

2 Corinthians 24 - 12:20 - 13:14

Bruce Pike

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This week

Appeal 12:11-21

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Concern 12:20-21

Warnings 13:1-10

Trial 13:1-4

Plea 13:5-6

Prayer 13:7-10

Ending 13:11-14

Appeal 12-11-21

Concern 12:20-21

2 Corinthians 12:20–21 (LSB)

20 For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances.

21 I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality which they have practiced.

- For I am afraid.
 - Why Paul wants to build up the Corinthians (v19)
 - Because some are still holding out.
 - Wants to avoid a repeat of the sorrowful visit (2:1)
- that perhaps. Not certain. Still time for repentance
- when I come. Upcoming visit.
- I may find you to be not what I wish.
 - Not having godly sorrow to repentance, earnestness to right their wrong, demonstrating their innocence (7:9-11)
 - Still not understanding completely (1:14)
- And may be found by you to be not what you wish
 - Not appearing weak as previously.
 - Not sparing anyone (13:2)

- that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances.
 - Behaviors seen in Corinth previously
 - strife, jealousy, selfish ambition. Divisions
 - arrogance, outbursts of anger. Selfish attitude
 - slanders, gossip. Evil speech.
 - disturbances. Open defiance of authority and established practice. Confusion in worship.
 - Not the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3) or the mind of Christ (Ph 2:2-4)
- my God may humiliate me before you
 - The Corinthians were Paul's offering to his Lord (Ro 15:16). Continuing immorality would mar that offering.
 - In the presence of the Corinthians, their spiritual father would be dishonored by the actions of his children.
- I may mourn
 - mourn. Lament for the dead. Paul's response to lack of repentance of the holdouts.
 - Contrast his comfort and overflowing joy when most of the Corinthians repented (7:4)
 - Contrast 3 Jn 4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth.
- over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality which they have practiced.
 - sinned in the past and not repented. The holdouts.
 - Emphasis on sexual immorality. Told to flee (1 Cor 6:18) but they did not want to give it up.

Warnings 13:1-10

Trial 13:1-4

2 Corinthians 13:1-4 (LSB)

1This is the third time I am coming to you. BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY MATTER SHALL BE CONFIRMED.

2I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest as well, that if I come again I will not spare anyone,

3since you are seeking proof that Christ speaks in me; He is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

4For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God toward you.

- v1 Upcoming trial
 - This is the third time I am coming to you.
 - Upcoming visit to receive the collection. Previous visits were when the church was created and the sorrowful visit.
 - BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY MATTER SHALL BE CONFIRMED.
 - Quoting Dt 19:15 (LXX).
 - Not third visit. Rather the beginning of public proceedings (Mt 18:16).
 - In 1st C courts the accuser and defendant were both private parties before a judge. If the defendant was found innocent then they could become the accuser. The Corinthians have accused Paul of not being an apostle of Christ. Paul knows he is innocent. Now he will press charges against the Corinthians.

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- v2-3 Will not spare
 - I have previously said when present the second time
 - On the sorrowful visit. Paul warned of consequences of not repenting.
 - and though now absent I say in advance
 - Again warning them to repent
 - to those who have sinned in the past
 - To those continuing in immorality (12:21)
 - and to all the rest as well
 - To those who repented but have allowed the holdouts and opponents to continue.
 - Dealing with sin and false doctrine is the responsibility of the entire church.
 - that if I come again I will not spare anyone,
 - If. Certainty
 - Spare.
 - Cause another not to be troubled. As he did on the sorrowful visit.
 - No object. Anyone or anything.
 - Paul does not say what he will do. Maybe expose deeds of darkness (Eph 5:11) and induce unbelievers to leave (1 Jn 2:19), demolish strongholds (10:4-5), expel the unrepentant (5:13).
 - since you are seeking proof that Christ speaks in me
 - Putting Paul to the test: is he truly commissioned as an apostle of Christ; does he speak with His authority; can he bring consequences?
 - Paul has stated his apostolic position multiple times (1 Cor 9:1, 11:23, 14:37, 15:9-11) and has demonstrated all the qualifications of a true apostle. However, the holdouts are still not boasting in him. They cannot see the power of Christ displayed in his weakness.
 - Now Paul will give a proof that they cannot deny.
 - He is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.
 - By denying Paul's apostleship, the holdouts are opposing Christ.
 - OT examples of Yahweh dealing with those who opposed Him
 - Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because he had taken a Cushite wife. Miriam was struck with leprosy. (Num 12)
 - Levites Korah, Dathan, Abirah rebelled against Moses. The ground opened up and swallowed them and their families. (Num 16)
 - Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before Yahweh. Fire came out and consumed them. (Lev 10)
 - Jerusalem destroyed and the nation exiled to Babylon (2 Ch 36:15-21)

- v4 Example of Christ
 - For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God.
 - When Christ was on the earth He became weak to the point of death. But now by the power of God He is exalted to the highest place (Ph 2:8-11)
 - For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God toward you.
 - Likewise Paul is now weak in the gentleness and forbearance of Christ (10:1) but through him the power of God will be manifested toward the Corinthians.
 - The Corinthians were seeing true power as the strong lording it over the weak (Mt 20:25). But the power of Christ is perfected in weakness (12:9). In this world, Christians experience weakness so that God's power can be displayed in them.

Plea 13:5-6

2 Corinthians 13:5–6 (LSB)

5Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

6But I hope that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test.

- v5 Turning the tables
 - Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith.
 - The Corinthians have been testing Paul to see if he is truly an apostle of Christ. Now he challenges them to test themselves to see if they are in the faith.
 - The faith. The entire gospel.
 - Decision
 - Understanding
 - Actions
 - Or do you not recognize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you
 - Appeal to conscience. Rhetorical question expecting “yes”
 - If they recognize that Christ is in them
 - They are a sanctuary of the HS and must be holy. (6:19)
 - If not they will be disciplined. (13:3)
 - unless indeed you fail the test
 - First time Paul has mentioned false profession.
 - False professors’ minds are veiled; they cannot see the light of the gospel (4:3-4).
 - Paul will not spare them. When confronted they will respond with ungodly sorrow (7:10) and either leave (1 Jn 2:19) or be put out (Mt 18:17).
- v6 Paul’s integrity
 - But I hope you will realize.
 - They had partial understanding (1:14). Pleading for complete understanding before he comes.
 - If they understand completely they will repent of their immorality, reject the false teachers, and boast in Paul.
 - that we ourselves do not fail the test.
 - we ourselves. Emphatic.
 - do not fail the test. Is commissioned as an apostle (1:1). Speaks and acts in integrity before God (2:17).

Prayer 13:7-10

2 Corinthians 13:7–10 (LSB)

7Now we pray to God that you do no wrong, not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved.

8For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.

9For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong. This we also pray for, that you be restored.

10For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I need not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

- v7-9 Prayer
 - Now we pray to God.
 - Seeking His grace to be manifested in the Corinthians.
 - Two prayers
 - v7 do right
 - v9 be restored
 - that you do no wrong... that you may do what is right
 - Repent (7:9-11)
 - Stop sinning (12:20-21)
 - Boast in Paul (1:14; 12:11)
 - Reject the opponents (11:3-4)
 - not that we ourselves may appear approved
 - According to the standards of the culture
 - Paul's judge is God. He knows that he is approved (2:17; 12:19). He does not care about his reputation with men.
 - even though we may appear unapproved
 - To his opponents and the unrepentant.
 - If the Corinthians do right then Paul will not need to use severity.
 - For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.
 - The truth. The gospel
 - Paul is the commissioned apostle representing Christ to the Gentiles (1:1). He ministers in the sight of God (2:17) and in the knowledge of coming judgment (5:10).
 - If the Corinthians show that they understand the truth by doing what is right then Paul will continue in the gentleness and forbearance of Christ (10:1). He can only use severity against the unrepentant.
 - For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong.
 - If the Corinthians are strong (doing right) then Paul is glad to be weak (12:9).
 - Strong Corinthians are Paul's boast (1:14) and his letter of commendation (3:3).

- This we also pray for, that you be restored.
 - be restored. Lit “you the completion”. Made complete.
 - Paul’s mission: Col 1:28-29 Him we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose I also labor, striving according to His working, which He works in me in power.
 - Proclaiming, admonishing, teaching
 - To present every man complete in Christ.
 - Striving according to Christ’s working in power.
 - He prays for them even though they abandoned him.
- v10 Motive
 - For this reason. That they be restored (v9b)
 - I am writing these things. The entire epistle
 - so that when present I need not use severity.
 - Pleading with the holdouts.
 - If they repent then he will not come with severity.
 - in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me
 - Paul is an apostle of Christ by the will of God (1:1).
 - He has the authority and power to be severe.
 - for building up and not for tearing down.
 - As v8 Paul’s authority is for building up. But this includes discipline.

Ending 13:11-14

2 Corinthians 13:11–14 (LSB)

11Finally, brothers, rejoice, be restored, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

12Greet one another with a holy kiss.

13All the saints greet you.

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

- Finally, brothers. To the whole church. Warning done. Reminding them of their common faith.
- rejoice, be restored, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace
 - Paul's desire for them
 - be restored. Made complete (13:9). Correct the evils among you before I arrive.
 - be comforted. Abounds in Christ (1:5). Encouraged to continue after they repent.
 - be like-minded. Lit "have the same view". As Ph 2:2 thinking the same way, no selfish ambition, have the mind of Christ.
 - live in peace. Not strife, jealousy, disturbances (12:20)
- and the God of love and peace will be with you
 - Not the God of mighty discipline (13:3)
- They obey, God empowers. As Ph 2:12-13 ...work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.
- Greet one another with a holy kiss. Customary greeting. Holy.
- All the saints greet you. In Macedonia where Paul is writing.
- The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
 - grace. Enables the others.
 - Lord Jesus Christ. Divine/human/messiah
 - love of God. Poured out in kindness towards them
 - fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Enabling the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3)
 - be with you all. All will be necessary to achieve Paul's desire for them.

Was Paul successful? Likely

- His last visit lasted three months (Acts 20:2-3). During that time he wrote Romans. No hint of present difficulties.
- After he delivered the collection to Jerusalem He planned to go to Rome and from there to Spain (Ro 15:24-25). He would not have done this if the church at Corinth was in disarray.
- The Corinthians were pleased to contribute to the collection for Jerusalem (Ro 15:26-27)
- The epistle of 2 Corinthians was preserved (likely at Corinth).

Application: Learning to please

2 Cor 1:14...just as you also partially did understand us

- The Corinthians had only a partial understanding of the gospel.

Eph 5:8, 10 walk as children of light...trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

- We also need to learn what is pleasing to our Lord.

References

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