so that he could mete out more punishment to the offender.

Verse 7: *“So that, on the contrary, you should be forgiving and encouraging, lest the abundance of sorrow upon this one swallows him up.”*

On the contrary: In contrast to what this minority wants.

Be forgiving and encouraging: Instead of making the punishment more severe, Paul wanted them to forgive and encourage this man. Paul desired restoration. He wanted this man to be brought back into the congregation so that he could become productive, a servant, again.

Note: We need to realise something: There are offenses, sinful behaviours, that can disqualify someone from ever serving in a certain position again. Even though they do something that disqualifies them from serving in a position (e.g. a congregational leader, a pastor, a ruling elder or a deacon) – they lose the title or the position – it does not mean that they cannot be restored to the congregation, or to the fellowship of believers. Losing a title or a position does not mean that we cannot love, pray for, or accept them as brothers or sisters among us. We should not confuse restoration to the body of believers as meaning that this person is also restored to their previous role. **Restoration to the body does not necessarily mean restoration to their previous role.** There should be a desire among us to see people restored. We are not to keep them in continual punishment.

Swallows him up: Consumes him.

Verse 8: *“Therefore I beseech you to certify upon him love.”*

Beseech: Strongly encourage.

To certify upon him love: Paul wanted this congregation to let this man know that he was still loved and not hated. Although they had contempt for his offense, they did not have contempt for him. If an offender is going to be a recipient of love and restoration to the fellowship, it will depend upon true repentance and acknowledgement of his/her offense as wrong. If they do not repent, if they do not confess, if they do not own up to it, then there can be no restoration to fellowship.

Verse 9: *“For to this also I have written, in order that I should know your documentation, whether in all things you are obedient.”*

To this also I have written: This is one of the main things that Paul is writing about: that they affirm their love for this man who has sinned and repented.

Documentation: Prove. One of the things that documents or proves our faith is our willingness to forgive – to, completely and thoroughly, put the offense aside. This does not mean that the offender does not have to deal with the consequences, he does need to, but he can deal with them knowing that he is forgiven. Forgiveness does not mean a removal of consequence. There are consequences to sin – sometimes long and serious consequences – but love can still be placed upon a sinner who has repented.

In all things... obedient: Paul instructed them not to punish this offender anymore. He instructed this congregation to love and encourage this man. He wanted them to be obedient to these commands.

Verse 10: *“But to you what you have forgiven also I. That which I have forgiven I have forgiven on account of you in the face of Messiah.”*

What you have forgiven also I: If this congregation had forgiven this offender, then Paul too would consider him forgiven.

That which I have forgiven I have forgiven on account of you: Paul is teaching us a principle here. Because this congregation has forgiven, Paul will also forgive. This is how we should understand the forgiveness that we have received from God. As God has forgiven us, so also do we need to forgive others. Paul is living this out.

Face: Presence.

Verse 11: *“In order that we will not be outwitted by satan, for his schemes we are not ignorant.”*

Outwitted: Deceived. Doing something that gives the enemy an advantage. This is what the consequence of unforgiveness brings about in our lives. When we do not forgive others (forgetting the forgiveness we have received in Christ) we give advantage to the enemy, our adversary. This is a very dangerous position to find ourselves in.

His schemes: We must not be ignorant or against knowing what satan’s schemes are. One of these schemes is unforgiveness. Not forgiving others is a sure way to allow satan to take advantage in our lives.

Verse 12: *“But after coming into Troas for the gospel of Messiah, a door to me was open in the Lord.”*

Coming into Troas: Paul did not go to them in Corinth, but he did go to Troas. He was not idle, but he continued to travel and to minister to others.

For the gospel of Messiah: Some Bibles insert the word ‘preach’ before ‘gospel’. Obviously, Paul did that too, but preaching is just one of the many parts of ministering the gospel. This gospel teaches us about the all-sufficient work of Messiah that brings eternal change into our lives. It puts us on a journey of pursuing God’s will. If we have received the gospel but are not committed to it, nor passionate about the will of God, then we need to question ourselves as to whether we have believed the Biblical or true gospel.

A door to me was open: Something brought about an open door, an opportunity presented itself, for Paul, in Troas. Things were going well.

Verse 13: *“But I did not have rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; so leaving them I departed for Macedonia.”*

I did not have rest: Paul did not do anything in a frivolous manner. He has also just spoken about the enemy taking advantage, so this uneasiness is also set within that context.

Leaving them: Leaving Troas and the opportunity that had come up there. For some reason, the Spirit of God was moving Paul. Even though Paul had an opportunity he did not take advantage of it. We, likewise, should not take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself in our lives. Even for “open doors” we need to seek counsel from God and follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We need to be convinced in our spirits whether something is a God willed opportunity or not.

Macedonia: Paul mentioned Macedonia a couple of times in 2 Corinthians 1.

Verse 14: *“But to God His thanks is grace always He makes us triumphant in Messiah, and a spirit of His knowledge is manifested, as a pleasing aroma through us, in all places.”*

God His thanks is grace: Many Bibles translate this phrase as giving thanks to God, but it literally means ‘God His thanks is grace’. Grace is so multifaceted. Grace is a source of thanksgiving. It is also a source of perseverance. Grace is a source of determination to the will of God, for the purposes of God. And, of course, grace saves.

Always: This could be used either way: We can always acknowledge and give thanks for God’s grace, or He always makes us triumphant.

In (or for) Messiah: We are submissive, we have subjected ourselves to Him, for His purposes. We are in Him. But we are also always for Him. Paul is saying that we are triumphant always because we are about Him and for Him.

A pleasing aroma: Similar to an incense offering - which was something that was pleasing to God. We want to be pleasing to God. When we are pleasing to Him it means that we are doing His will. Our desire should not be to be a pleasing fragrance before Him so that He will bend to our will and do what we want Him to do for us. That is a selfish desire and one that is not pleasing to Him.

Verse 15: *“That a fragrance of Messiah we are to God among the ones who are being saved and among the ones that are being condemned.”*

Fragrance: A very pleasing, sweet, perfume. This is a different word to the word in 2 Corinthians 2:14.

Fragrance of Messiah: The fragrance belonging to Messiah.

Being condemned: Those who are perishing. Those who violate or reject God’s standards are going to be condemned. Many people reject God’s commandments, God’s truth etc but they want God to love them, work for them, serve them. This is idolatry. When God’s knowledge is presented to people (like a sweet perfume) it is going to reveal those who will be saved and those who will be condemned.

Verse 16: *“A fragrance of death to the ones who are dead, but to the ones who are alive a fragrance of life. And to these things this is something that is sufficient.”*

Fragrance of death...fragrance of life: The gospel proclaims either eternal life or eternal death to people. This is pleasing to God because this is true. Every human being will face either one of these two fragrances: eternal life or eternal death (those who have rejected Messiah will live for eternity in hell – eternally condemned).

To these things this is something that is sufficient: There is much debate as to how to understand this last phrase. It could possibly mean that being a fragrance of God (proclaiming life and proclaiming death) is sufficient for us, in this life, to be used in this way. It could also mean that there is a sufficiency in the gospel – as it proclaims both life and death.

Verse 17: *“For we are not as the many who peddle the Word of God, but out of sincerity as from God, before God in Messiah we speak.”*

Note: This verse is foundational in regard to what a teaching ministry should be about.

The many: Even in Paul’s day, there were numerous people, congregational leaders, who peddled the Word of God for profit, claiming to have been sent by God but were not. Paul makes a distinction between himself and this majority.

Peddling the Word of God: They made it into a business, a means of income. They had wrong motivations, as they saw the ministry of the Word of God as a means to achieve financial blessing or prosperity.

Sincerity: Has a nuance of transparency. Paul (and true Bible teachers) wanted people to see that what he was sharing was firmly rooted in the Word of God. Paul did not want to lead people in the wrong direction. That is why he never did things frivolously nor made his decisions lightly.

Before God: Whatever our sphere of influence...whenever we talk about God, we need to realise that He is there watching us. We want to speak with transparency and sincerity.

In Messiah: In a covenantal relationship with Messiah, walking with Him, being in His character.

Chapter 3

Part 1: 2 Corinthians 3:1-11

This chapter is full of information concerning our faith. In it, Paul wants others to understand the call and the methodology (founded on truth) that the apostles used to share the gospel. Paul validates his call and the methodology of his ministry through these individuals at Corinth. Paul was very pleased at the way God had moved in this congregation – who were based in an ungodly and greatly immoral city. People usually visited Corinth in order to gratify their fleshly desires, not in any way wanting to submit to the standards of God.

Verse 1: *“Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? Nor do we have need, as some, of epistles of recommendation unto you, rather from you is our recommendation.”*

Beginning again to commend ourselves: Are we trying to validate our ministry, our call, as apostles or servants of Messiah? This was not Paul’s, Timothy’s etc objective. They were not writing to recommend themselves or to give themselves a stamp of approval.

Epistles: Letters

Recommendation: Stamp of approval.

From you is our recommendation: Paul, and those who were serving with him, could be judged by how this congregation in Corinth were behaving. The proof (validation, stamp of approval) for his work was seen in their testimony. That is one of the reasons why Paul rejoiced over them (2 Corinthians 2:3). He saw the work of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit within this congregation at Corinth.

Verse 2: *“Our epistle is you, having been written in our hearts, known and read by all men.”*

Epistle: A letter with words of support in it that someone would bring to others in order to commend themselves in it.

Written in our hearts: Paul is saying that their (Paul and those with him) love and thoughts for this Corinthian congregation was held dearly in their hearts. This congregation validated the ministry of the Paul. They were a testimony, before others, that what Paul, and those serving with him, was doing was producing legitimate fruit, things that were pleasing to God.

Known: People could see this testimony and come to their own conclusions.

Read: People could watch how this group behaved.

Read by all men: This did not mean the whole world, but it included everyone who had come in contact with (had knowledge of, had heard about, or had viewed) this congregation. This congregation was faithfully living out the call, the faith, that they had received. This validates what Paul is going to say further on in this chapter.

Verse 3: *“Manifesting you are an epistle of Messiah, ministered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the Living God, it has not been written on tablets of stone but on tablets of fleshly hearts.”*

An epistle of Messiah: The testimony of their lives was founded on Messiah.

Ministered by us: (Ad)ministered. The idea here is this: when someone takes out insurance it is the insurance broker who makes it valid by putting it into effect. God used Paul and others to put into effect His truth in these people’s lives.

Spirit: The Spirit (as seen in Genesis 1) brings about order from chaos. He did this in creation, and He does it in people’s lives. This is important, because the validation of Paul's ministry is seen in the order, the purposes and the will of God, being realized in these people's lives - in this congregation at Corinth.

Tablets of stone: The ten commandments (the law of God) were written on tablets of stone. Although these tablets were glorious and revealed the righteousness of God, they were not instruments for making us righteous. They define righteousness, but do not impart righteousness.

Fleshly hearts: Human hearts.

Verse 4: *“But we have confidence such as this through Messiah and before God.”*

We have confidence: Paul and those with him were confident in what they had done in their ministry of proclaiming the gospel. This confidence was not rooted in pride or self-exaltation.

Through Messiah: This confidence came to them through Messiah working in them and through them. They were carrying out Messiah’s ministry.

Before God: In the presence of God.

Verse 5: *“Not that we ourselves are sufficient ones, to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.”*

Not that we ourselves are sufficient: Paul knew that whatever good he did came from the Spirit of God.

Our sufficiency is from God: Paul is emphasizing that he is an instrument of God and all praise goes to God. The reason he could be an instrument of God was because he trusted in the Word and truth of God.

Verse 6: *“Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, not by the letter but by the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit makes life.”*

Who: Referring to God (in the person of Christ).

Ministers of a new covenant: This covenant it is unique. One of its primary characteristics is that of forgiveness.

Spirit: In this covenant there is an emphasis on the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 59:20-21). There is a connection between redemption (the Redeemer, ie Yeshua) and the giving forth of, through a covenant, the Spirit.

Not by the letter but by the Spirit: This covenant’s power is not in the letter but in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings Godly order into our lives.

The letter kills: Paul is talking here about the Torah (the law). This does NOT mean that the Torah is bad and that we should set it aside as New Testament believers. The Torah, in and of itself, when applied to humanity will bring death. It announces God's judgment because it reveals to us the standards of God. It teaches us the proper definition of righteousness. We know what righteous and unrighteous are because of the law or commandments of God. When we encounter God’s commands, and apply them to our lives, we quickly realise that we are unrighteous and are heading for death, condemnation, judgment. It shows us that we are sinners headed for eternal destruction, as we do not meet God’s standards. If we trust in the commandments for salvation, we will find death.

However, even within the Torah there is a message of hope. Within the Torah we learn the principles of redemption and that there is a Redeemer. When we become a recipient of redemption that means that we also receive the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit makes life: This does not mean that He only makes life after we have died. We need to understand that from the moment we believe, while we are alive, we are being made alive – eternal life has already started for us in this present age and is not only reserved for the age to come.

Verse 7: *“But since this ministry of death, in the letter having been engraved in stones, brought about glory, so that the children of Israel were not able to gaze upon the face of Moses on account of the glory of his face, which glory is being annulled.”*

Engraved in stones: Paul changes the word for writing (2 Corinthians 3:2) from ‘written’ to ‘engraved’. Paul is beginning to (grammatically) contrast this difference between the old and the new – the letter and the Spirit.

Brought about glory: The old was glorious. The commandments and laws of God have a degree of glory. Those who reject or disagree with this (saying we need to ‘unhitch’ from the Old Testament) are not Biblically sound.

However, as glorious as the law was, that glory was surpassed by a greater glory that came through the new covenant by means of redemption and the ministry of the Spirit.

Note: This glory was from the law. It was not the glory of God - as the glory of God does not fade away, it does not dissipate, and nor does it become obsolete. It was the glory of the law that was reflected from Moses' face.

Annulled: Disappearing. Lessening. Fading away. Losing significance. Grammatically this is speaking about a present condition. It is something which is happening now but has not yet reached its fullness (like this earth...it is already fading but is not quite gone. The earth will be replaced. Like our bodies.... they are presently fading away, but they are going to be transformed/replaced. This is the same as what is currently happening with the law. A change has happened, and that change is eventually going to be in effect in its totality) Eventually, in a time yet future, the law will be done away with and will no longer be relevant, but this time is not yet. Today the law of God is not fully functional in society. Nobody is killed for violating the Sabbath. What Judaism teaches, and what believers need to also affirm, is that in this time allotment (because there is no temple, no altar, no functioning priesthood) it is not possible for the laws (e.g. The Sabbath) to be kept according to what the Word of God says about keeping it (in order for the Sabbath to be kept, sacrifices had to be offered up etc – Numbers 28:9-10). This however does not mean that the Sabbath loses all significance and is no longer relevant. The Sabbath teaches us many things that we can learn and properly apply to our lives. This is true for all the commandments of the Scripture. By means of the Spirit, we need to apply the message of the commandments, the righteousness of the law, to our lives – not walking in the flesh, but in the Spirit (Romans 8:4). What this is speaking of is that although the law currently exists it is going to be overshadowed. The law still has relevance, but there is something that is greater, and eventually this law will be no more, and what overshadows it will be eternal.

Verse 8: *“How much more so will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?”*

Ministry of the Spirit ... more glorious: The ministry of the law had glory to the effect that it changed the face of Moses, but that glory slowly faded away (Exodus 34:29-35). In contrast to this, the glory of the Spirit does not fade but is going to become greater and greater until it reaches its full measure.

Verse 9: *“For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, how **much more abundant the ministry of righteousness in glory.**”*

Note: The Torah (those first five books in the Old Testament) defines what righteousness is but it is not an instrument that produces righteousness. It is only through redemption, when the righteousness of Messiah is imputed to us, that we become righteous.

Verse 10: *“For even that which has been made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that surpasses it.”*

Note: The law is NOT eternal. Its truth is eternal, but its status is temporary. It is however going to be utilized by Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom (The 1000 year reign of Christ on earth). It is going to be the Torah, the commandments of God, that Messiah is going to use to rule over this Kingdom and there will be a functional temple during this time (Isaiah 2:2-3). When that Kingdom comes to an end, there is going to be a transition into the final state of the Kingdom of God - the New Jerusalem. In the New Jerusalem there will be no temple (Revelation 21:22). At that time the law will become obsolete and will be completely done away with.

The glory that surpasses it: i.e. The new covenant (not based on the letter but based on the Spirit).

Verse 11: *“For if that which is fading away has glory, much more that which remains is glorious.”*

That which is fading away: God is still at work to make the law obsolete but it is not yet so – it will not be obsolete in our lifetime, in this age, in this dispensation, and in the Millennial Kingdom. The law will only become obsolete in the New Jerusalem.

That which remains: Referring to the new (Kingdom) covenant. ‘New’ is the main adjective that describes the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 3

Part 2: 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

Verse 12: *“Therefore, having such a hope, much more boldly do we speak.”*

Therefore: Based upon what Paul has already taught in this chapter.

Having: This word is written in the present tense. This means that it is a current reality for believers.

Such a hope: Paul is emphasizing the fact that we have a very unique, a particular, hope. Hope does not originate in our desires (what we want, what we hope for) but is always connected to the promises of God. Our expectations should always be founded upon what God has promised. Paul had this hope in the promises of God - that what God has said is going to be a reality.

Boldly: Paul had confidence and absolute assurance – not only in his thoughts but also in the way that he spoke. Paul is saying that what he believes and knows he is going to be bold to speak out, to utilize it for the purpose of God.

Verse 13: *“And not as Moses who set a veil over his face before the children of Israel, so not to gaze to the end of what was fading away.”*

Moses: Biblically, Moses was a mediator between God and Israel. He mediated the law (the commandments) and there was a glory attached to this law – Moses’ face shone so that he had to cover it with a veil. The law is not something we should condemn or look down on as bad, or think that it is past, abolished or that Messiah came to destroy it (Matthew 5:17). He came to fulfil the law for us and in us. When speaking of the law, Moses spoke of the fact that blessing and curse accompanied the law (Deuteronomy 30:15-20). On the cross Jesus dealt with the ‘curse’ part of the law so that the ‘life’ and ‘blessings’ part of the law could become the reality in the lives of those who believed in Him.

The law was, and is still, glorious! Paul tells us in Romans 7:12 that the law is holy, and the commandments are just and good. Although it is still glorious, it is fading and one day, but not yet, it will disappear altogether.

Gaze to the end of what was fading away: Moses put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel would not gaze and see that the end would be fading away, that it was not permanent. Moses wanted them to focus on the message of the law. He did not want their focus to be on the fading glory that was attached to the law.

Verse 14: *“But their thoughts were hardened. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted over the reading of the old covenant, because the veil is taken away in Christ.”*

Thoughts: This is a word for perspective. In this case it shows that they had a wrong perspective. They were infatuated with looking at this glory that was fading away.

Until this day: From Moses to Paul, and even until today, their minds are hardened when the Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible, commonly referred to as the Old Testament) is read. Nothing has changed. They do not see things properly (i.e. with the proper understanding).

Old covenant: Old Testament.

The veil is taken away in Christ: The reason why the glory of the law dissipates is because there was something greater on the horizon that the letters pointed to – Messiah’s death for us. Moses did not want them to focus on this fading glory, but on the word itself - what it said: God's will and purposes that the law reveal. That same veil still remains, as the only way to have it removed is through Christ. Christ did not remove the law. He removes the veil over our understanding of the law, so that we can rightly perceive why the glory of the law is fading and why there is no longer a need for the veil.

Verse 15: *“But until this day, whenever Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts having been laid.”*

Moses: Referring to the law of Moses – the first 5 books of the Old Testament.

Having been laid: Something caused it to be there.

Verse 16: *“But when one should turn to the Lord, the veil is removed.”*

When: In the exact moment that someone believes.

Turn: This is a word for repentance.

Lord: Paul is referring to Yeshua. One of the hermeneutical devices that help us to interpret the Word of God is to always pay attention to how Messiah is being spoken of - whether it is by His name, a title, Saviour, teacher, Lord. Paying attention to this can help us to better understand the text we are reading from. Paul is speaking here of people turning toward the Lordship of Yeshua – recognising His authority and submitting to Him. When we submit to the Lordship of Yeshua, through faith, then this veil is removed.

Verse 17: *“But the Lord is Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”*

The Lord is Spirit: Being in Messiah, having that new covenant relationship with Him and submitting to His Lordship, manifests itself through the Holy Spirit entering into us to change and transform us – He brings Kingdom order into our lives. The Spirit of Yeshua and the Holy Spirit are one and the same.

Liberty: Freedom. The Spirit gives us liberty and freedom. This does not mean liberty and freedom to do whatever we want to do. It does not mean liberty or freedom to sin. What it does mean is that we now have freedom and liberty to serve God. That is why Yeshua is called ‘Lord’ in this verse. We become servants of God through Messiah.

Verse 18: *“But we all, with unveiled face, the glory of the Lord is now through us being reflected – that same image - we have been changed from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*

Note: This verse summarizes the whole purpose of this third chapter.

But: A word that shows a contrast. We are not like those with veiled faces. We have a different reality.

All: Referring to all believers – none excluded. This is a transformation that we all have in common – we have the ability to see and understand things properly.

Unveiled face: When we accept Yeshua, that veil is removed.

Reflected: Some Bibles translate this word as ‘mirror’. When that veil has been removed, we see things clearly and therefore can properly reflect the glory of God. That is what a disciple, a follower, an imitator does – he/she reflects the glory of God. We are not divine, so we do not emit light like God does (Luke 9:29 Revelation 21:23), but we have a calling to reflect His glory – not the glory of the law that fades, but the glory of the Spirit of God.

Image: Related to the word ‘icon’. An exact replica of the original.

Note: The veil does not conceal any of God's revelation. Secondly, although we are reflecting God's glory we are not concealed or covered up like Moses was. The glory that Moses demonstrated (the glory of the law) was a glory that was fading away. Our glory is of the very Spirit of Messiah.

Have been changed: Undergone metamorphosis. The Spirit changes us from glory to glory. We are not saved by our deeds. However, having been saved, our deeds are called to reflect the glory of God - through His Spirit which is given to us when we recognize and submit to His Lordship in our lives.

Chapter 4

Once we have received salvation, we become a purchased possession (an instrument) of the living God, to serve His purposes. The gospel is a plan, a revelation, of God's redemption. Once we have been redeemed, part of the plan is that our mortal bodies become an ordered and functional temple for the Holy Spirit, so that we might glorify God even while we are within these human bodies. In this chapter, Paul gives us wisdom and counsel regarding being transformed and conformed to the will and purposes of God – learning how to walk with God and how to participate in His purposes (how to do what He has saved us to do). Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes this chapter from God's perspective and not from his own perspective.

Verse 1: *“On account of this, having this ministry, just as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.”*

This: The ministry (God's work) that we have been called to do.

Ministry: This ministry or service to Him is not a “if we feel like it”, but it is an obligation that we have to Him once we are saved

We: This is relevant for ALL believers.

Received mercy: This is written in the passive. We cannot get mercy for ourselves. It is only through the work of Messiah and His grace that we can become recipients of mercy. Mercy is foundational for beginning the work of God in our lives.

Do not lose heart: Do not despair. Do not grow weary. Receiving God's mercy has an effect on us. It causes us to not become easily discouraged or worn out in doing that which is good. It energizes us and gives us a passion for the work of God.

Verse 2: *“But we reject the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor adulterating the Word of God; but for the manifestation of truth, commending ourselves to the conscience of all men before God.”*

But: In contrast to. A change happens.

Reject: To reject or to renounce means to strongly affirm that something is no longer a part of our lives. We no longer have anything to do with the things that work in our lives in an adverse way.

Hidden things: Things that people do that they do not want anyone to know about. Hidden agendas, hidden behaviours.

Hidden things of shame: If people knew that we were doing those things they would be a cause for our personal shame. People cover, hide, or camouflage these things. This is not what a true believer does. We need to live very transparent lives.

Craftiness: Deceitfulness. Something that's not up front, not clear or not easily discerned. People purposefully think hard about how they are going to hide these things.

Adulterating: Perverting

Word of God: It is so significant that when Paul talks about lifestyle he always turns quickly to Scripture, to the Word of God.

Commending: A word of presentation and a word of transparency. We are living and behaving in such a way that, no matter who we encounter, their conscience will bear witness that what we are saying or doing is righteous and proper, Godly.

The conscience of all men: See comments of 2 Corinthians 1:12.

Before God: In the Presence of God where nothing is ever hidden, but all is exposed. He agrees with this evaluation.

Verse 3: *“But if also is hidden our gospel, it is hidden to those that are perishing.”*

Hidden: This is a word which comes from something that has been hidden in the past, is hidden now and will continue to be hidden. It is hidden for those who refuse to acknowledge the gospel or see it as significant or valuable...those *that are perishing*.

Our gospel: Referring to the gospel of Messiah – the proclamation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Messiah.

Perishing: They have no interest in the things of God and so do not respond to Him.

Verse 4: *“In whom the God of this age has blinded the thoughts of the ones who are unbelieving, in order that they would not be illuminated to the light of the gospel, of the glory of Messiah, who is the image of God.”*

The God of this age has blinded the thoughts: This is a foundational and vital spiritual principle. There are those who wilfully, knowingly, reject truth. Their consciences tell them that what they are hearing is right and that they need to respond by falling under conviction. If they DO respond to that conviction (God’s grace drawing them to Himself) they will be brought closer to God until they become believers. But if they reject that conviction (received through the prompting of their conscience) that rejection begins to harden their hearts and take them further and further away from God (like Pharoah in the book of Exodus – Exodus 7-10) Pharoah hardened his heart (of his own accord) again and again. Eventually God stepped in and worked with Pharoah to harden Pharoah’s heart (from the 6th plague onwards). It is at that point that we can say that God then blinded the eyes of Pharoah. Consistently saying “no” to God leads to darkness, a spiritual blinding, in a person’s perspective (see also 2 Thessalonians 2:11).

Unbelieving: They are against faith. They are against truth. Unbelievers.

Illuminated: Enlightened.

The light of the gospel: The glory of Messiah. The gospel manifests glory, and the source of that glory is Messiah – who He is (God) and what He has done (He clothed Himself with human flesh and then lay His life down for us so that we could have eternal life).

Who is the image (icon) of God: Referring to Yeshua. Yeshua is the perfect representation of God the Father. Yeshua is God.

Verse 5: *“For not ourselves we preach, but Messiah Yeshua the Lord, but ourselves your servants on account of Yeshua.”*

But ourselves: In contrast to Yeshua. Paul is making a distinction between us and Messiah.

Your servants: Knowing Yeshua, understanding what He has done for us, causes us to become committed to serving others – on Christ’s behalf.

Verse 6: *“God, the One who spoke out of darkness, shone light in our hearts for the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Messiah Yeshua.”*

Spoke: Some Bibles translate this word εἰπών as ‘commanded’ but it is not the word for commanding. God does not need to command. His spoken word carries authority.

Spoke out of darkness, shone light in our hearts: A reference to creation. The creation account speaks about the authority of God to bring order, purpose, meaning, a future. Before God spoke, the earth was empty and void. It could not produce anything. Everything came into being by the spoken Word of God. In our lives, what we are called to do, the promises we are going to receive, the rewards, the blessings all begin with the Word of God. That is why it is so vitally important for us to be committed to reading, learning and putting Scripture into practice.

Light of knowledge: God has given us knowledge, illumination, revelation so that we can know truth. Knowing truth brings about the glory of God, and it does so in the face of Messiah Yeshua.

The face of Messiah Yeshua: This can be understood as before Him, in His presence. He is witnessing and overseeing this. He is supplying us with the light. A face can also be taken to mean an idiom for blessing (like the Aaronic benediction – His face shines upon us in order to bless, Numbers 6:23-27). As we receive illumination, revelation from the Word of God we are going to do ministry, which is going to bring about the blessing of Messiah in our lives.

Verse 7: *“But we have this treasure in an earthen vessel, that the surpassing power shall be of God and not from ourselves.”*

Treasure: Through faith, as an outcome of being redeemed (ie only applicable for believers), we become an earthen vessel with treasure in it. This treasure reveals and releases the blessings of God into the lives of others.

Earthen vessel: We are the workmanship and creation of God – made from the dust of the earth originally.

Surpassing: This is a word that talks about going exceedingly beyond the expectation, need or request.

Verse 8: *“In all trouble, but not being crushed; being perplexed, but not being of despair.”*

In all trouble, but not being crushed: God gives us this surpassing, exceeding, power in order that we can suffer much. As we walk with God in this world, we are going to experience trouble. But this treasure in us, the surpassing power of God, ensures we are not crushed by this trouble. God speaks about power and immediately follows it up by talking about suffering. This should strongly reinforce the fact to us that He gives us the power so that we can endure the suffering – no one needs power to endure luxury.

Perplexed: Confused. At times, as we walk with Him, we may feel confused about what we are experiencing. But this treasure in us, the exceedingly, beyond measure power of God, ensures we are not discouraged or in despair, but that we are able to persevere, to endure, to overcome this world!

Verse 9: *“Being persecuted, but not abandoned; cast down, but not being destroyed.”*

Persecuted: It is normal for a true believer to experience persecution (Hebrews 11:32-40).

Faithfulness to truth, to the Word of God, causes persecution.

Not abandoned: God is not going to leave us nor forsake us.

Verse 10: *“**Always** the death of our Lord Yeshua in the body we carry, that the life of Yeshua in our body be manifested.”*

The death of our Lord Yeshua: Yeshua is the best example we will ever have of what it looks like to live a Christian life. He was troubled, persecuted, struck down. He, the very Son of God, was perfectly faithful to speak truth and was beaten, mocked, scorned, scourged, and, eventually, killed for it. A life of luxury was not the path that Yeshua (who had the right and the authority to do so if He had wanted to) chose to walk.

In the body we carry: As we go about day after day, event after event, we bear the death of Messiah. This means that we always remember that He suffered, so that we are not surprised when we suffer. He was hated, so we should not be surprised when we are hated.

That the life of Yeshua in our body be manifested: As we walk in recognition of Messiah, who died for us, it is going to encourage, empower, steer and direct us to do those things that He did. The life of Yeshua was a life of suffering. As we suffer for Him (identify with Him in His death) it is going to be a testimony to others of what the life of Yeshua looked like.

Verse 11: *“For always we the ones living for death being delivered over, on account of Yeshua, so that also the life of Messiah should be manifested in our mortal fleshly bodies.”*

Living for death: Luke 9:23. When we live for death it means that we are ready to die. We do things and make decisions that cause the world to want to rise up and kill us. We are prepared to suffer for what we believe.

Delivered over: Handed over.

Mortal fleshly bodies: ie Fleshly bodies of death. We need to make a proper evaluation of our lives. We are in this body for a very short time compared to the time of eternity. We are rapidly running out of time, so we must be wise, not wanting to have everything we can in this temporal life. We do NOT want to be unprepared for eternity, and the only preparation we get for eternity is right now.

Verse 12: *“So that on one hand death is being worked out in us, but on the other hand it is life for you.”*

Being worked out: Being done

Life for you: Notice that whenever Paul writes he is always thinking about those whom he is ministering to.

Note: If we are all about investing in this world, this life, then we are investing in that which is being destroyed. This would be a bad investment. If we had money and were going to invest in a company, we would not want to invest in a company that is decaying or moving towards its conclusion. Instead, we would want to invest in one that was moving up, one that had a glorious and good future. Likewise, investing in the Kingdom of God would be termed a good investment from God’s perspective.

Verse 13: *“For we having the same spirit of faith according to that which has been written down: ‘I have believed therefore I have spoken,’ we also believe and therefore speak.”*

Faith according to that which has been written: Notice that faith goes together with the truth of God, the Scripture (Romans 10:17).

I have believed therefore I have spoken: Quoted from Psalm 116:10. Paul shared with them what he believed. We, as a ministry team, also need to share what we believe – transparent with no hypocrisy.

Verse 14: *“Knowing that the One who raised the Lord Yeshua, also on account of Yeshua we are going to be raised and will present us with you.”*

The One: God the Father.

On account of Yeshua we are going to be raised: We are going to be raised up to experience Kingdom life (John 11:25). If we do not experience resurrection, we will not experience the real life of God.

Present us with you: All believers are in this together. Paul told them that he was going to be resurrected because of his faith in Yeshua, and he was going to be presented, along with all of us, when we go before God for the judgment of rewards. We receive these rewards with everyone else (Hebrew 11:39-40).

Verse 15: *“For all things on account of you, in order that the grace should abound and should do so more and more, and that thanksgiving should abound to the glory of God.”*

All things on account of you: Paul made decisions for their sakes.

Should do so more and more: Some people interpret this to mean that grace should abound through more and more people.

Thanksgiving should abound: When grace abounds, it brings about more thanksgiving, which in turn brings about more glory being given to God. As we grow spiritually, our gratitude for God (His workmanship, provision, leadership, Presence) will also naturally grow.

Verse 16: *“Therefore not losing heart, since the outer man is decaying but the inner man is being renewed day after day.”*

Not losing heart: 2 Corinthians 4:1. We do not become faint hearted. We do not despair or grow weary when we see decay starting to set in in our natural bodies.

The outer man is decaying: This body that we have right now. It is getting older, slower, weaker as it approaches death.

The inner man is being renewed: We are in a process of inward spiritual renewal.

Verse 17: *“For our momentary light tribulation, for the exceeding eternal weight of glory, is being worked out in us.”*

Momentary: From the perspective of eternity, this tribulation is short, it only lasts for a moment.

Light tribulation: The worst form of tribulation a believer could go through would be considered ‘light’ when compared to the wrath of God.

Weight: Depth.

Being worked out: Written in the passive. This implies that this temporary and light tribulation that we go through (comparatively speaking) is what is producing this eternal highly significant glory that we are going to have.

Verse 18: *“We do not look intently at the things seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things that are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen they are eternal.”*

Look: The Greek word here means to look intently or very carefully at something. To pay a lot of attention to it.

Things seen: The luxuries of this world (money, houses etc). We do not attach significance to these things.

Things which are not seen: He is referring to the Kingdom promises.

Temporary: They are here but do not endure. Revelation tells us that these things are going to be destroyed in an hour (Revelation 18:9-10). None of the things that the world puts significance on, from a worldly perspective, are going to make it into the Kingdom of God.

Eternal: An adjective that describes the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 5

Part 1: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Death is a subject that is relevant for all human beings. We will all leave this body in one of two ways: either we will die, and our soul will go elsewhere, or, if we are a believer, and if we are alive at the time of our blessed hope (the rapture), this body will be changed and our souls will inhabit a new body, a Kingdom body.

Verse 1: *“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, should be destroyed, we have a dwelling place from God, a home not made with human hands, eternal, in the heavens.”*

We: Paul is not speaking to the world but is speaking to believers, in Messiah, about an experience that is only specific to them.

Know: Written in the present tense. This means it was known in the past, is known now and will continue to be known into the future. This is something certain. We can be sure of this.

Our earthly house: This is obviously not speaking about our place of residence, but Paul is speaking figuratively about our bodies – where our souls reside.

If: ‘If’ is correctly used here. Paul is speaking about the possibility of something that will happen, but no one knows necessarily when.

Tent: Living in an animal skin tent was common at one time. Similarly, our souls have an earthly tent, human skin.

Dwelling place: Paul uses a different word here for a building. This shows a contrast between the earthly house and the heavenly dwelling. A dwelling is larger, greater and more significant than a house (John 14:1-3).

Home: A place of intimacy, a place of safety and security.

Not made with human hands: If something exists in the Scripture that is not made by human hands normally, and rightly so, we assume it to be made by God.

In the heavens: Also connected to God and His Kingdom.

Verse 2: *“For also in this we groan; and our building from heaven, to be clothed with, we yearn for.”*

In this: ‘This’ is a demonstrative pronoun. Whenever a demonstrative pronoun is used we need to realize that something is being pointed out in a very demonstrative way in regard to the subject (in this case, the subject is our earthly bodies)

Groan: This is a word that expresses sorrow, pain, or discouragement. In this world, things can be going well and then, before too long, something happens to interrupt our joy, our peace, our happiness. When we are in this earthly body we experience discomfort, pain, anxiety, sorrow etc.

Clothed with: We are going to be changed, transformed. We are going to exchange the bodies that we are in for new, Kingdom bodies.

Yearn: Strong, passionate, intense desire. We strongly desire this new body, as it is far superior, in every way, to the one we have right now.

Verse 3: *“For if we also are clothed (with this new body), not naked we will be found.”*

Naked: ‘Naked’ in the Bible is a term frequently associated with shame. One who has nothing pleasing to God is considered ‘naked’ (Those with dirty clothes or filthy garments are seen as unrighteous – not clothed correctly). If we are ‘not naked’ it means that we will not be ashamed before God, as we are going to be clothed.

Verse 4: *“For also the ones being in the tent we groan, being burdened, unto which we do not want to be unclothed, we want to be clothed, that mortality be swallowed up by life.”*

The ones: Referring to our souls/spirit, the very essence of who we are.

Tent: Skin

Groan: Same word for expressing pain, sorrow, grief, sadness and suffering.

Not want to be unclothed: As believers, we do not just want to die and be done with it. A person who wants to escape life is not someone who has faith. There should be a desire and a hope within us that this life is not all there is, and that we are waiting for our new bodies, which are connected to God’s Kingdom.

Mortality: Death.

Swallowed up by life: Throughout the Scripture there is a consistent relationship between a Kingdom experience and life. We have a very small taste of life now, but when we are in the Kingdom, we will experience the fullness of what life truly is. This is what should excite and motivate us, driving our behaviour in this world.

Verse 5: “*But the One who is working this out for us is God, and He gives to us the guarantee of the Spirit.*”

The One: There is only One source that gives us this Kingdom life.

Working this out for us: God works out this eternal life for us, as we could never do it by ourselves - we are a recipient of what Messiah did for us.

He gives to us: This (the Holy Spirit) is the proof.

Guarantee: A down payment. A deposit. It's only through a new covenant relationship (a covenant of redemption) that we can receive the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 59:20-21). Not only is God working this out for us, but we can be assured that these promises are true – the Holy Spirit working in our lives is evidence of that (eg: When we are tempted, the Holy Spirit tells us that this is temptation and is not something we want to do).

Verse 6: “*Therefore being confident at ALL times, and knowing that being at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.*”

Confident: We are confident because our expectations, our hope, is founded on the promises of God.

At home in the body we are absent from the Lord: Being present in the body means that we are out of our heavenly home, we are absent from the Lord. This tells us that we have to be in a new condition in order to be present with the Lord in His Kingdom. Our souls can be in the Presence of the Lord without their bodies. However, it is when we are clothed with our new bodies that we are enabled to dwell in the presence of God.

Note: There is a difference between the present-day heaven and the Kingdom of God. The present-day heaven is not eternal but, like the law, it is passing away – 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1. It is also interesting to note that at the time the present heavens expire is the same time that the law expires (Matthew 5:18) When we talk about our eternal dwelling place, we are talking about the Kingdom of God. In order to function in this Kingdom, we need to have a new body – adapted specifically for this Kingdom. There is no indication from Scripture if those who come to faith after the rapture are going to be given a new body. One interpretation is that they might possibly be given one. Another interpretation is that they will continue on in their human bodies, but they will need to eat of the healing leaves in order not to experience decay – Revelation 22:2 (i.e. they will be like Adam and Eve before the fall).

Verse 7: “*For through faith we walk, and not by sight.*”

Through faith we walk: As long as we are not in our new body, not in the presence of God, we walk by faith. This means that we do not see as the world sees or believe as the world believes. Seeing with the eyes of this world leads us into deception. We see things only in one dimension – we do not perceive the spiritual dimension with our human eyes. We do not know what is taking place in the angelic realm, what battles are being fought around us etc. Because we do not see clearly with these eyes, we cannot make decisions solely on what we can see but we need to base our decisions on truth - we make our decisions by faith.

Verse 8: *“We are confident, and we think that it is preferable to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”*

Think: The word used here is the word for thinking in a good way. Having the right perspective.

Preferable: Profitable.

Absent: To be away from home.

At home: Present. Paul does not place any time period or waiting period between these two conditions. As a believer, if we are not at one place, then we are at the other.

Verse 9: *“Therefore, also being passionate, whether we are at home in the body or absent from it to be well pleasing to Him.”*

Passionate: Having an ambition. Paul had a strong desire, a passion, to be well pleasing to God regardless of his circumstances.

Him: Meaning the Lord.

Verse 10: *“For all of us it is necessary to appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, in order that each of us receives the payment for the things done through the body, whether these things be good or bad.”*

All of us: Paul is specifically speaking to all believers. Non-believers do not appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Non-believers are judged at the White Throne judgment of God (Revelation 20:11-15). These two judgments serve completely different purposes. The judgement seat of Christ is a judgment of rewards. The Great White Throne judgment is a judgment of condemnation. Everyone who goes to the Great White Throne judgment will be tossed into the lake burning with fire.

Receives the payment: Our deeds are going to produce a Kingdom result. We are compensated for what we have done while on earth.

Whether these things be good or bad: Messiah went to the cross for everything that we have done in the flesh that is displeasing to God. We are going to understand the consequences of those actions in this world and for eternity (by suffering a loss of rewards), but Messiah has paid the price for them. Messiah will get all the praise and honour for anything good that He did through us, and we get rewarded.

Note: Messiah has a purpose and a plan for our lives, and He also has all the rewards in place, so that if we carry out those plans and purposes those rewards are waiting for us. But if we do not do those things God has planned for us to do, then we lose the rewards that would have accompanied those things...we suffer loss (1 Corinthians 3:14-15).

At this judgment, we are going to understand what our lives could have been, and we are also going to realise what faithlessness cost us.

Chapter 5

Part 2: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

God has given us work to do. A great aspect of this work, this calling in our lives, is called the ministry of reconciliation. This involves bringing individuals into eternal intimacy with God through the gospel.

Verse 11: *“Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, men we persuade to God. For that we have been manifested, and I hope also in your conscience.”*

Therefore: This is a very important word that is a type of conjunction. It is a word of transition. ‘Therefore’ tells us that Paul is reaching a conclusion based on what he has revealed prior to this word.

Fear: Phobia. A phobia can be an imagined threat or a legitimate threat (something that rightly should cause fear).

The fear of the Lord: Paul is referring here to the wrath of God, the threat of His eternal judgment. God is wrathful and He is going to judge sin. The best example of the wrath of God is the cross. The fact that Jesus would be commanded to die on a cross tells us that God’s judgement and His wrath is real. We need to understand that God is not weak. He will not ignore or think lightly of sin. The cross reminds us that those thoughts are misplaced.

Men we persuade: Those who have received Messiah, who have believed the truth, who have brought themselves under the authority of God’s word, who know the reality of God’s wrath, are going to persuade men to enter into a covenant with God (to be reconciled to God, to be redeemed).

Manifested: A word of appearing. In this context it can best be understood as being transparent - we show ourselves, we reveal ourselves.

Hope: Paul’s hope was that he (and his companions) would not only be physically seen by the Corinthians, but that the Corinthian’s consciences would also discern them – i.e know the reasons, motivations, and purposes of why Paul did the things that he did.

Verse 12: *“For not again ourselves we commend to you, but an opportunity being given to you to boast on behalf of us, that you should have before the ones in appearance rejoice and not in heart.”*

Not again ourselves we commend: Paul was not there to seek their approval. It had nothing to do with Paul or his companions, but everything to do with the purpose of God.

An opportunity: When Paul went to this congregation it gave them a spiritual opportunity. God had sent Paul to them to give them a revelation of prophetic truth. Spiritual opportunities are connected to eternity. We should not neglect or ignore them.

Boast: This word states or reveals something publicly. It can also be understood as rejoicing. People boast about that which is good, that which is pleasing, that which brings joy into their lives. Paul is not saying that we want the attention, but rather this was an opportunity given to them in which they could rejoice. In a general sense, it gave them the opportunity to bear witness, to testify, to reveal something.

Appearance: Literally ‘of the face’

Note: For some people 'seeing is believing'. Paul is saying that they wanted to be transparent. They came and behaved in a way to bring about a spiritual change. The Corinthians saw their commitment, and their conduct, and it did not call attention to Paul and his companions, but rather it gave the Corinthians an opportunity to rejoice, publicly, before those who only pay attention to what they see with their eyes.

Not in heart: The heart is a word of thought. Proverbs 23:7 tells us that as a man thinks in his heart so is he. Many times, in the Bible, when the word 'heart' is stated, it is telling us that it is an idiom for discernment (what we think about etc). Paul is saying here that some people only think according to what they can physically see with their eyes. These people will not ponder or reflect on these things inwardly in order to arrive at truth. They are just going to make decisions based upon what they see. These Corinthians could boast/rejoice concerning Paul (etc) as he had lived out his commitment to God in a discernible/visible way, because he sincerely believed that God is wrathful and will judge sinners.

Verse 13: *"For whether we are beyond ourselves it is for God; if we should appear sober-minded it is unto you."*

Note: Paul gives two very different situations in this verse: Either 'this' or 'that'.

Beyond ourselves: To stand outside of. Acting uniquely...people may say acting in a way that is perhaps not dignified from a worldly standpoint. The world does not understand this behaviour.

It is for God: Whenever we behave in an unusual manner, from a worldly perspective, Paul says we do so unto God. It is our service, our commitment, to Him that the world cannot understand.

Sober minded: Normal behaviour. Paul wanted to have a testimony that they could discern and appreciate, that they could easily comprehend. If at times our behaviour seems out of the norm it is because we do not fit into this world or its way of behaving.

Verse 14: *"For the love of Messiah compels us, judging this: that since One on behalf of all died, so that with the result of that all died."*

Judging this: This is the conclusion that Paul has reached.

One: Jesus Christ. Messiah's love for us compelled Him to go to that cross.

On behalf of all died: Yeshua died for all of humanity (John 3:16).

The result: ...all died: Yeshua, who had never sinned, became sin for us. The sins of the whole world were laid on Him. The outcome of sin is death, judgment...and that is why Yeshua had to die. He took the punishment, the death, of all of humanity. In a sense, through Yeshua, we all die, we all receive the punishment of being Torah violators. If we receive Messiah, we die too (Dead to sin and alive to Messiah – Romans 6:11). He took the punishment for us, and it is credited to our account. Because of the cross, we have already received God's judgment. We no longer walk under the law, but, being led by the Spirit, we walk in faith. It is through faith that we fulfil the righteousness of the law.

Verse 15: *“On behalf of all He died, so that the ones living no longer for themselves should they live, but for Him who died for them and was raised from the dead.”*

So that: Paul is now going to tell us the reason why Yeshua died.

The ones living: Talking about believers.

No longer for themselves should they live: Messiah died so that we could live for Him. He did not die so that we could live for ourselves (living to achieve what we want to achieve for ourselves).

For Him: We need to live for Messiah Yeshua.

Raised from the dead: Yeshua was raised from the dead by God the Father. God the Father, by raising Him from the dead, confirmed the sufficiency, the perfection, of Messiah’s offering. It was acceptable to God. Yeshua’s resurrection here is clear, but our resurrection (our Kingdom future) is also hinted at here. If we died with Him, we will also be raised like Him.

Verse 16: *“So that we from now on no longer we know things according to the flesh. But since also we have known according to the flesh Messiah but now no longer do we know (Him thus).”*

So that we from now on: There is kind of a chain reaction. Something happened (in this case, this death) which leads to us thinking in a different way ‘from now on’, from the moment we believe.

Know things: Discern things. Reckon things. We no longer see things from an earthly perspective, but we see things differently.

We have known according to the flesh Messiah: There are two primary interpretations/perspectives of this. The first one is that Messiah came in the flesh and was known as a human being. People could touch Him, speak to Him, hear Him. The second possibility is that we came to know Messiah out of a fleshly perspective. We did not want to experience the wrath of God, or be sentenced eternally to hell, so our motivation in coming to faith initially was a fleshly one.

No longer do we know (Him thus): This fleshly way of coming to Messiah (Fear of wrath etc) is no longer our motivation for knowing Messiah. We no longer need to live with a fear of the wrath or judgment of God. Not having an assurance of our salvation (which is what we should have – and even more so as we mature spiritually), being constantly afraid of the wrath of God, causes us to have a wrong understanding of the work of Messiah. Messiah’s work was all sufficient. He accomplished the work, purpose and will of God perfectly so that we can have assurance and never have to be concerned about the wrath of God as a believer. Messiah has already taken that wrath upon Himself when He died for us. Now we live for Him – not out of a fear of God’s wrath, but out of a desire to please Him because we love Him.

Verse 17: *“So that from now on if anyone is in Messiah (they are) a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold all things are new.”*

So that from now on: This same kind of chain reaction spoken about in 2 Corinthians 5:16. No longer thinking in the flesh, or with a fleshly attitude, leads to us thinking in a different way ‘from now on’.

Anyone: Applicable to all believers

In Messiah: Being in a new covenantal relationship with Him.

Old things: Written in the plural. Our old habits, our old ways of thinking, our old ways of doing things, etc

Passed away: Written in the singular. For us (who are now considered dead in Messiah), these old things are also to be considered dead in Him.

New: What God began in the past is true now and will continue to be true into the future. These new things accompany us. They cause us to be different. These new things become a new reality for us.

Verse 18: *“All things are from God, reconciling us to Himself through Messiah Yeshua; also, He has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.”*

All things are from God: He is the One who has brought about all these things for the purpose of reconciliation. Therefore, He should be the recipient of all praise, glory, and thanksgiving.

Reconciling: Reconciliation brings about a specific change in our lives.

Reconciling us to Himself through Messiah Yeshua: It is only through Messiah Yeshua that we can be reconciled to God.

He has given to us the ministry of reconciliation: This goes back to what Paul said earlier. We have been manifested, we have become transparent, so that we can reconcile people to God through Messiah. We want to see all things brought under the Lordship of our Lord and Saviour - that all things would be reconciled to Him. When people are reconciled to God, then they will no longer fear the judgment of God. Every believer has been given the ministry of reconciliation. We have an absolute obligation to be thinking purposefully, with intent, of how we can be in the presence of others for the purpose of reconciling them to God through Messiah Yeshua. All of us have been given this ministry, and all of us need to act on it so that God can begin to fulfil His purposes in our lives.

Verse 19: *“As that God was in Messiah reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their transgressions, and set in us the word of reconciliation.”*

God was in Messiah: This is a great text to speak about the divinity of Messiah. God did it through Messiah, through the uniqueness of their Oneness.

Reconciling the world to Himself: God is going to bring a change to all of creation, to all of the world. Every aspect of this world is going to be dealt with based upon reconciliation. That which is not reconciled to God is going to experience the judgment of God.

Not reckoning to them their transgressions: This is how God reconciled those who received the gospel to Himself. This is a promise. God worked through Messiah in order that He would not reckon, not account, not recognize their transgressions. Our sins have been dealt with at the cross. We have been forgiven.

Word: The plan, the purpose.

Verse 20: “*And in Messiah we have become mature, we encourage that you should be encouraged through us to seek on behalf of Messiah that you should be reconciled to God.*”

Mature: Many Bibles translate this word as ‘ambassador’, but this is not correctly translated. It is a word that refers to an elder in a Presbyterian congregation. It refers to those who are mature enough to lead that assembly. Paul is saying that on behalf of Messiah we are mature, we are the elders (older ones – even a babe in Messiah is older, spiritually, than someone in the world), and with that comes a God given authority subjected to the will, purpose and revelation of God.

You should be reconciled to God: This is written in the imperative, which means that being reconciled to God is a commandment. It is also written in the passive. This means that it is something we cannot do by ourselves, but it needs to be done for us. So, being reconciled is a commandment, but we cannot do it for ourselves. Being a recipient of reconciliation comes as an outcome of the ministry of Messiah, and His ministry continues through individuals. Believers have that word of reconciliation, and they share it with others and encourage others to receive reconciliation. We cannot reconcile ourselves, but we can receive and become a recipient of God's reconciliation to Himself by Messiah.

Verse 21: “*For the One who did not know sin on behalf of us sin He made, so that we should know the righteousness of God in Him.*”

Note: This verse gives us a proper understanding of this work of reconciliation.

The One who did not know sin: Jesus had no connection whatsoever with sin in His own life. He had no experience with it. Sin was foreign to Him.

On behalf of us: Neither God the Father nor God the Son benefitted from this. It was all for us. We needed to be saved. We needed this reconciliation. We needed this forgiveness.

Sin He made: God made this One (Yeshua) to be sin. He laid our sins upon Yeshua so that He would take the punishment and we would not. And, not being punished, therefore, we could enjoy eternal life, Kingdom life. The righteousness of God was upheld through His judgment of sin upon Messiah.

We should know the righteousness of God: As believers we are going to experience the righteousness of God.

In Him: In this covenantal relationship with Messiah.

Note: When we live our lives being a herald of the message of salvation (the gospel), speaking about the means of how to be reconciled to God, and when we live with discernment, making righteous decisions, our lives are going to be greatly changed. One of the changes we will experience is having inner peace, contentment, that joy that overcomes all the attacks that the enemy can throw at us.

Chapter 6

Part 1: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Since we are ministers of reconciliation what can we expect when we live in faithful obedience to that call? We need to know this, so that, when these things happen, we are not surprised, confused, or discouraged.

Verse 1: *“But we, workers together, exhort that not in vanity the grace of God you received.”*

But: This is a word of contrast. What Paul begins to reveal now is that when we are living righteously, we should not expect it to make life easier for us. There is much opposition to righteousness in this world. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of righteousness (Matthew 6:33), but the kingdom of this world is opposed to righteousness. This world is stained by sin and characterised by darkness. When we strive, in obedience, to promote or proclaim reconciliation to this world the response is, more often than not, negative. Those who belong to this world do not want reconciliation to a holy, righteous, just, and perfect God. *Workers together:* Paul is speaking about himself and those who are working or serving together with him.

Exhort: Encourage

Vanity: This word speaks of having no proper purpose or no good outcome. It has a degree of that which is worthless, not productive.

Grace: Grace, after salvation, works in a person's life to produce the will of God. We are saved for a purpose - not to live in sin or practice unrighteousness. Grace produces righteousness in our lives. Righteousness and the will of God go hand in hand.

Not in vanity the grace of God you received: The implication is that it would not be in vain, but it would produce much fruit or good work in regard to the will of God.

Verse 2: *“For He says: ‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.’ Behold, now is an acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation.”*

He: The Lord

In an acceptable time: This is a quotation from a very well-known chapter in Judaism: the book of Isaiah 49:8. This chapter is about God's redemption and the significant place that Israel has in God's plan. Israel is God's vessel to bring about a Kingdom change.

Acceptable: Good and pleasing. A word for welcoming something because it's exactly what was hoped for or desired. Paul is revealing that they had (and we have) a wonderful spiritual opportunity. They were living in a significant time – the gospel was going forth for the first time ever into all of the world and was not only limited to within Israel.

I (God) have heard you: The people had been praying for this time of redemption. When it says that God, who always hears, has heard them it means He has heard in order to respond.

Salvation: This is a Kingdom word.

I have helped you: God has heard but now He is also responding to these petitions for redemption. He has helped the people through the work of Messiah. This was the first generation outside of Israel who had the opportunity to respond to the gospel message of salvation.

Behold: This is a word (in the Old and New Testament) that means something very significant is about to be said and we need to pay attention to it. In this verse it is used twice – doubly emphasised.

(Good, pleasing) ...*acceptable:* Paul uses the word ‘acceptable’ but he adds two prefixes to it in the Greek which tell us that this time is also ‘good’ and ‘pleasing’.

Now is the day of salvation: There is an invitation to respond. God has acted, and now we need to be faithful to discern what He is up to and respond – participate in what God is doing. We need to not only work together with others, but we also need to work together with God.

Note: When the time of the Gentiles, the church age, comes to an end so too does the time of the gospel going forth come to an end. The ‘end’ in Matthew 24:14 is referring to the end of the church age (see also Luke 21:24 and Romans 11:25). As ministers or servants of the Kingdom we need to expect this.

Verse 3: “*Nothing by no one giving offense, in order that the ministry would (not) be stained.*”

Nothing by no one: In the Greek language this is simply the way of Paul saying that he did not want anyone to give offense.

No one giving offense: It is very important that we live beyond reproach. We need to live in a way that does not discredit our faith. Offenses can be stumbling blocks to others.

Stained: Having a blemish or an unseemly mark upon it.

Verse 4: “*But in all things commending ourselves as ministers of God; in much endurance, in tribulation, in needs, in distresses.*”

In all things: In all behaviours.

Commending ourselves: Showing ourselves

Ministers of God: Being a representative to or for the work of God (what He is about).

Endurance: Perseverance. Some Bibles translate this word as ‘patience’ but this is a word for enduring through suffering. This word is also never used in regard to something joyful or pleasurable. We never endure what we love. The context here is needing to endure through difficult times.

Tribulation: More often than not Biblically, this word ‘tribulation’ is used in regard to believers (Acts 14:22). As we submit to this call to be ministers of reconciliation, ministers of God, submitting to His purposes and plans we are going to encounter tribulation (persecution).

Needs: This is a word referring to that which is absolutely necessary for us to do. These are the things that faith compels us to do. They are essential. We are going to persevere in tribulation to accomplish these essential things which are going to be met with much opposition from the enemy.

Distresses: This is not a word that speaks of minor suffering but of intense suffering. When a patient is in distress medically it means that the situation they are in is life threatening and action needs to be taken. As believers, we are going to find ourselves in life-threatening situations where action, by means of the Holy Spirit, needs to be taken in order to overcome.

Verse 5: *“Also in stripes, in prison, in riots, in toils, in night watch, in fastings.”*

These are the types of situations that we are going to find ourselves in for our faith. This had great significance and relevance in Paul’s lifetime but will also have great relevance in the near future.

Stripes: Blows. Has to do with being physically harmed, a form of torture or physical pain that comes from receiving blows of some types.

Riots: Uprisings.

Toils: Serving in physical labour.

Night watch: Some Bibles translate this word ‘sleeplessness’ but it literally means night watch. It probably has to do with someone guarding the city, watchman on the walls. Here it is a reference to prayer (Acts 12:5). In times to come we are going to find ourselves in dire situations where true believers are going to realise that they cannot sleep but will be compelled to stay up and offer prayer all night.

Fastings: In the plural. This means not just fasting occasionally but fasting in abundance.

Verse 6: *“In purity, in knowledge, in long suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love.”*

Note: This verse speaks about how we need to meet these unpleasant things we are going to encounter.

Knowledge: Knowledge of the Word of God. We do not change our perspective.

Long suffering: To suffer long.

Genuine love: Love is connected to the law of God (Matthew 22:36-40). Loving God produces love for others.

Verse 7: *“And in the word of truth, in the power of God, through weapons of righteousness of the right hands and of the left hands.”*

Word of truth: We are able to live in purity, knowledge etc because of our commitment to truth. Scriptural truth needs to be the motivation for all of our thoughts and actions.

Power of God: When we're walking in the truth we can expect to be in the power of God - these things go hand in hand.

Weapons: This word is inaccurately translated ‘armour’ in some Bibles. It is however more accurately translated ‘weapons’. ‘Armour’ is defensive - defending against the attack of the enemy. This is not what this verse is speaking about.

Righteousness: When our objective (goal) is righteousness, and all our words and actions are for the purpose of the righteousness of God, then He is going to supply us with the weapons that we need to overcome the attacks of the enemy.

Of the right hands and of the left hands: This is an idiom meaning in whatever situation we find ourselves in (right or left).

Verse 8: *“Through glory and that which has no value, through a bad word or a good word, as deceivers but yet we are true.”*

Glory: Honour. Righteousness produces that which is glorious and brings honour to God.

No value: This is not the word for dishonour. Whether the world thinks our behaviour is glorious or of little value makes no difference.

Through a bad word or a good word: Regardless of the accusations, regardless of what is said, we don't take our marching orders from the world. We do not conform to society's standards according to what they do or do not think of us – whether they give us a good or a bad report.

Deceivers: Even if the world calls us derogatory names (deceivers, bigots, narrow minded etc) we need to hold on to what we know to be true. We are going to be attacked for what we believe so we need to prepare ourselves for this.

Verse 9: *“As unknown or recognised, as dying but behold we live, as chastened and not killed.”*

Unknown or recognised: The world may or may not know or recognise us. It makes no difference whether we are known or unknown.

Dying: Some people will be put to death.

Behold we live: Just because we are put to death does not mean that we are not alive. Dying for our faith ushers us in to true, eternal life.

Chastened: Disciplined

Not killed: We may be disciplined but it's not the end for us.

Verse 10: *“Being grieved but **always** rejoicing; as poor ones, but making wealthy many; as not having but all things possessing.”*

Grieved: Being made sorrowful.

Poor ones: Physically, looking at our bank accounts or financial resources, a time is coming when our faith is going to make us poor. We are going to lose the right to utilize assets or earn money. These things will make us financially 'poor ones'.

Making wealthy many: As we do what God has called us to do, and as we become 'poor ones' in the process, we are going to be making many people wealthy. This is not talking about making them physically wealthy but spiritually or Kingdom wealthy in the promises and blessings of God.

Not having but all things possessing: In this world we may be rejected and suffer loss but in actuality we have inherited the Kingdom of God and have everything that we need of eternal value.

Chapter 6

Part 2: 2 Corinthians 6:11-18

As believers, there are certain decisions that we must make so that we can reflect the character of God in this world. This is the calling of every believer. In the last half of this chapter Paul is writing about a change that should happen to every believer. We need to constrain ourselves, not out of obligation, but because we are now a different people. What was once acceptable in our eyes is no longer acceptable and only what is acceptable in Yeshua's eyes is now acceptable. We have been given the mind of Messiah (Philippians 2:5, 1 Corinthians 2:16). As such, His perspective guides and restricts us. These restrictions are good and bring joy into our lives. They protect us from the deceit and the attacks of the enemy.

Verse 11: *“Our mouth is opened up unto you, O Corinthians, our hearts have been enlarged.”*

Our mouth is opened up unto you: This is an idiom of revelation. Paul, and others who served alongside him in Corinth, taught the Corinthians the revelation of God.

Our hearts have been enlarged: Speaking about endearment. This revelation that Paul spoke to the Corinthians came with a great love and affection in Paul's heart toward them. As Paul, and others, gave the Corinthians revelation, as they grew to know them and ministered in their midst, their hearts were literally expanding, growing, changing. As a result, now they cannot forget about the Corinthians and move on. These people are in their thoughts and prayers wherever they go. This love and revelation did not only change Paul's heart, but it also changed this congregation. They began to think and behave differently.

Verse 12: *“You are not constrained by us, but you are constrained by your strong sense of compassion.”*

Constrained: Restrained. Confined. Restricted.

Not constrained by us: Paul is saying that it was not them themselves (Paul and his companions), in their own natural beings, who restricted or restrained the feelings and actions of the Corinthians. The Corinthians were not obligated to behave in a certain way because of who Paul was. This constraint was not from an outside source.

Constrained by your strong sense of compassion (feelings of mercy): This constraint came from within themselves, their new natures and the Holy Spirit dwelling within them. Compassion began to function in their lives and this new perspective caused them to live, think and behave differently. This compassion constrained them (Matthew 9:36).

Verse 13: *“But the same payment as children I speak, and you have been enlarged also.”*

Payment: Recompense. A payment that is a natural outcome or consequence of something.

As children I speak: We know the old adage 'like father, like son'. There is consistency within a family. A father influences his children to behave in a similar way to him. What Paul is saying here is that there is a response, an outcome, a payment required once we have taken hold of the gospel - those feelings of mercy, compassion, concern, and care for others cannot be set aside. We are required (constrained) to get involved in the lives of others, to

be concerned for their wellbeing. Paul is saying that this is the natural outcome or recompense of what every believer is called to. Paul spoke to them as his children because they were the ones who he gave birth to, spiritually speaking.

You have been enlarged also: Their capacity to love others, and to be concerned for others, has increased. They have grown. This is one implication of our new natures.

Verse 14: *“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership does righteousness have with lawlessness? And what fellowship does light have with darkness?”*

Note: Paul is responding here about another implication of our new natures. In the same way that compassion moves us to get involved with some people, the holiness of God, our call and our covenantal relationship with Him can also mean that we won't have anything to do with others. There are some people that we need to separate ourselves from. It is always appropriate to get involved in someone's life for the purpose of ministry (leading them to salvation, being a blessing or help to them, counselling them, steering them in the truth of God). However, that same faith, new nature or changed objectives that we have to serve God can also manifest itself in us separating, distancing, or not being involved with others. *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers:* It is a commandment. There is no context for this statement, which means that Paul is making a broad statement – applicable in a variety of circumstances. A yoke implies being put together for some type of objective or purpose, for a contract or an agreement. A simple application of this would be that believers should not marry unbelievers. Believers should also not go into business with unbelievers. There should be a clear separation or difference between us and them.

Unbelievers: Those who are against faith.

Righteousness: This is a Kingdom word. One of the chief adjectives that describes the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom people (our thoughts and behaviour) is righteousness (Matthew 6:33). There is also a connection between righteousness and the law (Romans 9:30-32). The law is not an instrument that produces righteousness. This means we cannot take the law and apply it to our lives and by doing so become righteous. The law does not have any power, but it is connected to righteousness in that it defines what righteousness and unrighteousness are.

Lawlessness: Against the law. There are only two conditions that humans can be living in – either they are righteous, or they are lawless. There is no in-between position.

Light ...darkness: Like righteousness and lawlessness these two things are mutually exclusive. Where there is light darkness flees. If there is darkness there is no light.

Verse 15: *“For what voice together does Messiah have with Belial? Or what portion do believers have with unbelievers?”*

Voice together: Speaking about harmony.

Messiah: He was completely committed to the purposes of God.

Belial: An Old Testament term in the Torah that speaks about that which is evil consistently, through and through. It is an evil that wants nothing to do with the purposes of God and is in fact in opposition to His purposes.

What portion do believers have with unbelievers: Unbelievers are not going to receive the rewards/blessings that believers receive, and believers do not receive the condemnation or curses that unbelievers receive. We will have nothing in common.

This is how we need to see these individuals that are linked to this world rather than to the Kingdom of God. We can have no fellowship, no relationship, no agreement, no harmony between us and them.

Verse 16: *“And what agreement can the temple of God have with idolatry? For you are the temple of the living God. And God has spoken that: ‘I will dwell among them, and I will walk with them. I will be to them God and they will be unto me My people.’”*

What agreement can the temple of God have with idolatry: None! They are by nature opposed to one another. The worship of God manifests submissiveness and obedience in a person’s life, but idolatry is all about someone exalting themselves and getting what they want and doing so in a culturally acceptable manner.

The temple: The Spirit of God has entered into us, He dwells in us.

I will dwell among them: Quoted from Leviticus 26:12 and also alluded to in Ezekiel 37:27. It is only through redemption that God can dwell with us. Fellowship is about experiencing God. Rejecting the things in the world brings about intimacy or fellowship with God.

I will be to them God and they will be unto me My people: This is the definition and outcome or result of redemption.

Verse 17: *“Therefore, you come out from the midst of them, and be separate says the Lord. Those things that are unclean do not touch, and I will receive you.”*

Therefore: In light of this redemption.

Come out: This is related to the same concept as when the Israelites came out or went forth from Egypt. See also Leviticus 26:12-13 and Isaiah 52:11. It’s a call to depart from this world. This departure had consequences. Our departure from the world also has consequences today.

Come out from the midst of them: Do not be yoked or connected to this world. We have been called out of it.

Separate: This word is a word for setting boundaries. This is an important concept. We need to be people that set boundaries in our lives. These boundaries need to be based upon God’s standards; the standards laid out in the Torah (Those first five books of the law). As believers, the law still has relevance for our lives today – it defines what righteousness is. Scripture makes it very clear that we’re not under the law (that means that we are not going to be judged by the law), but we can apply the truth of the law to our lives – not the letter of the law (the law cannot be kept in its fullness today because there is no temple etc) but the spirit of the law. When we walk in the Spirit, and not in the flesh, we will fulfil the righteousness of the law (Romans 8 4). We are not to take part in those things that the law has declared unrighteous.

Says the Lord: This is a commandment, a Godly instruction.

Unclean: Impure. That which has not been perfected or made pure. Those things which are unacceptable to God and which He cannot bless.

Touch: This is a broad word in the Biblical language. If we say Biblically that we are not going to touch something it means we are not going to speak about it, think about it, deal with it or be in any way related or connected to it. When we choose to be connected to anything unclean we are choosing to push away God’s blessing.

However, when we are choosing to be part of that which is clean, pure and reflects the character of God then we are inviting God's Presence, blessing, provision, perspective, power etc into our lives.

I will receive you: This is a term of receiving or welcoming something with joy.

Verse 18: *"And I will be to you for a Father, and you will be to Me for sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

I will be to you for a Father: This is a promise (Quoted from 2 Samuel 7:14)

Father: 'Father' speaks of provision. A father is a provider, a protector, an instructor.

Sons and daughters: 'People', referring to a covenant people, is applicable to both males and females. In the Book of Revelation this term 'people' changes to 'sons' – which is also an inclusive term for both male and female. 'Sons' speak of those who are heirs and who will receive an inheritance. Sons and daughters here speak about a family relationship. Family speaks about intimacy. We are going to experience perfect intimacy with God (and others).

Almighty: This name for God is a name that speaks about His dominion over all things. Everything belongs to God. This name or title emphasises and exalts this.

Chapter 7

Part 1: 2 Corinthians 7:1-9

We need a compassion that can be used by God for the purpose of influencing others. This compassion causes us to think, speak and behave differently - so that God's purposes can be mediated out to others through us. This is the call upon every believer.

In this chapter Paul writes in a very personal way, as he wants to show his love toward these people in Corinth, as well as to help them understand his motivation for doing the things that he did.

Verse 1: *"Therefore, having these promises, beloved ones, we cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit, to be perfected in holiness in the fear of God."*

Therefore: In light of what Paul has shared with us in the previous chapter.

Having these promises: Included in these wonderful, eternal, Kingdom promises is that God will be our God, and that we will be His people, His sons and daughters (part of His family).

Beloved ones: Paul spoke in an endearing way to this congregation. They were very significant to him because of their location, as well as the potential they had in spreading the gospel (many people travelled through Corinth, so it was a place from which the gospel could be more easily spread 'to the ends of the earth').

Cleanse ourselves: In light of what God has extended to us, His promises etc, we want to rid ourselves of anything, spiritually or morally, that would defile us or cause us to be unclean. When we cleanse ourselves, it brings about a proper change in our lives.

Perfected: To come to the end. To be made perfect. The standards of God's Kingdom, His righteousness and holiness, are what we are pressing on toward behaviourally - we want to reflect the character of God (even though we are declared 'holy' and 'righteous' when we are saved our behaviour needs to undergo a change).

Holiness: Holiness is always related to the purposes of God. When we are pursuing, committed to, striving for, and passionate about the things that relate to the purposes of God it is going to produce holiness in our lives. Holiness is the instrument that rids us of defilement.

The fear of God: The person who fears God is the person who is committed to the priorities of God.

Verse 2: *“You make room for us. We have not acted unjustly, nor are we corrupting individuals and nor are we exploiting anyone.”*

Make room: This is a word that speaks of giving priority to something. This verse has nothing to do with making room in their hearts. Instead, it is referring to a clearing of agendas and schedules and making room for the things of God. Here Paul is asking the Corinthians to give Paul and his companions their attention, to give them priority in their lives.

Unjustly: Improperly. Paul was not there to treat anyone unjustly. Injustice, corruption or exploitation were not characteristics that summarised Paul’s ministry.

Verse 3: *“Not for condemnation I speak, for I have spoken previously that in our hearts are you, for dying together and also living together.”*

Not for condemnation: Paul spoke some very strong words to this congregation, but he did not write to them to bring condemnation upon them (Romans 8:1 – in Messiah there is no condemnation).

I have spoken previously: Paul’s message is consistent.

In our hearts are you: Paul’s objective was to minister to the Corinthians in a way that was not unjust, corrupt or that exploited them in any way. Paul’s objective was to help them to move forward in attaining spiritual perfection. He wanted them to be individuals that were committed to the things of God and who manifested the holiness of God.

Dying together: Paul realised that walking in obedience to the purposes of God can bring about suffering – even to the point of being put to death. People were often put to death together.

Living together: If they are not put to death they will be living together. Paul is speaking about the commitment we have to each other. Togetherness speaks of a community living in intimacy in order to fulfil the purposes of God.

Verse 4: *“More boldness is to me for you, more boasting is to me on behalf of you, having been filled with encouragement in a surpassing way, with joy in all of our tribulation.”*

Boldness: Paul is speaking confidently and accurately to them. He understands their situation. He is confident that they need to hear these terms. He wants a Godly change, a Godly perspective, to come into this congregation, that is why he speaks to them like he does. He wanted them to grow in their seriousness for the purposes of God.

Boasting: Rejoicing.

Encouragement: Comfort.

Tribulation: They have tribulation because they are walking with God. Paul and his companions had suffered because of what they done on this congregation’s behalf.

Verse 5: *“For also our coming into Macedonia there was no rest for our flesh, but in all things we were troubled on every side. Outside, conflicts. On the inside, fearful things.*

Macedonia: When they went into Macedonia for the purpose of doing this work, being obedient to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, they did not find rest. Paul is probably the best example, from a new covenant perspective, of what serving God and doing ministry should look like.

Flesh: Bodies.

Troubled: Stressed. Suffering. Having hardships.

Outside: In the physical. What he encountered in the world physically.

Conflicts: Battles.

Inside: Inwardly.

Fearful things: Written in the plural. Paul had much fear inwardly.

Verse 6: *“But the One who comforts the humble ones, God, comforted us in the coming of Titus.”*

Humble ones: Those who have been made low as the world has pushed them down or dominated them. The downcast.

God comforted us in the coming of Titus: A fellow brother and fellow servant. This should be one of our objectives – when we go into a place, or when we have fellowship with other believers, we should become instruments of encouragement.

Verse 7: *“And not only in his coming, but also in the comfort with which he was comforted by you, proclaiming to us your desire, your weeping, and your zeal on behalf of me, so that I rejoice all the more.”*

The comfort with which he was comforted by you: Titus went to the Corinthian congregation and witnessed how God was bringing change into their lives. They were growing, maturing and had a passion for the things of God.

Proclaiming to us: Titus testified of this change in the Corinthian congregation to Paul and the others with him. Titus was comforted when he saw that change in this congregation, and Paul in turn was comforted by the report back from Titus.

Desire: Will. It speaks of their sincere commitment – what they were truly committed to.

Weeping: Sorrow. Mourning. Lamenting. When this congregation heard what Paul and the others were going through (the suffering etc), because of their ministry to this congregation and to others, they were filled with sorrow because of it.

Zeal: This is a word that shows a great commitment and passion. This congregation were committed to Paul.

Verse 8: *“For if also I grieved you in the epistle I do not regret it, though I did regret it. For I saw that that epistle for an hour grieved you.”*

I grieved you in the epistle: The strong words that Paul had written to them in his letter had caused them to be sorrowful. Paul would have written this epistle in order to set this congregation in order, to help them to understand their call.

I do not regret it: Because of the change that Paul's epistle brought about in their lives Paul did not regret writing the letter to them.

I did regret it: What he did regret was the fact that they had to undergo sorrow in order for that change to occur (2 Corinthians 7:10). Paul's objective wasn't to cause them grief, but it was to cause them to pursue the things of God.

For an hour: For a brief moment, a short period of time.

Verse 9: *"But now I rejoice, not that you have been grieved, but that you being grieved was for repentance. For you were grieved by God in order that nothing you should lack from us."*

Grieved by God in order that nothing you should lack from us: God brought them to a place of sorrow, which in turn led them to repentance so that they would not suffer loss on account of any omission on Paul's part (1 Corinthians 3:15).

Chapter 7

Part 2: 2 Corinthians 7:10-16

The more we serve God, are an instrument of reconciliation, and work for Godly restoration the more intimacy with God we will experience, but it will also deepen our relationship with other people.

Verse 10: *"For sorrow according to God produces a repentance unto salvation, without regret; but the sorrow of the world produces death."*

Sorrow: Grief. It can be related to a righteous conviction - or it could have something to do with having one's sin or misconduct exposed and because of that they are sorry that it took place. Here Paul is talking about a spiritually sound conviction. These people have grief because of this wrong that was committed.

Sorrow according to God: The implication is that God is the source of this sorrow. For those who are in Messiah, and who have the mind of Messiah, anything done outside of His will is a sin or transgression. These transgressions should lead us to experience Godly sorrow. Conviction is a good thing.

Produces: Works out

Repentance unto salvation: Repentance is necessary for receiving salvation - entering into that eternal relationship with God. Here, however, Paul, according to the context, is not speaking about receiving this eternal salvation. He is writing to a congregation who have already received eternal salvation. The salvation that Paul is talking about here is salvation in the sense of bringing about the order of God, restoring things to the will of God, bringing healing within this congregation so that they can function properly.

Without regret: This sorrow is without regret because it produces repentance and, ultimately, restoration.

But: In contrast to this Godly sorrow.

The sorrow of the world: This is the sorrow that is produced when a sin is exposed, and the person is sorrowful that they have been found out and sorrowful about the punishment or consequences that they are encountering.

Verse 11: *“For behold this same thing according to God has grieved you, but also it produced in you diligence, giving a defence, being vexed, having fear, and also longing, zeal, and justice. In all things you proved yourselves to be pure and that which is pragmatic.”*

Behold: A word of significance. A word that reminds us to pay attention.

This same thing ... has grieved you: Paul is concerned with a previous problem and keeps coming back to this specific event which we don't know too much about. What we can surmise is that someone behaved in an offensive manner, did wrong, to at least one other person, if not more, in this congregation and there was a conflict. The congregation responded in perhaps a strong and harsh manner to this wrong doer and Paul was encouraging them to be merciful and compassionate to the one who had done the wrong, and also to be supportive for those who were injured.

Diligence: Commitment and passion for the things of God. Diligence is rooted in a sincere desire, an affection for God, which manifests itself in a sincere, earnest, genuine, authentic affection for others. This sorrow that was from God produced within them a diligence, a desire, to act not hastily or carelessly but to respond with a sense of urgency to set things in order.

Defence: Usually refers to giving a verbal argument, defending oneself primarily in a court or before a council. As believers we are going to get a negative response from the governments of this world and we are going to need to make a defence – not to get out of punishment but to defend the truth.

Vexed: Having indignation, a word related to (Godly) anger.

Longing: A desire for something or someone.

Zeal: Strong commitment. Passion.

Justice: Many Bibles interpret this word as ‘revenge’ or ‘vindication’. It is not a personal revenge or a wanting to get even. Instead, it is a word that speaks about a desire to bring out that which is just, righteous or proper. It's a word that speaks to restoration or putting things back into order.

Pure: Innocent. In difficult situations, despite fear, we need to prove ourselves to be innocent or pure.

Pragmatic: Pragmatic is a word that speaks about something that is thoroughly researched or studied in order to arrive at a realistic conclusion. A pragmatic decision is one that fulfils or meets an obligation (eg the purposes of God). We need to be diligent to search things out in light of God's Word.

Verse 12: *“Therefore since also I have written to you, not out of necessity for the one who has committed the wrong nor was there a necessity for the ones who suffered the wrong, but a necessity to manifest our diligence on behalf of you and to you before God.”*

Not out of necessity for the one who has committed the wrong: Paul's objective in writing to them was not to defend, support, or change people's thinking about the one who had done the wrong.

Nor was there a necessity for the ones who suffered the wrong: Although this matter had to be properly dealt with, Paul did not write to sway the people one way or the other. He had no personal investment in either the one who did the wrong or in the ones who suffered.

Diligence: Earnest affection

Manifest our diligence: Paul wanted to show his affection and concern for all of them in this congregation. It wasn't about the individual - those who were injured or those who did the wrong. Paul had a broader objective and was concerned about everyone.

Before God: In a way that was pleasing to God.

Verse 13: *“On account of this we have been comforted by your comfort. Abounding even more, we have rejoiced by the joy of Titus, his soul having been refreshed by all of you.”*

Comforted: Based on the report that Paul had received from Titus about this congregation he was comforted.

Your comfort: Referring to the comfort that the Corinthians gave Paul - based on their response to Paul's letters as well as how they had handled this situation.

Titus: Titus visited the Corinthians and then relayed a good report to Paul and the others about them.

Rejoiced by the joy of Titus: Paul and Titus, and those with them, were happy to see the spiritual growth in this congregation, as well as the way in which they were handling difficult problems.

Verse 14: *“Because if something to him on behalf of you we boast I am not ashamed. But as in all things I have always spoken truly to you, even so our boasting to Titus has come about in truth.”*

Him: Referring to Titus.

On behalf of you we boast: Even before this situation arose Paul had shared with Titus that this congregation were a source of rejoicing.

I am not ashamed: Paul had told Titus about the faith and diligence that this congregation had in serving God - despite the problems that they faced. Paul's rejoicing in them was not in vain, as they had proved his words to hold true.

Our boasting to Titus has come about in truth: In the past, Paul had boasted or rejoiced before Titus about this congregation. Paul's words have proved true and so he now has no regret about the boasting he did about them.

Verse 15: *“Also his feelings of mercy are abounding for you, remembering all of your obedience, as with fear and trembling you received him.”*

His feelings: Referring to Titus's feelings.

Feelings of mercy: Titus now had a desire to be compassionate to them and to help them.

Remembering all of your obedience: Paul and Titus were excited that these individuals, after being taught truth, had embraced it and were obediently living it out.

With fear and trembling you received him: When Titus went to the Corinthians, as this situation was going on, they received him as a leader who had been sent by Paul. They listened to what he said and did what needed to be done.

Verse 16: *“Therefore I rejoice that in all things (I am) confident in you.”*

In all things confident: Paul had an assurance in all things.

Confident in you: It is so important for a leader to demonstrate this or to say these words of encouragement to those whom he leads. Paul is letting them know that he is confident that whatever happens to them, whatever situation they find themselves in, that they will do the right and Godly thing. In the end, no matter what the problem is, there's going to be reconciliation and restoration (a spiritual victory).

Chapter 8

Part 1: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

God is generous. When he sees a need He moves. At the heart of this passage is 'grace'. Grace is related to generosity, and it involves giving. God's grace is there for us to receive. His grace is related to His generosity (John 3:16). That same generosity that He has should be demonstrated through us toward others. God gives, and the people of God should also give generously.

Verse 1: *"But we make known to you, brethren, the grace of God having been given in the churches of Macedonia."*

You, brethren: Referring to the Corinthian congregation.

The grace of God: God's grace involves giving towards a need (our need for salvation, our need for forgiveness, etc). When some translations interpret this word for grace, they translate it as 'gift'. Grace is not given out of obligation, social pressures or because someone deserves it. Grace is given out of a generous spirit that looks to another and sees a need. It stirs within us an urgency or a strong desire to meet that need. This grace is a part of our new nature. It is part of our regeneration by the Spirit of God. One of the effects of being generous toward others is that God then provides us with joy in our lives.

Been given in the churches of Macedonia: These congregations in Macedonia had displayed the grace of God by giving. Paul had lifted up the Corinthian congregation to others and now we see that he also upheld the Macedonian congregations as an example for others to follow. Being generous gives evidence that the grace of God is working in our lives.

Verse 2: *"That in much proof of tribulation the abundance of their joy, also according to the depth of their poverty, it abounded for richness of their generosity."*

Proof: Evidence could be documented that these congregations were suffering affliction.

Much proof of tribulation (affliction): These congregations in Macedonia were suffering much tribulation for their faith. They were not a group of people who were enjoying a life of luxury.

Abundance of their joy: Even though they were suffering much they had an abundance of joy, because they were congregations who gave generously. Godly joy overcomes sadness, despair, and hardship.

Depth (strength or magnitude) of their poverty: Being poor did not stop them from being generous. Their poverty was not more powerful than the grace of God in their lives.

It abounded: Referring to the grace of God.

Richness: This means that which is exceeding, goes beyond. Their generosity was rich in light of their poverty. What excited Paul was to see Messiah being manifested in the lives of others – in this case, they were manifesting the generosity of God.

Verse 3: *“That according to their power I testify, and beyond ability, they were freely willing.”*

Power: In this context this word is understood as ‘ability’.

Beyond ability: They had some resources that they were able to give, but they went beyond their ability. Paul testified to this. He knew first hand that they were very generous.

Freely willing: They had a desire and they chose, of themselves, to behave in this way. Paul didn't pressure them into giving. When they saw an opportunity to participate in the ministry of God they wanted to do so - not just according to their ability but beyond their ability. This kind of behaviour should not be the exception for believers, but it should be the norm.

Verse 4: *“With much encouragement they beseeched us that the grace and the fellowship of ministering to the saints we would receive.”*

Encouragement: This is a word that speaks about something that meets ones needs inwardly - it comforts them or gives them consolation.

Beseeched: Pleaded

The grace... we would receive: The Macedonian churches pleaded with Paul and his companions that they would receive the gift (something unmerited, undeserved, not asked for) that they had.

Fellowship: Participation. They wanted to share in the ministry. What motivated them was that they wanted to share the grace of God while they participated in the ministry to the saints (other believers – near or far)

Verse 5: *“And not just as we had hoped but themselves they gave, first to the Lord and then to us, through the will of God.”*

Themselves they gave: They gave of themselves (time, talents, resources) generously – beyond what was expected or hoped for.

First to the Lord: They understood that this giving was first and foremost unto God (see Matthew 25:34-40 as to how we can give to the Lord).

Lord: They recognised and submitted to His Lordship in their lives.

Through the will of God: They wanted to participate in the will of God.

Verse 6: *“So we urged Titus, that, just as he had begun, thus he would complete for you this grace.”*

Titus: Titus was a fellow servant with Paul and was someone who God used mightily. Titus was constantly bringing reports back to Paul about what was going on in these congregations that Paul had started or that he had ministered in or taught in.

For you: Referring to the Corinthians.

Grace: Gift. This gift also had implications to Titus' ministry. He would go back to Corinth and complete what he had begun there.

Verse 7: *"But just as in all things you have abounded – in faith, in word, in knowledge, in all diligence, the love from you to us - in order that also in this grace you should abound."*

You have abounded: Paul is testifying that they have a pleasing testimony. The truth that Paul had imparted to them had taken root and abundantly produced that which was pleasing to God.

Word: Speech

Diligence: Being diligent means understanding what is urgent and responding quickly to it.

Verse 8: *"Not according to a commandment I spoke, but through the diligence of others and also the authenticity of your own love you have documented."*

Not according to a commandment: They did not do this out of compulsion. Paul, a ruling elder/spiritual father, did not obligate, order or force them to do this. He did not shame them into being obedient.

The authenticity of your own love: The grace of God produces diligence and sincerity in people. The Corinthian congregation displayed the same diligence as the diligence displayed in the Macedonian congregations. God's grace produces an authentic, genuine love for others. It is that love which caused them to be generous toward others.

Verse 9: *"For you know the grace of our Lord Messiah Yeshua, that, on account of you, though being wealthy He became poor, in order that you, through this One, being poor shall be made wealthy."*

Know: This is not only referring to cognitive knowledge (How Yeshua generously went to the cross to die so that our sins could be forgiven – He suffered tremendously in order that He could provide salvation for us) but is also experiential.

Lord Messiah Yeshua: Our perfect example in all things is Messiah. What He did is being manifested in Macedonia and in Corinth - not out of compulsion, but because grace is ruling in these people. We will never produce the righteousness of God unless we have that same mindset as Messiah, unless we submit to the leadership of God's grace that teaches us to deny those things that are against the character of God.

On account of you: Yeshua did not do what He did because of what He could get out of it, or to make people think more highly of Him etc. It was His love for us that compelled Him to go to the cross.

Being wealthy: He had everything.

Made wealthy: Rich in Kingdom possessions – rich in the things of God. As we give, in His name, based upon His love, we receive (Luke 6:38). God is so pleased to bestow upon us these Kingdom promises, because they represent not only His love for us but they are also tokens or evidence that prove our love for Him.

Chapter 8

Part 2: 2 Corinthians 8:10-24

For God's work and purposes to be done we need resources. This passage of Scripture speaks about the provision (specifically financial) that God gives in order that His work can be done. God commands us to be a giving people - giving to help, assist, bless and influence others for the things of God.

Verse 10: *“And I counsel in this for your benefit, not being only to do what you began and were willing to do a year ago.”*

I(Paul) counsel: This is Paul’s opinion, but it is a knowledgeable opinion. Paul is giving advice/counsel and he's doing so from the position of knowledge.

This: Referring to the matter that Paul has been talking about – the need for financial resources so that ministry can be done.

For your benefit (profit): Paul’s actions and words for others had a positive, Godly, righteous and edifying effect on them.

Willing to do: The Corinthians church had, for a long time (over a year), been desiring to send a gift or love offering to the church in Israel. This gift was not asked for or required. However, they wanted to give it to these believers in order to be a blessing to them. They wanted to help the Jewish believers by sending them a gift.

Verse 11: *“But now also that you bring to completion that which you need to do, thus even as you willed thus also to complete from what is possessed.”*

Bring to completion: A year earlier they had decided that they were going to send this gift. The desire was in their hearts, but they had not actually carried it out yet. Paul is encouraging them that the time to respond was now. It is not enough to have the right intent; we need to follow through with, and complete, the good desires that we have.

As you willed: Referring to their previous intent to send this gift. Some Bibles translate this as ‘readiness’ or ‘preparation’. More than a year earlier they had begun to set aside resources, make collections and save up money for the purpose of sending it.

What is possessed: What you already had.

Verse 12: *“For if this previous intent is present according to what one has it is well pleasing, not according to what he does not have.”*

Previous intent: Willingness to give.

According to what one has ... not according to what he does not have: This Corinthian congregation had not met their goal. They wanted to be excessively generous, but the amount that they had desired to give had not yet been met. This congregation, although not wealthy, were faithful. For a year or so they had been setting aside and working on trying to make it a generous gift. Paul is telling them that even though they have not reached their goal it is time to complete and send the offering. It was time to act.

It is well pleasing: What they had managed to collect was acceptable or pleasing. They weren’t to stop and not act on their desire because they had not reached their target

amount. God was pleased with what they had managed to save up. He wasn't displeased by what they still lacked (what they did not have) in order to fulfil their goal. What we don't have should never be the deciding factor of our generosity.

Verse 13: *"For not in order that others be at ease but you in tribulation."*

Note: God does not work in a way that some are always at ease while others are always afflicted. Circumstances change. Sometimes we experience an easing, but at other times we feel the affliction.

Verse 14: *"But from equality; in this present season you have abundance for those that lack in order also that those in abundance will be there for you in those times of lacking. Thus there will be equality."*

Equality: God is the great equalizer – God is just and everything eventually equals out.
This present season: There are different seasons in life. There are seasons of abundance but also seasons of lacking. Through the administration of the grace of God in our lives, God is going to bring about equality. He had arranged things so that at this time this congregation had abundance. When we have, we need to give. When we do not have, God is faithful to bring others to supply our needs. If we are not faithful when we have an abundance, we must not expect God to bless our disobedience. God would not be faithful if He blessed disobedience. When we are disobedient He disciplines us to bring us to His perspective. His justice brings about change.

Verse 15: *"As it is written: 'He who gathered much had nothing left over, he who gathered little had no lack.'"*

It is written: Quoted from Exodus 16:18. Those who gathered manna (heavenly bread that fell from the sky) in excess of their needs saw their supplies perish and spoil with maggots. Their excess did not benefit them. Those who gathered in order to meet their need found that they had enough to satisfy them. This example reveals to us an important principle on how to administer God's provision in our lives.

Verse 16: *"But grace to God who gives this same diligence on behalf of you in the heart of Titus."*

Grace to God: This word for grace can be understood as giving thanks to God.

Diligence: The word for haste or urgency. When someone truly has a need, God will make haste to bring about His provision to meet their need. His faithfulness to us causes Him to respond urgently. When we have the Holy Spirit living in us we are going to have this same character. Some Bibles talk about this as 'earnest care' or commitment. Being earnest produces faithfulness (loyalty) and diligence.

Titus: Titus was a faithful, loyal and Godly ambassador of the faith. Paul appreciated him and saw his commitment to the things of God.

Verse 17: *“He received this exhortation, but he possessed diligence all the more so; of his own initiative, therefore, he came unto you.”*

Received this exhortation (encouragement): This might be referring to the fact that Titus had heard, from Paul and others, about the commitment and growth of the Corinthian congregation. Because of that, he knew this was a congregation worth investing in. They had the potential to produce much fruit.

Diligence: Diligence has been emphasised again and again in this passage. Titus was an individual who responded to the need to do ministry. He interrupted his life to get involved in the lives of others.

All the more: Titus was super diligent. He went the extra mile for others.

He came unto you: Titus had a desire to bless this congregation, to share with them, teach them and impart Godly things to them.

Verse 18: *“And we sent with him the brother who is praised in the gospel through all the congregations.”*

The brother: We are not told this man’s name.

Praised in the gospel: This could mean that this man found satisfaction and fulfilment (praise) in the work of the gospel. It could also mean that this man received praise for his commitment to the gospel by all the congregations (he had a testimony or a reputation of being committed to the gospel). He accompanied Titus to minister to the Corinthians.

Verse 19: *“And not only that, but also being chosen by the congregation to be our fellow traveller with the grace for the administration by us to the glory of the Lord Himself, and for your forethought.”*

Chosen ... to be our fellow traveller: Paul and some others with him were going to administrate the giving of this collection, this gift, to the church in Judea. This unnamed brother or fellow believer had been chosen to go with Paul to do this.

The grace: Referring to this financial gift.

To the glory of the Lord Himself: All of their service was done to bring glory to God.

Forethought: Alludes to preparation or readiness. This collection had been happening for a year, and now the moment was at hand for them to give what had been collected to this group who were going to travel to Judea for the purpose of administering it.

Verse 20: *“Avoiding this: so that no one can blame us in the abundance of this administration by us.”*

Avoiding: If things are done orderly or properly then they were going to avoid any shame or guilt being levelled at them.

Blame us: Make them feel guilty.

Verse 21: *“Taking care of that which is good - not only before the Lord but also before man.”*

Note: We need to be careful and transparent. God knows what is going on in our lives, but others are also watching. Paul needed to administrate this abundant gift properly - not only before the Lord but also before men. He wanted to have a good reputation and testimony.

Verse 22: *“We sent to them our brother whom we have proven in a variety of many things being diligent, but now in much super diligence and much confidence in you.”*

Our brother: This same unnamed individual. He was loyal and showed an earnest faithfulness for the things of God.

Have proven: He had been tested and had not been found wanting.

Diligent: This earnest, sincere behaviour again being emphasised.

Much confidence: This one has much confidence in what this Corinthian congregation was doing. He was confident that they were going to give in abundance for the purpose of God.

Verse 23: *“Whether on behalf of Titus: my partner and for you a fellow worker; whether our brothers: they are messengers of the churches, for the glory of Messiah.”*

Titus: When Titus went to Corinth, they were thankful for his visit. They were a blessing to him. They did not just receive what he had to say but they were diligent and faithful to behave in the way that they were expected to.

For you: Referring to this Corinthian congregation.

A fellow worker: A very important truth we can glean from this is this: we are all in this together. We are all fellow servants. We are all called to take part, in a variety of ways, in this work or ministry (according to our calling and giftedness).

Our brothers: The apostles of the congregations.

For the glory of Messiah: This is the key. We are all servants together. Everything we do should be for the glory of Messiah.

Verse 24: *“Therefore show your love, and the reason we have boasted on behalf of you for you to manifest to them before the congregations.”*

Show your love: The way that we show love is by manifesting Torah truth - walking in the commandments of God. Love produces lawfulness – it is not about keeping the letter of the law but about keeping the righteous intent of the law, through the Spirit. A lack of love produces lawlessness. Showing our love shows forth our commitment to the character, will and purposes of God – loving His righteous standards. Loving involves giving of ourselves like Yeshua did (John 3:16)

Manifest to them: We are called to manifest faithfulness, righteousness, and the standards of God in our lives.

Before the congregations: We should have a testimony that is visible to others. The church is called out of this world to be a witness of, or testify about, Yeshua.

Chapter 9

Verse 1: *“For concerning the ministry to the saints, it is unnecessary to write to you in this regard.”*

Unnecessary: Redundant. If Paul were to write something to them regarding the ministry to the saints it would be excessive. This congregation were fulfilling this ministry, so it was not required for Paul to give instructions to them concerning this. Paul is demonstrating the confidence that he has; these individuals do indeed understand, and they desire to do ministry in a generous manner.

Verse 2: *“For I know your readiness which on behalf of you I was boasting to the Macedonians, because in regard to Achaia it was made ready a year ago, and your zeal has stirred up many.”*

Readiness: Preparation. Forethought. Doing something with intention. We never stop with just thinking about good intentions, but we need to carry them out.

I was boasting to the Macedonians: Paul said good things to the Macedonian congregations about this Corinthian congregation. The Corinthians had a good reputation or testimony of being a generous people.

Achaia ...was made ready a year ago: This collection for Achaia had already been prepared a year earlier. These individuals in Corinth took giving and collecting finances etc for others seriously.

Your zeal has stirred up many: Their faithfulness was contagious. Their desire to give generously was a testimony that others saw and it stirred within others this same desire to give generously. Generosity has a power to it. Generosity spreads.

Verse 3: *“But I sent the brothers to you, in order that our boasting on behalf of you would not be in vain in this matter, that just as I have said you would be ready.”*

In the past this congregation had proven their faithfulness in generosity. Paul knew they would be ready with this next collection, that they were taking up, but nevertheless he sent others to confirm that they were indeed ready, as well as to remind them of what their intention had been. At times, we all have the best intentions, but things happen and sometimes these things can cause us to forget our intentions or to not be as prepared as we should be.

Verse 4: *“Lest somehow some from Macedonia with me will come and they will find you not prepared, and we would be in shame (and I need not say that you would be embarrassed) that we boasted in this confident boasting on behalf of you.”*

Paul is taking the necessary steps to make sure that the testimony that he gave, the rejoicing that he had done on behalf of this congregation, would not have been done in vain. He also wanted to ensure that this congregation would not be shamed.

Verse 5: *“Therefore I deemed it necessary to encourage the brethren that they come previously unto you to set things in order, beforehand, concerning this previous announcement that was made in regard to your blessing, that it would be made ready thus as a blessing not as a compulsion.”*

Deemed it: Considered it.

Previously: In advance.

Compulsion: An obligation. When we do things in advance it bears testimony of our sincerity. Preparation shows planning and a desire to do what needs to be done. When everything is prepared in advance it is not seen as an afterthought or as something that we were compelled or forced to do.

Verse 6: *“But this (I want to reveal): The one who sows sparingly, sparingly also he will reap. The one who sows blessing, blessing he will receive.”*

Note: In this verse Paul begins to tell us about the attitude that we should have in regard to giving. He also teaches us a Biblical principle concerning giving in a general sense.

The one who sows sparingly: This is not really a generous person. He is not bearing testimony of his strong commitment or his love. He gives, but he does not give generously (abundantly) but sparingly.

Blessing: We can give to meet a need. When we give over and above the need, that extra amount, the overflow, is seen as blessing (Luke 6:38).

The one who sows blessing, blessing he will receive: This is another one of God’s promises. This is an encouragement to not be a stingy people, but to be a giving people.

Verse 7: *“But each one (should give) just as he has intended in his heart, not from grief or out of necessity, for a cheerful giver God loves.”*

Each one: This includes all of us.

Intended: Purposed. When we give we need to think deeply (research or investigate) about the needs of the person that we are going to give to, so that we can give intentionally into a legitimate need – not giving flippantly, casually or carelessly.

Not from grief: We must not give in a way that causes us grief.

Out of necessity: Being told that we have to give and then giving out of compulsion or out of a sense of obligation. We need to give willingly.

Cheerful: The Greek word used here is related to ‘hilarious’. God loves it when a person has an opportunity to bless another, and they do it in such a way that they are filled with joy when they give. Giving (and this is not necessarily always financial) should cause us joy and bring us laughter, because we know God is so good and He has given us this opportunity to partner with Him.

Verse 8: *“For God is able through all grace which He makes abound for you, that in every way all grace to supply at all times, having all sufficiency, that you should abound for every good work.”*

All grace: When God gives grace, He holds nothing back. An example of this is the death of Jesus on the cross.

All sufficiency: Lacking nothing.

Abound for every good work: Good work is important - it should characterize us. It is because of good works that others are going to know that we have been saved. Good works are not the means to salvation, but they are the outcome of a salvation experience (Philippians 2:12). The outcome or proof of salvation is that we are going to be people that demonstrate God's priority in our lives, and this is seen through good works.

Verse 9: *“Just as it is written: ‘He scatters, and he gives to those who are poor; his righteousness remains forever.’”*

It is written: This is a quote from Psalm 112: 9. This psalm speaks about the things that accompany a righteous man. A righteous person gives.

Scatters: This means that this giving is not done in just one or two places. This kindness or generosity is plentiful and affects many lives.

Poor: Needy

His righteousness remains forever: His generosity has eternal consequences and is going to produce eternal reward.

Verse 10: *“And the One who supplies seed for sowing and supplies bread for food makes complete your seed and causes it to increase for the fruits of your righteousness.”*

The One who supplies: Whatever we do and whatever we can give is only possible through God. He supplies what we need in order that we can supply what others need.

Complete: Full. God is the only One that gives the increase in order that there will be fruit for our righteousness. We are God's instruments by which He sows His righteousness in this world and, by so doing, manifests our righteousness.

Verse 11: *“And in all things He makes wealthy in all generosity, which produces through us thanksgiving to God.”*

Wealthy: Enriches. God enriches us so that we can enrich others. Through our generosity others are enabled to give thanks to God.

Verse 12: *“That the ministry of this service is not only filling up the needs of the saints but also abounds through many thanksgivings to God.”*

Filling up: Supplying completely

Also abounds through many thanksgivings: The generosity of the Corinthians resulted in thanksgiving to God from the saints, but it also abounded in others. The objective of generosity is to bring about thanksgiving to God (Matthew 5:16).

Verse 13: *“Through the proving of this ministry, it brings about glory to God concerning the submissiveness of your confession to the gospel of Messiah, and for liberal sharing with them and all men.”*

Proving: This is a word that Paul uses frequently and is a word that means to document. This is simply an act of making our faith known - documenting it.

Note: People knew that these individuals had confessed the gospel. Now it was their behaviour, their generosity (their documenting or doing the ministry), that brought about a testimony where people could see the sincerity of their confession to the gospel.

Verse 14: *“And their supplication on behalf of you, for they yearn for you on account of the surpassing grace of God upon you.”*

Supplication: Their prayer, their intercession. Because of the generosity of the Corinthians, others were moved to pray on their behalf.

Yearn: Desire or long for. They are longing for these individuals because they have love and affection for them. They also see the exceeding grace of God on them and they long to be like them. They long to be generous and behave in a similar fashion.

Verse 15: *“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”*

Thanks: This is the same word that can be used for ‘grace’.

Indescribable: Being unable to describe something. We need to be people that give thanks to God and understand that His grace, His gift, is indescribable. It goes beyond words. Romans 8:32.

Chapter 10

Part 1: 2 Corinthians 10:1-7

Verse 1: *“But I myself, Paul, I exhort you through the meekness and gentleness of Messiah - whom according to the face being humble unto you, but absent bold unto you.”*

I myself: Paul speaks to this Corinthian congregation in a very personal way. He makes himself vulnerable as he shares with them his innermost feelings for them.

Exhort: Encourage. Paul is encouraging them to have a right perspective or understanding.

Meekness: Humble. Jesus did not come to earth to fulfil the desires of human flesh, but to fulfil the desires and purposes of His Heavenly Father. ‘Meekness’ is not a word used to describe a passive or weak individual who is an easy pushover. Jesus, although He was tempted in every way, never sinned. (Hebrews 4:15). He was One who quietly but consistently was committed to pursuing the purposes of God.

Gentleness: Jesus is not someone who overpowers others by physical means. ‘Gentleness’ is a word that implies trust, relying upon God to move in any given situation. Paul, like Messiah whom he was imitating, desired to come to this congregation in a meek and gentle manner. He did not want to force people to change, but rather, by example, he wanted to show them the submissiveness of his own life because of his faith in the mighty God.

Face: An idiom for presence or an appearance. What we see with our eyes.

Humble: Paul is speaking about himself in light of Messiah.

Absent bold: When Paul is separated from them, when he is not in their presence, he speaks in a more bold manner. He gets to the heart of the matter by allowing the words to touch them and bring about a change rather than physically forcing them to change. He wants the

revelation of God to change these people and not his personal presence, personal abilities or demands.

Verse 2: *“But I beseech not being present to be bold with confidence which I have reckoned to be bold unto some that reckon concerning us that according to the flesh we walk.”*

Beseech: A strong word that means to ask or implore.

Not being present: Paul shared with them in a bold and confident way when he was not with them.

Reckoned: This means to give serious thought or consideration to something.

Bold unto some: Paul had been bold to those who had made accusations or statements that he and those with him were walking in the flesh (by implication: not in the anointing of the Spirit). Some of these people had accused Paul of being timid, quiet, and docile when he was present among them, but a different person, bold, when he wrote these words away from them. Paul’s writing, however, was written under the influence of the Holy Spirit – therefore not his words but God’s words. Among them, he showed himself to be of the character of Messiah. He did not physically force others to change their behaviour, but he relied upon spiritual warfare as a means to bring about change.

Verse 3: *“For in the flesh we walk, but not according to the flesh do we wage war.”*

Note: In this verse Paul speaks about the reality of his behaviour.

In the flesh we walk: Paul is referring to the fact that he is alive, a human being with a fleshly body.

Not according to the flesh do we wage war: His warfare was not based upon physical means. That is why Paul was not forceful, overwhelming, or powerful when he was personally with them.

Verse 4: *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but powerful with God for bringing down strongholds.”*

Weapons of our warfare: These are weapons (written in the plural) that belong to God. These weapons are the anointing and the moving of the Spirit of God in their midst. This is what Paul relied on when he was with them - not his physical actions, deeds, or behaviours.

Carnal: Physical, fleshly.

Bringing down: Destroying.

Strongholds: This is written in the plural and refers to the strongholds of the enemy.

Note: These are a few spiritual principles about how the enemy works:

1. He wants us to do things in our lives that are against the standards, commandments and judgments of God.
2. When we violate truth, by behaving in a disobedient manner, the enemy is given an entrance into our lives. He uses that foothold to begin to build his own stronghold in our lives.
3. If we do not repent, and do not turn back to the standards of God, these little footholds will turn into large strongholds. Satan wants to exploit us for his own objectives. He wants to control and influence our perspective (how we see things and how we think) so that he can control our actions.

4. Strongholds in our lives make victory a lot harder to achieve, as we will find it easier to succumb to temptation.

Verse 5: *“Arguments bringing down, and every high thing lifted up against the knowledge of God; and taking captive every thought unto the obedience of Messiah.”*

Note: This is a very important verse for spiritual growth. It is foundational for anyone who wants to walk in the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and for those who want to experience God's presence and victory in their lives.

Arguments: This is a word derived from human logic. Human logic (doing what seems right in our own eyes) always argues against the truth of God.

Bringing down: Casting down.

High thing: Exalted thing. This is rooted in pride.

Lifted: We (when we are unrepentant) are the ones who do the lifting up. In this context it means that we, having been deceived, put significance on things that we should not place significance on.

Against the knowledge of God: Putting great significance on things exalts or lifts them up. We begin to see those things as desirable, and we begin to pursue them rather than pursuing the things of God. This begins to adversely affect our knowledge of God. When we place significance on those things which are against the will of God, it impairs our ability to know God. This will ultimately lead to us being deceived, and, therefore, defeated by the enemy. Our ability to serve God is directly related to our knowledge of God. The more we know God the better we are able to serve Him.

Unto the obedience of Messiah: This should be our objective. Any desire, any idea, any objective that we have needs to be brought before Christ, submitted to His authority.

Verse 6: (literally): *“And in preparation having to vindicate all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”*

Note: Paul knows that fulfilling this ultimate call, to bring everything into the obedience of Messiah, is a process. In this verse we see Paul's grace extended to people in this regard.

Preparation: Readiness. Paul is wanting us (and himself) to be prepared, in our desires and behaviours, to bring forth righteousness from every situation that we find ourselves in.

To vindicate: Retribution. This is a very unique word. It is not a word for wanting to get even or wanting our own justification. Vengeance belongs to the Lord (Romans 12:19-21). In the Greek, this word for vengeance contains the word for righteousness. Vengeance is what God does in order to bring righteousness or justice out of a situation.

Vindicate all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled: Paul wants to enact that which is going to set things in a righteous order, but he cannot do that until obedience is fulfilled. This obedience will only be fulfilled when all those who are going to obey do obey, and when all those who are going to repent and submit to God's authority repent and submit. There is a timing (a time period) attached to this verse that alludes to the long suffering of God (2 Peter 3:8-9).

Verse 7: *“The things according to the appearance you see? If anyone is convinced that he himself is to be of Messiah, this one let him consider again of himself - because just as he is of Messiah, thus also are we of Messiah.”*

Things according to the appearance you see: Paul is warning them of their need to be careful. We are not to evaluate or judge things simply by their outward appearance or according to what we can see with our eyes. This is a dangerous thing to do. We need to look at things through a different lens - that lens being the truth of God.

Let him consider again: There were people in this congregation, and people who were on the fence as far as their obedience was concerned, that were challenging Paul’s apostleship, his words, his behaviour etc. Paul wanted them to pause and to think again about their profession of faith. As believers we ought to have the same mindset, we need to agree on truth. We need to destroy human argument, and all have the mind of Christ – seeing things from the right Biblical perspective.

Also are we of Messiah: Paul was reminding those naysayers, who considered themselves to be disciples or followers of Christ, that Paul and those with him were disciples or followers of Christ too. As such, there should have been a unity between Paul and them. Disunity revealed a problem. Agreeing to disagree is not the solution for disunity. Tolerating falsehood is also not a solution for disunity. It is only through the truth of the uncompromising Word of God and genuine faith in Messiah that true unity can come about.

Chapter 10

Part 2: 2 Corinthians 10:8-18

We are called to live in a way that demonstrates our reliance upon God. His weapons of warfare are mighty for bringing down strongholds. In this section Paul speaks to those who are speaking against him.

Verse 8: *“For if even in abundance somewhat we boast concerning our authority, which our Lord gave to us, for edification and not for tearing down. I will not be ashamed.”*

Note: Paul, to a certain degree, is again making a defence in this verse.

Abundance: Speaks of that which is growing in a strong way.

Boast: This word for boasting is a word that Paul frequently uses. It is a word which alludes to something which shows that which is pleasing. Within the context it is referring to a Godly pride. It is a rejoicing or a being thankful because of what is going on. It is not the carnal kind of boasting whereby people seek to exalt themselves.

Authority: The word used here in Greek is a unique word. It is a word that implies authority together with power.

Our Lord gave to us: ‘Us’ is referring to Paul and those who serve with him.

Edification: Building up.

Not for tearing down: Paul’s objective was to build up the Corinthian congregation in the things of God, he did not want to tear them down.

I will not be ashamed: The implication here is that Paul does not need to change his way of dealing with this congregation. He does not need to apologize or do anything different. There is no guilt or embarrassment about how he has acted before or toward them.

Verse 9: *“In order that not I should seem to make you fearful through the epistles.”*

Not...make you fearful through the epistles: When Paul wrote these letters to them his intention was not to make them afraid. He did not want them to think that he was angry with them or that he wanted to tear them down. These were not the reasons why he wrote these letters to them.

Verse 10: *“‘For his letters,’ they say, ‘are weighty and powerful, but the coming of the body is weak and the word is contemptible.”*

Note: This verse tells us of an accusation, a criticism, levelled against Paul by some within this congregation.

The coming of the body: This is an idiom referring to Paul’s physical presence with them.

Weighty and powerful... is weak: They see a disconnect between the one who writes such things to the way that Paul actually behaves amongst them.

Word: Paul’s speaking to them.

Contemptible: Of little value. Some of these people thought Paul’s words had little significance. They did not understand the objective of Paul. When he was with them it was for the purpose of edification (building them up) and it was not a time of destruction or tearing down. That is why when he was with them he was meek and gentle. He did not use physical strength, or harsh and demanding words, to bring about a change in their midst. Instead, he relied on the Spirit of God to touch the people’s hearts and to bring about change (spiritual warfare rather than physical warfare). These people were too concerned with the exterior and how things appeared rather than about what was actually going on inwardly.

Verse 11: *“Let such a one reckon because we are with the word through the epistles when we are absent and we these same ones are also present in deed.”*

Reckon: Consider or think about. Be mindful of.

Same ones: The way Paul wrote and the way Paul behaved were not incongruent. Whether through the epistles or whether in their presence he was one and the same person. He was committed to the same purpose or objective – which was to edify the body of believers.

Verse 12: *“We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves as certain ones compare themselves. But these measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves among themselves. They do not have understanding.”*

We do not dare... to compare: This speaks about humility, spiritual sensitivity as well as a fear of the Lord.

Classify: Judging according to a certain set of standards. We are not to classify ourselves according to the standards of other human beings, but our standard is Christ. He is the One our lives need to match up to – the standard that we compare our lives to.

Compare themselves: There are a couple of different ways that we can understand this. Some were possibly comparing themselves to those who were champions of the faith (the well-known apostles who had a great reputation). Another way to interpret this is that some

people were comparing themselves to those who did not have much faithfulness. In both instances these people are trying to elevate themselves in the eyes of other people.

These: Those who compare themselves with their own preconceived standards. They do this in order to elevate themselves or to make themselves feel good about themselves. When we compare ourselves to Christ, we all come up short, but that should spur us to grow – to become more like Him.

Measure: This is a word for matching a standard. They measure and compare themselves to others.

They do not have understanding: Our objective is not to be better than someone else – our objective is to be like Christ. It is unwise to compare ourselves with others or to join some elite group in order to feel better about ourselves.

Verse 13: *“But we are not going to boast of things that are unmeasurable, but according to that which is measurable within the region that God has portioned to us. This measure has reached also unto you.”*

Boast: Be impressed by or rejoice over.

Things that are unmeasurable: The abstract things that people put forth that have no substance or measurable indicators - usually a false testimony. It is very dangerous to base our theology, and our behaviour for service to God, on testimony alone (our dreams or visions etc). We always need to check our testimony against the Word of God.

Region: Area. Paul is talking about the area or the place where God has positioned him to serve.

The region that God has portioned to us: Paul is not boasting about his position or status. What he is boasting about is the fact that he has been called into service. Paul is thankful for and rejoices in this service.

This measure has reached also unto you: Paul was rejoicing because he got to minister to this Corinthian congregation. Paul was enabled to be a blessing to their spiritual walk. That was his objective or purpose.

Verse 14: *“For it is not that we had not been reaching out to you and in doing so have overstepped our call, but rather it is unto you that we have come with the gospel of Messiah.”*

Unto you ... we have come with the gospel of Messiah: Paul’s call was to take the gospel to the unsaved, and part of that call included taking it to the Corinthian congregation.

Verse 15: *“Not for those unmeasurable things we boast, in areas that belong to others, but having hope that the increase of your faith among you being made great according to our area.”*

Hope: Hope is the belief that God is going to, sooner or later, fulfil His promises. Hope brings about perseverance. It brings about a tenacity that causes us to overcome the enemy. Even though Corinth was a difficult area to work into, Paul did not wash his hands of it. He believed in the promises of God. He believed that God was going to work through him in this congregation. He believed that this congregation was going to be fruitful in righteousness.

Increase: Increasing abundance, abundance that went beyond, is what motivated Paul. Paul had a great expectation that God would do more and more. Paul was not satisfied with the status quo.

Faith: Faith, from a Hebrew perspective, is connected to truth. Paul wanted to increase their faith by discipling them in the truth of God.

Made great: Magnified or enlarged.

Our area: Where God had placed them.

Verse 16: *“To evangelize that which is beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s area of calling.”*

Paul did not want to interfere in the area of someone else's call - what God had portioned to them. Although they did not want to infringe upon the areas of others, they did want to go beyond this congregation for the sake of the gospel.

Boast: This word, in this context, is not speaking about self-exaltation, but it is speaking of rejoicing in. Paul wanted to be used by God in their lives. He wanted to rejoice in their growth and spiritual maturity. He wanted to see an increase in their faith, leading to more fruit and a greater testimony of being more and more pleasing to God. This is what we should be rejoicing about – spiritual growth is a victory for us.

Verse 17: *“But the one boasting, in the Lord let him boast.”*

But the one boasting, in the Lord let him boast: Quoted from Jeremiah 9:24. This means that whatever good we are boasting about, rejoicing about, talking about, has been imparted to us from the Lord. He is the source of anything good in our lives. We are just the vessels that get to hold His glory. It is not the cup that is praised, but it is what is in the cup that refreshes and nourishes others. We are like that cup. It is Christ’s Spirit within us that should always get all the glory and praise.

Verse 18: *“For not he who commends himself is approved, but rather it is whom the Lord commends.”*

Not he who commends himself is approved: The approval of ourselves does not mean anything.

Whom the Lord commends (is approved): God evaluates our lives, our service, our ministry. We do not want to be found to be people who magnify our ministries or our spheres of influence, but we want to be found to be people who magnify and submit to the Lord.

Chapter 11

Part 1: 2 Corinthians 11:1- 15

As we strive to be obedient vessels of the Lord, we are going to encounter opposition. Ultimately all of that opposition is from the enemy who has his disciples and servants on this earth. We need to realize that our fight is not a fight against flesh and blood. Our weapons for warfare are not fleshly (carnal, of this world) but they are spiritual, and they are used to make God's purposes, order and agenda a reality in our lives and in the lives of others.

Paul's defence of his words and of his behaviour get very specific in this chapter. He speaks against those whom he calls false prophets and those who are not true apostles. Paul's desire is that through his ministry, and through his faithfulness, these individuals who are attacking him might change and be brought into obedience to the same calling and ministry that he had received. Paul did not display anger toward these people, but instead he felt an overwhelming sorrow. He knew that the will of God in people's lives was being hindered, and this caused him sadness.

Verse 1: *"I desire that you would bear with me for a little foolishness – and indeed you do bear with me."*

I desire: This is a word of request. Paul is asking this Corinthian congregation to pay attention to what he is going to share with them.

Foolishness: This word refers to neither thinking much nor in great detail. This is not a call from Paul to get the Corinthians to indulge in that which is foolish. What Paul is saying to them is that he is going to be sharing something very simple with them, something that does not require a lot of thought, as it is self-evident.

Bear with: Tolerate or put up with. They have supported and have helped Paul – not so much financially, or in regard to his physical needs, but in regard to his presence.

Verse 2: *"For I am zealous for you with a zeal of God. For I have betrothed you to one man, and you as a pure virgin to be presented to Messiah."*

I am zealous for you: Paul speaks in a very personal manner throughout these epistles to the Corinthians. He shares transparently with them and makes himself very vulnerable, not trying to conceal anything.

A zeal of God: Paul is zealous for the same things that God desires to see among them. Paul had no personal agenda. This was not about him. He had set himself aside in order to be fully committed to the things of God - seeing God's will manifested in this congregation and, through this congregation, to other people.

Betrothed: Engaged. Promised in marriage.

A pure virgin: Paul's desire was that this congregation, having experienced the transforming power of the gospel, would become a part of the bride of Messiah. And that through the sufficiency of the work of Messiah they would be a pure, and therefore acceptable, bride.

Betrothed ... pure virgin ... presented to Messiah: This was not a new concept in Paul's day for those who had come from a Jewish background. In the Old Testament, God had presented Himself as a husband with Israel as His wife.

Verse 3: *“But I fear lest somehow as the serpent Eve deceived in his craftiness, so he has corrupted your thoughts from the simplicity that is in the Messiah.”*

The serpent Eve deceived: A Biblical example from the garden of Eden. Paul was concerned that in the same way Eve was deceived so too would these people be deceived by falsehood.

Craftiness: Deceitfulness and cunning.

Thoughts: Mind

The simplicity that is in the Messiah: Paul is again driving home the point that although the gospel is glorious its message is one of simplicity.

Verse 4: *“For if one comes and another Yeshua proclaims which we have not proclaimed, or a different spirit that you receive which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not received, you do well to bear up.”*

Another Yeshua: A different Yeshua.

Bear up: Not tolerate it or receive it. We need to be people who stand in opposition to falsehood and support that which is true.

You do well to bear up: They would do well if they rejected this distortion of Yeshua, the false spirit, or the distortion of the gospel.

Verse 5: *“For I reckon that I have nothing inferior to those who are the ‘most’ of the apostles.”*

I reckon (consider): Paul is saying that this is logically evident to him. It is something that is easy to think through. He has gone through all of the evidence, and this is the conclusion that he has arrived at.

Inferior: Lacking or less than.

Most: The illustrious or prominent apostles. Those who proclaimed to be of the upper echelon. Perhaps Paul is speaking here of the false apostles who elevated themselves above others.

Verse 6: *“But if even though I am inferior in words, yet I am not in knowledge. But in every way manifesting in all things for you.”*

Inferior in words (speech): Paul’s written words and spoken words appeared to have been very different from each other. His written words were heard differently. They were more powerful, stronger and to the point. When he came before a congregation and spoke to them the people saw a kind of disconnect. They thought his speech was inferior to the things that he wrote.

Inferior in words, yet I am not in knowledge: Though Paul’s words may not have impressed them he was telling them not to think that he did not know what he was talking about.

In every way manifesting in all things for you: Paul had no personal agenda. He was not there for anything concerning himself. He wanted nothing from them in return, but everything he did was for their sakes.

Verse 7: *“Was it a sin that I myself humbled in order that you should be exalted, because freely the gospel of God I evangelized you?”*

Humbled: Paul did not go to them presenting himself as a super apostle. He went to them in a humble way – not with fine garments or persuasive words, but in simplicity. His purpose was to be a blessing and an encouragement to them. He did not call attention to himself, but he went to them in order to simply accomplish God’s will.

Exalted: Lifted up

Freely the gospel of God I evangelized: Paul lived simply because he wanted to present the gospel of God freely - without any charge, as a gift.

Verse 8: *“Other congregations I plundered, my sustenance I took from them in order that you could be ministered to.”*

Plundered: Robbed. Paul is not talking here about stealing from other congregations. He did however receive some support from other congregations in regard to his ministry as well as in regard to his expenses. The Corinthian congregation, however, did not pay Paul for his ministry, expenses or daily upkeep. That is how Paul wanted it to be. He wanted to present the gospel to them for free. Paul never wanted it to be about himself, but he was concerned about them and about their spiritual condition.

Verse 9: *“And being present with you and also in need but not wanting at any time or through any means to burden anyone, for my need was completely met by the brothers, the ones coming from Macedonia. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.”*

In need but not wanting ... to burden anyone: He never looked to this Corinthian congregation to meet any needs that he had. He had no desire to be a burden to them.

I will keep myself: Even though Paul had every right to ask the Corinthians for sustenance he did not use those rights. Other people, the Macedonians, gave or provided for Paul in order to sustain him when he was in need.

Verse 10: *“The truth of Messiah is in me that this boasting should not be sealed up from those in the region of Achaia.”*

The truth of Messiah is in me: Paul is not only talking about the words that he is proclaiming, he is also talking about the way that he is living. Many people can speak truth, but their lifestyles reveal something else. The words that we speak and the way that we live both need to reflect truth.

This boasting should not be sealed up: Paul wanted to have a transparent testimony. He wanted others to see how he lived so that they could see how a true apostle behaved. Paul did not go to them in power. He went to them in weakness. He did not have any pretence, but he went to them in simplicity so that, through the simple message of Messiah, people's lives were transformed in Corinth.

Verse 11: *“What therefore... you think that I do not love you? God knows!”*

Love you: Paul loved this congregation. Not because these people were different from other people but because Paul knew the potential they had, as a port city, to influence a vast amount of people from different cultures, backgrounds, and languages with a powerful and accurate testimony, in simplicity, concerning the Word of God - in humility, not based on a desire for wealth but a desire for a Kingdom fruitfulness.

God knows: God knew the commitment and love that Paul had toward these people. He was willing to make sacrifices for them and was willing to endure times of need for their sakes.

Verse 12: *“For what I am doing also I will do, in order should we cut off the opportunity of those wanting an opportunity that they should boast that they should be found just as me.”*

What I am doing also I will do: Paul is not changing. His behaviour toward them is consistent.

Those wanting an opportunity that they should boast: There were those who wanted to boast but they were boasting in the wrong things. Their boasting called attention to themselves and was rooted in pride. Most preached the gospel for financial purposes. Paul’s hope was that these men would be changed and that in the end they would be boasting in the same things that Paul was boasting about – a humble life that was dedicated to the lives of others, a life that produced Kingdom fruitfulness.

Verse 13: *“These are false apostles, workers of deceit, masquerading as apostles of Messiah.”*

False apostles: Although Paul hoped that these apostles would be transformed into true apostles, here he is talking about the ‘testimony’ that they currently had. They were not true servants of God. They did not present an accurate gospel to the people.

Workers of deceit: The truth of Messiah was not in them. They were doing nothing that was pleasing to God. The truth of God should be the foundation of every servant of God, every true work of God, every ministry, every congregation. We are not to distort the Word of God or His testimony.

Masquerading: Giving a false presentation. They (like false teachers and false prophets) present one thing outwardly but inwardly they believe something different.

Verse 14: *“It is not a marvel! For satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”*

It is not a marvel: This false presentation should not surprise us. satan himself behaves in this way.

Masquerades as an angel of light: Most of the activity of satan in this world is going to be done by those masquerading as believers, those masquerading as part of the congregation of the redeemed. The most intense work of satan’s deceit is going to be within the body of believers. In the last days there is going to be a great departure from the true body of believers by those who are false believers.

Verse 15: *“Therefore it is not some great thing if also his ministers masquerade as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their work.”*

It is not some great thing: Paul is again telling us, in a slightly different way, that this should not surprise us.

His ministers: satan’s servants

Servants of righteousness: Although they are servants of satan, they present themselves as stewards of righteousness.

Whose end will be according to their work: The end of those who are false, who are not of the true gospel, who do not behave with the truth of Messiah, is going to be according to their deeds, their works. This is foreshadowing a judgment. Paul, who lives and behaves very differently to them, does not have to deal with them. Messiah is going to ultimately deal with them.

Chapter 11

Part 2: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

The word ‘fellowship’ can mean to spend time with other believers, but it can also be understood as a partnership within a local assembly or congregation. Each of us has a part, something to do, or a call within a local congregation. Paul's call was to be an apostle - and he heeded this call with the utmost seriousness. Do we take the call of God on our lives seriously? Are we committed to His call? Are we serious about being obedient to God? We know that as we begin to obey the call of God in our lives there is much opposition from the enemy. He will want to discourage us, try to discredit us, etc so that we give up. Paul was constantly defending his call as an apostle and how he carried it out. He was often criticized, slandered, and called false. In the second half of this chapter, we see how Paul conducted himself - how he spoke and what he said. This tells us a lot about his life and how he lived in subjection or submissiveness to the call of God on his life.

Verse 16: *“Again I say, let no one think me a fool. If not also even as foolish that you receive me, that I also may boast a little.”*

Note: In this verse Paul is responding to, and answering, his critics in Corinth. Paul’s critics were fellow believers, who had listened to others say derogatory things in regard to Paul. By criticizing Paul these others had sought to exalt themselves or make themselves look better than him.

Again I say: Paul wanted the Corinthian congregation to realise that it was uncharacteristic for him to speak so frequently about himself, but he wanted to reveal to them how faith in Messiah has impacted his life.

Let no one think me a fool: Paul did not want anyone to think that he was foolish. A fool is someone who does not think correctly. A fool is not thoughtful. Paul always thought very carefully about what he said or about what he did.

If not also even as foolish that you receive me: Paul did not want them to think that he was foolish, but if some of them did think he was a fool he was asking them to still receive him anyway.

Boast: This word repeats and repeats itself in this section. It is a word, within this context, that means something that is pleasing or causing joy. It can also be seen as rejoicing or praising someone else because of the faithfulness or Godly change that can be seen in their lives. Paul has used this word in regard to the believers in Corinth. Now, however, he is going to use this word in regard to what he rejoices over in his own life. Generally, it is not good to speak about and rejoice about ourselves. Paul, however, had thought this through and he had reached the conclusion that it was what he needed to do under these circumstances. He needed to defend his sincerity and commitment to the call that he had received as an apostle.

Verse 17: *“What I speak I do not speak according to the Lord, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting.”*

I do not speak according to the Lord: Normally when Paul writes something in the Scripture he does so according to the Lord - what God has inspired him to say. Here, however, what Paul is going to say is not within the Lord’s character – this would not be how the Lord would behave. Although this is not in accordance with how Messiah would behave, Paul was nevertheless inspired to write it down.

Confidence: This word in the Greek speaks of a natural or a known outcome. In the natural, if a person boasts we know that they are usually speaking about themselves. Paul was warning the Corinthians that he was going to be speaking about himself.

Verse 18: *“Since many boast according to the flesh, also I will boast.”*

Many boast: This was Paul’s rationale for speaking about himself – many do it.

Also I will boast: Many of Paul’s critics had boasted about their strengths - being like the ‘super apostles’ (Peter, James etc), but Paul boasts about something completely different – he boasts about his weaknesses. Paul does not talk about the great things that he has done, but, in humility, he speaks about what he has suffered for the sake of Christ. Paul teaches us that what we are willing to endure to serve God is what truly manifests our call and commitment to Him.

Verse 19: *“For gladly you bear foolishness, being wise.”*

Gladly: With joy

You bear foolishness, being wise: Paul is asking them, being wise ones, to put up with a bit of foolishness on Paul’s part. Paul knows that these Corinthians are a thinking people. They would understand what Paul was about to do in regard to his boast. From a worldly perspective Paul’s boasting would have appeared foolish, but they had the capacity to understand what Paul was going to reveal to them.

Verse 20: *“For you bear it if a certain one enslaves you, and if someone devours you, or takes from you, or if someone should exalt himself, or if anyone should slap your face.”*

Bear it: Put up with it. The Corinthians were able to put up with all the horrid things that happened to them. In this world there are many things that people tolerate because they have no other option except to tolerate what is done to them.

A certain one: Speaking about the Roman Empire.

Devours you: They were able to cope when others took everything that they had.

Takes: Robs

Exalt: Praise

Note: This is an important verse. It lays a foundation for what Paul is going to say. Many people endure suffering (some even inflict it on themselves) as a means to an end...they have a goal, but that goal can only be reached through suffering. Paul shares about what he has had to endure and overcome in order to reach his goal – a goal which was connected to the will and Kingdom of God.

Verse 21: *“According to dishonour I speak. We were weak. There are certain others that might dare to be bold. In foolishness I will speak, also I will dare.”*

According to dishonour I speak: Paul is perhaps saying this because he was not praising God. His focus was neither upon the Lord nor upon the Lord’s work.

Weak: Paul, and those with him, did not come to them in a self-exalting way. They did not lord it over people and nor were they demanding on them in any way. They came into their midst humbly, as servants.

Dare to be bold: Call attention to themselves. Others came to them in order to exalt themselves. They gave evidence about how important they were.

Also I will dare: Although Paul came to them in a modest way and would not usually dare to put the attention on himself he basically is asking them to tolerate him while he (in his words) foolishly does dare to call attention to himself.

Verse 22: *“There are those who are bold and who dare to say they are Hebrews. So am I. There are others who say they are Israelites. So am I. They say they are the seed of Abraham. So am I.”*

Note: In this verse Paul begins to give his credentials.

Verse 23: *“They say they are ministers of Christ? I speak in a way beyond myself and on behalf of myself – in regard to toil, more abundant; on behalf of blows, in a surpassing manner; in prisons, more frequently; in deaths often.”*

Ministers: Servants

I speak in a way beyond myself: Paul is speaking as he would not normally speak. He spoke like this because he felt that it was critical for people to know how committed he was to the call he had as an apostle.

Toil: Labour or work

Blows: Receiving stripes or whippings.

In prisons, more frequently: Paul spent a great deal of his time in prison.

Deaths: Paul is talking about those things that threatened his life.

Verse 24: *“By the Judeans five times I received forty (lashes) minus one.”*

Judeans: Referring to the Jewish leadership based in Jerusalem – this is not referring to the Jewish people as a whole. These Judeans were committed to the traditions of the elders rather than to the law of Moses.

I received forty (lashes) minus one: Paul was severely punished for speaking the truth – truth primarily concerning the identity of Messiah (His work and resurrection).

Verse 25: *“Three times beaten with a rod, once stoned, three times shipwrecked and a day and a night in the deep.”*

A day and a night: A 24-hour period of time.

In the deep: Paul was shipwrecked and lost at sea for 24 hours.

Verse 26: *“In journeys often, in perils of rivers, in danger by thieves, in danger by my own countrymen, in danger of Gentiles, in danger in cities, in danger in the wilderness, in danger in the sea, in danger among false brothers.”*

Perils: Danger

Own countrymen: Fellow Jews.

Wilderness: Deserts.

Note: The constant theme of Paul’s life was suffering. When he was not suffering, he was in danger. He suffered and he lived with danger because of his commitment to the call of God on his life. All of these things that Paul has endured and documented bear witness that he was truly an apostle. Paul did not boast about the things that he had accomplished, instead he boasted in the things that he had suffered for his faith.

Verse 27: *“In toil and trouble, in sleeplessness, often in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”*

Sleeplessness: Often Paul was unable to sleep – this could have been because he was under threat, or because he needed to stay awake in order to serve the church (preaching etc).

Fastings: There were numerous different occasions or reasons why Paul faithfully, consistently, and frequently fasted. Traditionally in Judaism it is taught that there is a correlation between faithfulness and fasting.

Note: Although Paul was an apostle, he was not getting wealthy from it. He was not even getting honour for what he was doing - in fact, quite the contrary.

Verse 28: *“Without the external, what comes upon me daily – my deep concern for all the churches.”*

The external: Those things that the body needs outwardly (proper clothing, various needs, etc).

Deep concern for all the churches: Paul was not only concerned about the church where he was at currently, but he was also advising, counselling, writing letters etc to all the congregations round about the regions.

Verse 29: *“Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn?”*

Stumble: A word referring to someone living in a scandalous manner. When someone stumbles it means that they are not walking on a clear pathway – the pathway of justice, truth, holiness or sanctification.

Burn: We all stumble at times. We all have fleshly, human desires, but it doesn't mean that we need to give in to our temptations.

Verse 30: *“If it is necessary to boast, I will boast in the things which concern my weakness.”*

If it is necessary to boast: Paul felt that it was a requirement for him to boast in order to defend his apostleship.

Verse 31: *“The God and Father of our Lord Messiah Yeshua, the One who is blessed forever, He knows that I am not lying.”*

He knows that I am not lying: Paul was testifying about all of these things before God (who knows everything) and man.

Verse 32: *“In Damascus, the governor, that serves underneath the king, Aretas, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to apprehend me.”*

The governor: This man was there to oversee the administration of the city of Damascus.

Apprehend: Arrest

Verse 33: *“But I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and fled from his hand.”*

Note: What Paul is doing, as he concludes this chapter and his defence, is giving us an example of how God has moved in his circumstances. When Paul acknowledged that he was weak, and he turned to the Living God, God moved in his life to see him through the difficulties that he faced. When Paul was weak God showed Himself to be strong. Paul endured much; however it was through his weakness that God was magnified, that God ministered, that God moved. All of this confirmed that Paul was indeed an apostle who had received his calling from God.

Chapter 12

Part 1: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Submission, being humble and having a desire to serve God (obedience) is going to bring about God's intimacy/presence in our lives.

Verse 1: *"Boasting is indeed not profitable for me. For I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord."*

Boasting: Rejoicing over something.

Boasting is indeed not profitable for me: Paul, first and foremost, wanted to do the things that were profitable spiritually for him (in speech, thought or action).

Visions: What can be physically seen.

Revelations: Things which are not necessarily seen but they are understood.

Verse 2: *"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago - whether in the body I do not know, whether outside the body I do not know, God knows – such a one was snatched away into the third heaven."*

I know a man: The vast majority of the commentators say that Paul is speaking about himself - despite the fact that Paul is speaking in the third person. In our opinion, Paul is speaking literally (not cryptically). He is not speaking about himself but is speaking about others who have had mighty experiences, visions and revelations from the Lord. Paul, when referring to himself, boasted about his weaknesses. When he boasted about others, those who were faithful to God and who were in Christ, he boasted about the mighty things that God had done in their lives.

In Christ: This man was in a covenantal relationship with God.

Fourteen years ago: The implication is that this man had an experience from God fourteen years prior to Paul penning this epistle.

Whether in the body ... whether outside the body: Paul was not sure if the man's entire body participated in this experience or if it was just his soul that was taken there.

Snatched away: This same word is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and is used in regard to our Blessed Hope or the rapture. It is a word that speaks of a removal or of a taking away - not a sustaining in place.

The third heaven: Scripture does not reveal to us what this third heaven is so we cannot (and should not) dogmatically say it is this or that.

Verse 3: *"And I know such a man - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, but God knows,"*

I know such a man: There is a debate as to whether this is referring to the same man mentioned above or if Paul is referring to someone else.

Verse 4: *This one was snatched up into Paradise and he heard words that were inexpressible, words which are not lawful for a man to speak.”*

This one was snatched up: There is also a debate as to whether this is the same experience as the one spoken about above, or if this is a different one.

Paradise: This word ‘Paradise’ (a place of the dead, also referred to as ‘Abraham’s bosom’) refers to a place of absolute provision. This place is in some way connected to the Presence of God and godliness.

Heard words: This man not only had an incredible vision, but he was also given revelation – information revealing a Godly truth or perspective. Those words were not for that man’s time or for his ministry purposes. They were words that revealed Kingdom things, words which God desired to share with that man but which he was not allowed to speak to us.

Note: Why is Paul sharing this with us? In the book of Genesis (Genesis 5:22-24) we are told about a man, Enoch. Enoch walked with God and then he was not, for God, being pleased with Enoch’s faithfulness and obedience, took him away – snatched him up. Paul, in speaking about these two individuals being snatched up, is in a way alluding to the reason why Enoch was snatched up. Like Enoch, these men were faithful to God and walked in obedience to Him. Like Enoch, these men were also snatched up into the Presence of God. Like Enoch, God was pleased with these men. Their submission and faithfulness to God resulted in them receiving revelation from God. That revelation showed God’s approval of them.

Verse 5: *“On behalf of such things I will boast; but on behalf of myself I do not boast, except in my weaknesses.”*

On behalf of such things I will boast: Paul did not boast about things which he had experienced (although the implication is that he too experienced these things).

On behalf of myself I do not boast: This is the Biblical basis for knowing that Paul was not speaking about himself in regard to being snatched up to the third heaven or to Paradise, but he was in fact speaking about others.

I do not boast, except in my weaknesses: God coming through for Paul, when he was weak, confirmed Paul’s call to apostleship. God’s purpose for our lives is greater than our natural abilities or intelligence. Of ourselves we are weak and cannot do what God has called us to do. However, in Christ, God’s purpose for our lives is achieved, because He supplies all that we need. When we are weak, God gets involved and moves in His strength to overcome our insufficiencies.

Verse 6: *“For if I should want to boast I would not be a fool. For I will speak truth, and I will refrain so that no one should account to me beyond what he sees or has heard from me.”*

If I should want to boast I would not be a fool: Paul, if he had desired to, could have boasted about the great things that God had done in his life. He would not have been lying. Paul, however, did not choose to speak about the great and glorious things. Paul did not want the glorious experiences to confirm his apostleship or his ministry. Paul wanted to talk to the people about Scriptural truth (the Word of God and the purposes of God), rather than about his experiences.

No one should account to me beyond what he sees or has heard: Paul did not want people to reach conclusions about him based on his experiences (things beyond or not spoken of in the Word of God). Paul did not want his life to be sensationalised. Paul wanted his testimony to be based on proven or documented things that God had done – not on what he had done.

Verse 7: *“In regard to these surpassing revelations, in order that I should not be lifted up, it was given to me a thorn of my flesh, a messenger of satan in order to strike me, so that I should not be lifted up above measure.”*

Surpassing revelations: This implies that God did indeed give Paul some revelations or experiences. Paul’s intention, however, was not to focus on these.

Thorn of my flesh: Paul had an affliction. The Bible does not tell us what it was. Many people speculate about what it could have been. However, we need to remember that Biblical teaching should never be based on speculation, but should always be based on truth.

Strike: Wound or injure. satan hated Paul and wanted to hinder his work/ministry.

So that I should not be lifted up: Even though satan was the one behind this thorn (he caused it), God, free to use all things, used it in Paul’s life as a means to keep him humble. Bad Biblical interpretation would cause us to state, infer or speculate what this thorn was. Good Biblical interpretation would lead us to conclude that because Paul mentioned this thorn, but did not clarify what it was, it was something noticeable to the people in Paul’s day.

Verse 8: *“On behalf of this, three times the Lord I beseeched so that it should be removed from me.”*

This: Paul is still speaking about this thorn in his flesh.

Three: This is a number of revelation and confirmation.

Beseeched: Strongly called out to. Prayed earnestly.

Removed: Taken away from

Verse 9: *“And He said to me: ‘Sufficient for you is My grace, for My power in weakness is made perfect.’ Therefore, with gladness I will boast in my weaknesses so that in me should dwell the power of Christ.”*

He said to me: God responded to Paul’s prayer.

Grace: A word which is related to thanksgiving. The way that we overcome suffering is by thanking and praising God. The joy of the Lord is sufficient for the various ailments, hardships, or plagues that we have to go through.

My power in weakness is made perfect: When we recognize our weakness, or struggle with things that keep us weak, we realize that we are dependent on God and have to trust in Him. This reliance on Him allows Him to bring His perfect work in our lives to completion. It is our weakness and subsequent reliance on God’s strength and power that has a wonderful outcome. Paul’s weakness, and God’s strength, was the key to Paul’s successful ministry. Paul never boasted in his successes, but only in his weaknesses.

Verse 10: *“Therefore, I esteem it good in weaknesses, in insults, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses on behalf of Messiah. For whenever I am weak, then I am powerful.”*

Therefore: According to what we have read this is the conclusion that we can reach as we think about and carefully evaluate what Paul has said.

I esteem it good: Paul deemed the weaknesses in his life as good things.

Needs: A shortage of resources.

Distresses: Literally the word for ‘narrow’. This speaks about being subjected to great pressure outwardly.

On behalf of Messiah: Paul is not talking about suffering due to having made rebellious or foolish decisions. Paul is talking about the suffering that is done for the sake of Christ.

Chapter 12

Part 2: 2 Corinthians 12:11-21

We want to be people that have a Godly testimony so that we can influence others for the purposes of God. This means that at times we may need to defend ourselves and show others that we do indeed belong to God.

Verse 11: *“I have become a fool boasting; you have compelled me. I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I inferior to the most eminent of the apostles, if even I am nothing.”*

I have become a fool boasting: They thought Paul was doing a foolish thing by boasting about his weaknesses.

You have compelled me: Instead of commending Paul (based on the fruit or on the evidence of what he had done among them), they had forced him into a position whereby he felt the need to defend himself and his call.

Verse 12: *“The signs of apostleship have been manifested among you in all perseverance - in signs and wonders and powers.”*

Note: Paul did not produce the signs of apostleship, but they were manifested through him.

In all perseverance: Consistently God released His power through Paul’s ministry. Even though Paul was an unimpressive man, God used him mightily.

Signs and wonders and powers: God’s signs, wonders, confirmations of His power by the changed lives of individuals were evidence of Paul’s call to be an apostle. People do not become apostles because others call them apostles. People are apostles when there is evidence of God’s power flowing through their lives.

Verse 13: *“For what is it in which you were inferior to the remaining congregations, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong.”*

Inferior to the remaining congregations: The Corinthian congregation was in no way inferior to or less than other congregations.

I myself was not burdensome to you: Paul did not behave differently in this Corinthians congregation except for in one way – he was never a burden to them.

Forgive me this wrong: Paul says this in kind of a sarcastic way.

Verse 14: *“Behold, a third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek the things of yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up treasure for the parents, but the parents for the children.”*

Behold: A call to pay attention. Paul is telling them something of significance.

A third time I am ready to come to you: This is unique. Paul was widely travelled and yet he, over and over again, desired to go back to Corinth. Paul, despite animosity from some within this congregation, loved this congregation. He also knew that this Corinthian church, based on their location, had such a great calling and potential. Paul’s desire was to minister there, to disciple there, to teach there, to help them to grow and mature.

I do not seek the things of yours: Paul was not interested in any of their possessions or their personal wealth.

But you: Paul did not want to be with them for personal financial gain, but he was interested in the relational aspect of his interaction with them.

For the children ought not to lay up treasure for the parents, but the parents for the children: Paul gives them an example from society. Parents provide for their children and not the other way around. Paul did not want them to provide for him but, like a spiritual father, Paul wanted to provide for them.

Verse 15: *“But I with great joy would spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.”*

Would spend and be spent: Paul considered it a joy to live sacrificially for them. Paul was also glad to exhaust his assets on behalf of them. Paul was not interested in saving things up, but he was fully invested and totally committed to Kingdom work.

Souls: Everything Paul did for this congregation was for their Kingdom future.

The more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved: This was puzzling to Paul, and it gives us insight into how Paul was feeling. Paul had heavily invested in these people, but they had not returned his love. They had not shown appreciation and value for the sacrifices that he had made for them.

Verse 16: *“Let it be. I will not burden you. But, being crafty, I took you with guile!”*

Let it be: Paul has accepted this lack of love and appreciation as he knows he cannot change what is.

I will not burden you: Paul is not going to harp on this point to make them feel guilty. As he said...he is letting it be. Paul does not want them to feel burdened by the fact that he feels unloved and unappreciated by them.

Being crafty: This was an accusation levelled against Paul. Some accused him of being cunning, crafty or deceitful. They declared that Paul lived humbly among them in order to trick people into accepting Messiah or to respond to his apostleship.

I took you with guile: Paul is kind of scoffing at what his accusers have said. His openness, love, etc caused them to think that Paul had ulterior motives, when in fact he did not. Paul

did not suffer all the things he suffered as part of a cunning strategy to deceive and win people for the gospel.

Verse 17: *“Did I exploit you by any of those I sent to you?”*

Exploit: Take advantage of

Those I sent: Paul, concerned for the wellbeing and spiritual growth of the Corinthian congregation, sent people to the Corinthians to be a blessing to them. None of those sent by Paul exploited them on his behalf.

Verse 18: *“I encouraged Titus and the brother I sent with him. Did Titus, by any means, exploit you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?”*

Titus: Titus was Paul’s very faithful fellow servant. He was frequently sent to places, that Paul had served in, so that he could help them to grow and mature spiritually.

Spirit: The implication is a spirit of humility, a spirit of wanting to help, to be a blessing etc
Did we not walk in the same spirit... in the same steps: Titus did not behave any differently to the way that Paul behaved.

Verse 19: *“Again you think that to you I am making my defence. Before God, in Christ, we speak - all things, beloved, for your edification.”*

Think: Many in this congregation were thinking in the wrong way.

I am making my defence: Paul was not trying to justify himself, but he was publicly stating his commitment to the Lord.

Before God, in Christ, we speak: Paul was not living to please them, but he was living to please God. Paul was not so much making this defence before the people, but he was making it before God. Paul wanted God to begin to move in this situation. He knew he was in a weak place, and he needed God’s strength to turn this situation around for good – for God’s glory.

Edification: Paul wanted God to move in this situation so that the people in this congregation would be edified, built up. Some of the commentators have proposed that if the Corinthians were built up, and if they grew/matured, then they would begin to see things clearly. They would realise that Paul was indeed a servant of God and that the apostolic call upon him was genuine, authentic, and true.

Verse 20: *“For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults.”*

I fear: Paul was very concerned that when he went to visit them again, he would see no change in them. Paul stated his concern in the hopes that it would get dealt with before he arrived.

I shall not find you such as I wish: Paul had an expectation of how he wanted them to be. He wanted to arrive at this congregation and find that they had grown and matured spiritually. He had a desire to find them as faithful disciples, serving God.

I shall be found by you such as you do not wish: If Paul found them in a state that he did not wish to find them in then he would not be pleased with them and he would begin to work to set things in order. Life would get very uncomfortable for them if that was the case.

Contentions, jealousies...: This is a list of behavioural concerns Paul had regarding this congregation in Corinth.

Contentions: Strife. This is caused by a love of self and wanting to get our own way (James 4:1). People behave in a way to get what they want, rather than being submissive to God's will.

Jealousies: People competing against each other to try to be the best.

Selfish ambitions: People seeking to do their own things rather than wanting to fulfil God's objectives.

Backbitings: Slandering one another. When people do not get what they want they begin to blame and slander other people.

Whisperings: Gossiping

Tumults: General disorder. If everyone in this congregation is doing what is right in their own eyes, then the activity of the Holy Spirit will be very limited in it.

Verse 21: *"Lest again when I come my God will humble me before you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication and licentiousness which they have practiced."*

God will humble me before you: Paul loved this congregation and, for a while, they had served in a very committed way. They knew the truth and implemented it in their lives. Some people within this congregation had now attacked, disgraced and questioned Paul in regard to his call to apostleship. Because of these individuals, a portion of this congregation in Corinth had turned against Paul. These individuals had brought about disunity. Now, instead of walking humbly with God, doing the things that God commanded, many were behaving for their own self-interest. This led to disorder. Paul, who had boasted/rejoiced over this congregation was concerned that he would get there to find that all he had rejoiced over had been misplaced, as it was no longer a growing and dynamic congregation.

I shall mourn: Instead of rejoicing Paul was afraid that he would mourn when he saw what had become of so many of them.

Sinned before and have not repented: These people had not acknowledged that their behaviour was sinful.

Uncleanness: God does not bless those who are in an unclean or impure condition. Being unclean spiritually pushes away the Presence of God.

Fornication: They had not repented of their sexual immorality. Disobedience to God strengthens our fleshly desires and often this is manifested through sexual immorality.

Licentiousness: A word of debauchery - a total lack of self-control. Those who lack self-control are easily manipulated and used by the enemy for works of unrighteousness.

Chapter 13

God desires us to be complete - to go through the process of, and arrive fully at, sanctification. He wants our lives to be fully edified by His Spirit. Paul desired this for others. He wanted others to reach completion. He desired that they had a testimony that reflected the presence of Messiah in their lives. Paul was not interested in being proven right, but he was interested in their continued growth. He wanted them to become mature believers – attaining to the full measure of Christ.

Verse 1: *“This third time I am coming to you. ‘By the mouth of two witnesses, and three, every word shall be established.”*

This third time I am coming to you: Paul has warned them of his intent to visit a couple of times now.

By the mouth of two witnesses...: Quoted from Deuteronomy 19:15

Word: Matter

Two witnesses: A testimony was considered valid if two people testified. It would be very difficult to dispute, and therefore was considered established (settled), if three people testified of the same thing.

Established: Paul was interested in the truth being established according to the will of God. Paul was going to visit them for a third time so that he could set things back into God’s order.

Verse 2: *“What I have said to you before I have said previously, as being present the second time. Being absent now I write to the ones who have sinned previously, and to all the rest, that when I come again I will not spare.”*

I have said to you before I have said previously: On Paul’s second visit he had spoken to them about these things. Paul had not changed his mind. His message was consistent.

I will not spare: Paul was ready and prepared to go Corinth. He desired to set things in order. They had accused Paul of being weak in their presence, but when he went back a third time he was not going to hold anything back, but was going to deal head on with them and their sins.

Verse 3: *“Since you seek proof of Messiah speaking in me, who is not weak toward you but mighty in you.”*

You seek proof: Some in Corinth were challenging Paul’s apostleship. They wanted proof that Messiah was speaking through Paul.

Who is not weak toward you: Messiah, for their benefit, was not weak, but mighty. Changes, good fruits, had come about in this congregation because of Messiah – not because of Paul. Paul was just the vessel that God had used. Messiah spoke through Paul unto them.

Mighty: Powerful

Verse 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 for you.”*

Crucified in weakness: Messiah, in order to accomplish what He was sent into the world to do, had to humble Himself and show the world His weakness.

He lives by the power of God: Messiah appeared weak, but the power of God lived in Him. Christ demonstrated weakness so that the power of God could be released in His life. It should not surprise us then that Paul (like every believer should) demonstrated weakness so that the life he lived was through the power of God – not for his own sake, but for the sake of others (*power of God FOR YOU*).

Verse 5: *“Test yourselves if you are in the faith. Document yourselves. Or do you not know yourselves whether Messiah Yeshua is in you – unless indeed you are disqualified?”*

Test yourselves: Frequently in Scripture we are called to test or evaluate ourselves to make sure that we are in the faith and walking in a proper way.

Document yourselves: There should be evidence. If we are in the faith, then our lives will show proof that we are living in light of God’s truth – our lives will begin to conform to the will of God.

Do you not know yourselves: If they were confused as to whether Christ was in them or not (which should have been simple to prove), then they needed to consider the possibility that they were perhaps not in Christ.

Disqualified: This is not talking about them losing their salvation. However, if they were unable to prove that they were in Christ and that Christ was in them then their testimony (their words against Paul) would be considered invalid as it was not factual. They would have been disqualified in the category of ‘two or three witnesses’.

Verse 6: *“I hope you know that we are not disqualified.”*

Hope: This is a word that speaks about a strong and sincere desire. This is what Paul, in the Lord, wanted to be a reality.

Disqualified: Undocumented

Verse 7: *“But I pray to God that you do nothing that is evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honourable, though we may seem disqualified.”*

Note: There was a problem with this congregation. They were neither living properly nor demonstrating faith.

But I pray to God that you do nothing that is evil, not that we should appear approved: If Paul went to Corinth and it was shown that the people were in fact doing evil then Paul’s words would qualify him because they would have been proved to be true. Paul, however, did not want these people to do things out of the will of God. He would have been happy to have gone there to find that his words had proven to be wrong or inaccurate (thereby disqualifying him). Paul’s whole motivation was not to be right, but that these people in Corinth were behaving righteously and honourably before God.

Verse 8: *“For it is not possible to do something against the truth, but for the truth.”*

Not possible to do something against the truth: What Paul had said regarding this congregation was true. They had some serious spiritual problems. Paul was not speaking to them in a way that was against truth, but he was speaking up on behalf of truth.

Verse 9: *“For we rejoice whenever we are weak (if it should mean that) you are powerful. But this also we pray, that you be complete.”*

We rejoice whenever we are weak: When Messiah was weak the will of God was fulfilled. Paul did not mind being weak if it meant that the will of God would be fulfilled in the lives of those in the Corinthian congregation.

Complete: This is a word that speaks about order, arriving at the proper status or condition – that they would be sanctified.

Verse 10: *“On account of these things being absent I write in order that being present I should not use harshness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.”*

Harshness: Strictness. Paul preferred to be strict with them in his writings rather than being strict with them when he was present with them – face to face. He wrote this letter before his scheduled visit to them so that they had time to repent and be restored back to the purposes of God before Paul arrived.

Authority ... given me for edification and not for destruction: The Lord (who Paul was in submission to) gave authority to Paul for one purpose: To build up the congregations and not to tear them down. If Paul went to them and needed to be strict with them then it was not for the purpose of their destruction, but it was to ultimately build them up.

Verse 11: *“Finally, brethren, rejoice. Become complete. Be encouraged, be of the same mind, be peaceful, and the God of love and peace is with you.”*

Finally: Paul is about to make his summary statements.

Rejoice: Be glad.

Become complete: Become those who are set into God’s order.

Be of the same mind: Have the same thought processes and same purpose – individuals who want to fulfil the purpose of God, individuals that manifest God's sanctifying influence in their lives, those who are truly built up and edified by the Lord and His Word.

The God of love and peace is with you: Paul’s purpose was not to upset this congregation. He wanted God’s love and peace (God’s blessing) to be upon them.

Verse 12: *“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”*

Verse 13: *“All the saints greet you.”*

Verse 14: *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”*

Note: This verse is a perfect example of where the Word of God teaches the doctrine of the trinity – God the Father, God and Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Although the word ‘trinity’ is not in the Bible, the message or the truth of the trinity is. One of the primary purposes of the trinity is to affirm the divinity of Messiah. In Daniel 7:13-14 we read that Messiah is going to be worshipped. The only way He can be worshipped, without it being idolatry, is if He is indeed the only begotten Son of God.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ: There is only one source for grace – and that source is God.

Grace...love ...fellowship: Only through grace (which comes through Messiah) can we be recipients of the love of God. This love manifests itself through the fellowship or intimacy of the Holy Spirit – God’s Presence in our lives.