

## Bible Study March 6, 2024

### 2 Corinthians

The central theme of 2 Corinthians is the relationship between suffering and the power of the Spirit in Paul's apostolic life, ministry and message. Paul's message asking for a collection for the Jerusalem congregation, his personal courage, and his suffering are questioned by his opponents.

Paul sees a close tie between the Corinthian's acceptance of his apostleship and the genuineness of their faith. In effect, to reject Paul is to reject Christ Himself, since Paul's life and ministry, message and manner of life, are one.

#### Chapter 3 Ministers of the New Covenant

Paul's message of grace through faith in Christ is Spirit filled, and in effect the lives of the Corinthian church are a letter from Christ. The grace of Christ is written on their hearts, not on tablets of stone. Paul was given authority and sufficiency from Christ, the same risen Jesus Christ that met him on the Damascus Road. The Old Covenant of Law has been replaced by the Covenant of Grace, the veil has been lifted that those who believe can see the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

#### Chapter 4 The Light of the Gospel

Jesus Christ is the Lord, who is the image of God. The light of the Gospel allows us to see how Christ's death on the cross makes it possible for believers to be in His presence, having been transformed by God's presence and His Spirit. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead enables believers to endure adversity. Our human weakness, seen as jars of clay, is in effect our treasure as we are afflicted, but not crushed when we have believed upon the risen Christ. Our current suffering is but a moment compared to the eternal glory that awaits us.

#### Chapter 5 Our Heavenly Dwelling

Our earthy home, referred to as a tent, is our human body. This will be destroyed, but we have a building from God, not made by hands, but by the Lord. We will have a resurrection body, guaranteed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian. We walk by faith, not by sight. Christ died for us, and in His death and resurrection, our old life dies and is raised anew in Christ. We are new creations, for we have been reconciled in and through Christ. "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." Verse 21 is key

to our understanding of the atonement of Christ and how we receive the gift of justification.

#### Chapter 6 The New Covenant Support for the Legitimacy of Paul's Ministry

Read verses 6: 1-11 Paul quotes Isaiah 49:8 identifying his ministry to that of Isaiah's call to repentance and perseverance in view of the coming day of redemption and judgment. Paul proclaims this time has now come in Christ. Paul's ministry reflects God's power in spite of human weakness. He also issues a call for Church discipline - "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers." (verse 14a)

The church is the fulfillment of God's covenant people, being restored in the New Covenant.

#### Chapter 7 Paul's Joy over the Repentant Corinthians

Paul has confidence in the Corinthians due to their repentance and their treatment of Titus. Godly grief is characterized by repentance, turning from sin to living for God. This confidence in the Corinthians is a transitional point in the letter.

#### Chapters 8 and 9 Paul now appeals to the Corinthian Church to give generously

Paul encourages the church to give towards the collection for Jerusalem as a manifestation of God's grace in their lives, bringing glory to God. Macedonian giving is shared as an example and encouragement to the Corinthians. The Corinthian church excels in all things – faith, speech, knowledge, spiritual gifts, earnestness, in love. He asks for gifts based on fairness, giving as they are able, according to what a person has.

Paul shifts again to praise of Titus, thanking God for his ministry to Paul and to the church of Jesus Christ. Read 2 Cor. 8: 16-24

Paul then shifts back to his appeal for the collection for the Jerusalem church. He encourages them to be generous, giving in joy and for the glory of God. He expands Proverbs 11: 24-25. Sow as you expect to reap. He also then Proverbs 22:8 is expanded stating that God loves a cheerful giver. He also quotes Psalm 112:9 in praising the man who distributes freely to the poor.

#### Chapter 10-12 Paul Defends His Ministry

Paul defends his humility and lack of professional rhetoric, claiming only the power of God in Christ Jesus. This power has been revealed in the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Paul does use the power of political nor physical persuasion, but only prayer, the Word of God, faith, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul uses his authority to build up,

not to tear down, not to destroy those who oppose him. He also challenges those in opposition to him not to boast about themselves, but to boast only in the Lord.

In Chapter 11, Paul uses the analogy of a Jewish father presenting his daughter as a virgin to the bridegroom. The preaching of a false gospel is what those who disguise themselves as servants of righteousness preach. Their deeds will show who they really are. Paul also speaks to them as one called by Christ, a Jew who once sought to destroy the Church, one who has been beaten, persecuted, jailed, and shipwrecked.

In Chapter 12, Paul, in the third person, describes his vision of heaven. To keep him from boasting, he was given a thorn in the flesh. This affliction appears to be of a physical nature, but could be psychological, persecution, or even demonic attack. Most believe it was physical; possibly poor eyesight, malaria, or even migraines. Paul prayed three times for the thorn to be removed. The Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12: 8)

Paul worked among them with the signs of a true apostle, with signs and mighty works. He is now ready to visit for a third time but does not want to take advantage of them. He prays they will be repentant and ready for his visit.

### Chapter 13 Final Warnings

2 Cor. 13:5 "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith." "Test yourselves, it is your restoration through prayer" that Paul seeks. Read 2 Cor. 13: 11-14