

Bible Thoughts

with
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on

2 Corinthians

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Introduction

WRITER. The Apostle Paul

Reason. We see a very human Paul in this letter, he refers to problems he has found in his ministry, disappointments as well joys.

Paul felt he has a special connection with the Corinth church, he had originally been involved in the founding of the church and had ministered there for a year and half [Acts 18:1-18](#). After his departure serious problems had appeared in the church and Paul sent Timothy to deal with them [1 Cor 4:17](#)

The problems grew worse so Paul had to make a personal visit to deal with the 'trouble makers.' This was not successful and so he wrote a serious letter which was delivered by Titus.

Paul and Titus meet at Macedonia, Titus has encouraging news for Paul. But there were still problems and Paul felt that he had to respond quickly to these problems so 2 Corinthians is written.

Paul felt that he had 3 areas to deal with:

- 1) To present the Gospel more clearly to the church.
- 2) To encourage their contribution to the ministry.
- 3) To destroy any opposition that there was to his apostolic ministry and his authority, because there were attacks by others who were trying to free the Corinthian church from the authority of Paul.

This letter contains a large amount of personal information about Paul, his faith, his feeling in persecution, dangers and disappointments.

The letter often refers to people, pretend apostles' who were trying to change the church to their advantage, they are unknown to us but obviously well known to the Corinth Church.

Date and Place of writing: This was written during Paul's third missionary journey (A.D. 57) while he was in Macedonia, probably some 12 months after 1 Corinthians.

The letter is broken up as follows:

Paul's recent work and experiences - 2 Corinthians 1:1 - 2:17

Paul's Ministry - 2 Corinthians 3:1 - 7:16

The love Gift for the Jerusalem Christians - 2 Corinthians 8:1 - 9:15

Paul's Authority - 2 Corinthians 10:1 - 13:14

Chapter 1

Key words used in this letter are *comfort* or *encouragement*, the verb is used 18 times and the noun 11 times. Despite having many problems Paul is able to write a letter of encouragement, his secret is that he has put all in the hands of God.

v1 Greetings. Paul used the title "Apostle" to emphasis his commission. The greetings included Timothy and the saints in all of Achaia.

v2 *Grace* given by God results in *peace*.

v3 What God is to you, The father of our Lord, the source of mercy and comfort. We should praise Him. ",Blessed be God." (present blessing) [Eph 1:3](#) (past blessing); [1 Peter 1:3](#) (future blessing)

What ever God the Father did for Jesus while He was on earth are now available for us today, for we are citizens of His kingdom [Col 1:13](#).

v4 In the next few verses Paul gives a list of what God does for us:- "comforts us," in our trials, Paul used a word which indicated the trials surrounded us and we had to look up to God for help. "Comfort" does not mean a hand on the shoulder in sympathy, it means a source of strength to face the trials. Because of this we are able to help others.

v5-8 Paul used a different word, "suffering," the same word was used for the "suffering of Christ" 1 Peter 5:1 Christ had to suffer physically because of His human nature, just like us He felt pain, but He also suffered because of who He was, and as His followers we must also suffer, especially if we want to serve Him.

We must realize that troubles are not just an accident, for the followers of Christ they come by the will of God for our "consolation" (someone that is a comfort in a time of suffering) and "salvation." For God to be in charge of all that happens is a wonderful situation because we can just let Him, in faith, control all the situations.

Paul appears to have gone through a real time of trials and suffering in Asia v8. It was so bad that they thought he was about to die. We are not told what this problem was, [Acts 19:21ff](#) might be to what he was referring. It could have been illness or a severe Satan attack, what ever it was God was in control. [1 Cor 10:13](#); [1 Peter 1:6-7](#).

v9-12 We are weak, we are really not able to look after ourselves, Paul realized that he could only trust God in all things, with all the experience he had had of God at work he knew that he was in good hands. But even with Paul's faith and experience of God he was still put through this time of trial, because God wanted it, and for Paul to trust Him in everything. God often waits until it may be physically impossible for a promise to be fulfilled. God's promise to Abraham. [Rom 4:16-22](#)

We must remember that because God is in control one trial may not end but we move onto another trial instead, just look at the different things which happened to the disciples in the early church.

v11 As Christians heard of Paul's experiences they were able to praise and thank God for His care, to give God the glory should be our aim.

"praying together for us." Paul often encourage prayer support for his ministry. [Rom 15:30-32](#); [Eph 6:18-19](#); [Phil 1:19](#).

v12-24 Paul talks of his "conscience," this is part of our personality, a person of good

conscience can usually be trusted. Unfortunately the Corinthian church felt that Paul had deceived them, he had promised to stay with them [1 Cor 16:1-8](#) but Paul had been forced to change his plans. The church were accusing Paul of "fleshly wisdom," v12, mis-using God's will v17, doing things for himself. Paul points out that he is subject to God's leading in all he does, after all in his original plan he had added "if the Lord permits" [1 Cor 16:7](#); Worth noting [James 4:13-15](#). Paul felt that his behaviour would be presented before the Judgement Seat, "the day of the Lord" v14 with joy and rejoicing by all.

v15-18 Paul felt that he was serious about seeking God's will, he had plans to visit them on the way to and from Macedonia. When we preach Christ to you did he not always say "yes" or "no" and meant it. When God says "yes" then we also will say "yes," this is what we have always preached.

By the Spirit of God he has stamped us with His promise, I did not visit you in Corinth because I wanted to spare you pain, we are not in charge of your lives, we are partners together, in joy I know that you are strong in your faith.

v19-20 Paul and his friends had preach Christ to them, how could God reveal the truth through false preaching. There is no "maybe" about Jesus or the promises of God, for all the promises of God have been made to be fulfilled through His Son Jesus. All the promises were revealed through Jesus, and this allows us to claim these promises.

v21,22 All Christians have been anointed by the Spirit and as we yield to the Spirit He will give us the power to serve God and live in a way which is pleasing to the Father. All Christians are also sealed by the Holy Spirit so that we are the property of Jesus and so He will protect us.

v23-24 The power of the Spirit helps us serve others, not trying to tell others what to do, but as servants. This was the opposite to those who were the false teachers [2 Cor 11](#)

Live to please God in all things.

Chapter 2

Paul seems to be having problems with one member of the church, it may have had something to do with Paul's promised visits which had been delayed. [2 Cor 1:12-18](#) Or it may have been the man Paul referred to in [1 Cor 5](#). Paul had dealt with this problem by a quick visit [2 Cor 12:14ff](#); [2 Cor 13:1ff](#). This has created a slight problem as we only have a record of one visit to Corinth by Paul [Acts 18:1-18](#).

There was another possible problem, someone was challenging Paul's apostolic authority. No details are given to what Paul is referring.

v1-4 Paul does not think of his own feelings, he is so sad about the problem, he wants them to be full of joy but knows that his words will probably cause hurt for someone. Sometimes it is necessary to hurt someone you love to prevent them harming themselves. A baby playing with a sharp knife will cry when it is taken away for their protection.

v5-6 "If any one" Paul states that the offence was against the whole church not just against him. Paul does not mention the name of the person causing his sadness, it also looks as if he was causing the church to split. If it was the person from [1 Cor 5](#) Paul

had told the church to discipline the man, and this had been done, with the man repenting so it looks like another person.

v9 Paul seems to have sent a short sharp letter, a copy of which we do not have, to the man, this had brought repentance by the man and Paul tells the Corinthian church that he has forgiven that man.

v9 Also shows that Paul was checking if the church would accept his authority on the matter.

v7-11 When he eventually met up with Titus, Paul was told that the church had disciplined the man.

Paul now asks the church members to forgive the man, he gives four reasons why they should do this:-

1) For the man's own sake, v7 "be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.". He must not be allowed to drift away from the church and the Lord. [Gal 6:1](#)

2) They should show their love for him, v8.

3) For the sake of the church, do not let Satan win. v11.

4) Finally for the sake of the Lord, v9-10.

The church must be united in Christ.

Paul's Plan's full of problems. v12-17

This appears to be referring to his ministry after the Ephesus riots [Acts 19ff](#) v12-13 God has given Paul an 'open door' in Troas for the ministry but his other arrangements had fallen apart, he had arranged to meet Titus, who he had sent to Corinth to sort out the problems.

v14 Paul now breaks off his report to give praise to God as he remembers the good news brought by Titus.

v15-16 Paul, who was once out to destroy the church is being led by his Lord in spreading a 'sweet smell' of salvation, but it also was a smell of death to those who rejected it.

v16-17 "Who is sufficient for the task?" Paul asks. Who is prepared to take on the responsibility and terrible consequences for the hearers. Paul emphasised that he gave the full message, commission by God, not as those who were corrupting the Word of God, for their own gain.

Chapter 3

Ministries Old and New

The world is full of genuine (true) material and fake material, stories, books, paintings all come as genuine or counterfeit (copies). As fast as the message of salvation through the Grace of God was spread a counterfeit "gospel" appeared which mixed the Law with grace, it was spread by a group who were called "the Judaizers." Paul often refers to them in 2 Corinthians.

Their basic teaching was that salvation was believing and faith in Christ plus the keeping of the Law. [Acts 15:1ff](#). The believer had to keep the Law of Moses to be made perfect. Because people like to "work" for their salvation, it is human nature enjoys it, this teaching was very popular, people just could not accept that salvation was a gift from God and let the Holy Spirit to work and do the perfecting.

Paul considered these people as false teachers who were "selling" the Word of God for their own benefit like a shop owner. [2 Cor 2:17](#)

In this chapter Paul shows the wonderful glory of the Gospel through the Grace of God, He compares the Old Covenant, the Law, and the New Covenant, Grace.

v1-3 It appears that the Judaizers told everyone that they had "letters of recommendation" from Jerusalem. A common practice in those times, other examples [Acts 9:1-2](#); [Acts 18:24-28](#). They were saying that Paul did not have such. Paul responds by saying that he did not need them in Corinth, as some do, as the Corinthians are the testimony to Paul's work, for their complete change of life. [1 Cor 6:9-11](#). Anyone can read the Law, but this experience on its own does not change a person, it needs a change in the heart, an internal power to change them. The Judaizers, or now we call them "legalists," can tell you what to do and not do, but you do not have the power to obey. The ministry of grace changes the heart, the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God and puts it in the heart of a believer.

A legalist can boast because he can "measure" by external standards, number in church etc. Only the Lord knows the hearts of His people, the changed lives.

v4,5 The changed lives at Corinth show Paul's confidence in his appointment by God but he does not claim any credit, it is the Grace of God. Man can either accept or reject God's offer, a person has to realize that they are sinners, there is nothing they can do to change it.

v6 Paul refers to the Law as 'the letter' and the Spirit as the New Covenant of Grace. The New Covenant requires ministers enabled by God [1 Tim 1:12](#). The Law is impossible to fulfil, one wrong doing is enough to fail, death must follow, but the New Covenant through Christ gives the power of life.

v7-11 The giving of the Law was glorious, it even affected the appearance of Moses, but that did not last. Paul does not deny the glory of the Law, it was our teacher, [Gal 3:24](#) it points to the tabernacle and temple services, but it could only give death, but the Covenant of Grace is even more glorious, it makes us right with God, it gives life. Paul make 3 contrasts, 1) the Letter(or Law) and Spirit(or Grace), 2) condemned and justified v9: 3) passing and permanent v11. The Law of Moses is a religion with a glorious past, but the glory has gone today, the light has gone, all that remains are past shadows. [Col 2:15-17](#)

Other references on the same subject [Rom 7:6-25](#); [Rom 5:20,21](#); [Gal 3:19](#); [Gal 2:16](#); [Gal 4:1-7](#); [Gal 5:1-6](#); [Acts 15:10,11](#) .

v12,13 Paul is full of hope, he can be very bold for his gospel, it will not pass away. Neither has he anything to hide, unlike Moses who had to put a veil over his face so that the people would not see the glory fade, the people might think that the Law that Moses was introducing would also fade.

v14 Israel had rejected their Christ because there was a spiritual veil still in front of their minds. They were reading the Old Testament scriptures but could not see the truth, blind to the message from God.

v15,16 Paul wrote "even unto this day," this still holds true today. Paul was seeing many Gentiles turn to God, but still the Jews were rejecting Christ. [Rom 11:7,8](#) Until they turn to Christ they just cannot see God's plan in the Old Testament, the Spirit reveals it to them and the veil is lifted.

v17 "Now the Lord is that Spirit;" a bold statement that the Holy Spirit is God. Where the Spirit works the person is shown liberty of life in Christ.

v18 "But we all " have the ability to and privilege to commune with God through His Son Jesus, we can enter into the holy of holies [Heb 10:19-20](#).

The "mirror" is the Word of God [James 1:22-25](#) as we look into the Word we see His Son, The Spirit of God changes us into the image of His Son, but we need to make sure that there is no veil between us and the Word.

In the original text the word translated "change" is translated "transfiguration" in [Matt 17:2](#), a change which comes from the inside like an insect goes via a larva metamorphosis (change) into an adult, like a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. Law brings us to Christ but grace make the change. [Gal 3:24](#)

Chapter 4

We have a glorious ministry

Paul continues his thoughts from chapter 3. v1-2 We have a glorious ministry, a ministry which brings life and salvation, far better to that of Moses, this ministry is by the mercy of God, a gift not because of anything we had done. [1 Tim 1:12-17](#)

The way each one of us looks at a tasks God has given us will affect the way we carry it out. If the task is a burden to you then you will only do what is required of you, you may even feel it was a punishment from God. When Paul considered his service for Christ a wonderful experience, he was overtaken by the mercy and grace of God.

This attitude kept him from being dishonest, he was referring to the Judaizers who were changing the Word of God but he was only giving the truth, the witness of our own conscience will prove it. Paul does not try to hide anything of the truth by distorting the Word of God, the Judaizers often ignored verses or passages which do not tie in with their beliefs.

v3,4 Paul was a faithful preacher so why were people not accepting the teaching? Why were the false teachers so successful?. Because the minds of the lost are being blinded by Satan, so people found it easier to accept the false teaching than the truth. Paul has already pointed out that the Jew has a veiled heart [2 Cor 3:14-16](#) but also the Gentiles were blinded. Satan does not want the glorious light of God to shine into their hearts, sadly he is using ' religious teachers' to deceive the people.

v5,6 Although Paul has received a wonderful task he does not use this to glorify himself, nothing is done for personal advantage, he seeks only to bring Christ to the lost. At creation God made the light shine, now He is trying to ' light up the darkness' of the lost heart. [Heb 1:1-6](#)

v7-10 Paul says we are like lamps made of pottery which carry the light of Christ, these pots are easily "broken" but being so fragile shows even more the glory of God. [Acts 9:15](#). Sometimes God will allow the ' vessel's to be troubled, distressed but never destroyed.

v10-11 Paul's "dying everyday" [1 Cor 15:30ff](#) was a sharing of his Lords life as a man, that is why he changed to the title "Jesus" The task must come first, if we suffer, it is for Jesus sake, if we die to our self it allows Him to shine through. If we go through

trials it is so that Christ might be glorified.

v12 Paul shows that the Corinthian church members will benefit from what is happening to him from what he is going through.

v13-18 *Our faith is strong*

v13 "the spirit of faith" an attitude to the way we live, by faith, Paul uses Psalm 116:10 "I believed and therefore have I spoken" and says we should be the same, the true witness for God is based upon our faith in Him, a faith which we received from God's Word. [Rom 10:17](#)

What did Paul's faith cover? There is nothing to fear from what life throws at us even death.

v14 God has raised His Son, nothing is impossible to Him, Jesus has conquered death, the last enemy, there is nothing the world can do to stop death, they might delay it but it will eventually come for all of us. [1 Thess 4:13-18](#)

v15 What ever happens to us, God will be glorified, our suffering will be used by God to help others, how? by the "abundant grace," grace leads to glory.

v16-17 Paul is not saying here that the body is not important, we should always look after it because our bodies are the temple of God. The inner body is renewed every day, He gives us the strength we need for the tasks He has given us. Paul considers our problems as "light affliction (troubles)," which are only for a short time compared with the eternal, forever, glory with God. [Rom 8:18,19](#). Note that these things will only apply when we are living according to His Will, not of self, wrong doing cannot be turned into glory..

v18 The things of this world may seem very real because we can see and touch them, but they are all only "temporal," for a short time, only the things which are hidden from us now will last for eternity, by faith we are able to see the invisible. [Heb 10:16-20](#), in our heart God is working, "[Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.](#)" ([Heb 11:1](#))

What is important to you, the visible world or the invisible world of God?

Chapter 5

Paul continues his thoughts from the previous chapter, "earthen vessels" but now turns to the coming new type of body, ready for the next life. Look at Paul's earlier thoughts [1 Cor 15:35-34](#)

v1 "We know," how? It is given from a divine source, the Word of God tells us. Our "earthly house," the physical body, will be destroyed, but God has supplied a new body made by His hands ready for heaven, "A building of God,". [John 14:19](#); [Phil 1:20-25](#); [1 Thess 4:13-18](#);

v2 Those who love Jesus want to be with Him, they do not want to die physically, but believe that He will soon return for His children and so take them directly to heaven. "We groan," are praying for that time to come. God has plans for each of us, when our task is complete He will call us home to Him if it is before His Son's return.

There are three states for each of God's children, alive, living in the 'house,' dead, naked, unclothed not in the 'house,' clothed about, in a transformed body from heaven.

v4,5 Paul was hoping that he would be alive on the earth for the return of the Lord, he

did not want to go through the experience of physical death. However, [1 Thess 4:13-18](#) indicates that Paul knew that many Christians would die before the Lord returned. Death should not have any fear for those who believe, Paul calls it a *departure*, [2 Tim 4:6](#). We each have been 'sealed' by the Holy Spirit as proof of this. [2 Cor 1:21,22](#)
v6-8 We are full of confidence, God's people are found in one of two places, on earth in their 'earthly vessels,' not with the Lord, or with the Lord away from the 'body'.

v9,10 So whether we are alive on earth or have gone away from our body, dead, when the Lord returns, our aim must have always been to please him. All Christians will have to appear before the judgement seat of Christ to explain what they had done for the Lord with their life, [1 Cor 3:11-15](#); [Eph 5:9-11](#); [Heb 13:20-21](#); [Rom 14:7,8](#). This is not the sin judgement [Rev 20:11-15](#) as that has been dealt with by Jesus paying the price on the cross.

v11-21 Why Christians must do what they do?

The Judaizers had accused Paul of using the ministry for his own advantage, but it was the Judaizers who were misusing the ministry, they had turned it into a business. What is the "ministry" of the Christian? To try to convince sinners to restore their relationship with God v11. We must not put pressure on people as we do this, we can take the message but it is the Holy Spirit which does the convicting.

v11 "Terror (Fear) of the Lord."

Sadly Christians often do not have this attitude, often there is an absence of any reverence at meetings in churches. One of the main ways the world is able to see God is through the Christian, our behaviour, how we treat God's Word and matters of God could make the unbeliever not take God's Word seriously. [Rom 12:1](#) Do you have reverence and honour God with your life? [Rom 12:16-20](#). If God judges His own people, what will happen to the lost? [1 Peter 4:17-18](#). Has your life stopped a sinner finding the Lord's salvation?

v12,13 Receiving the praise of men in place of giving glorify to God. The Corinthians were glorifying the Judaizers.

V14-17 "The Love of Christ."

v14 His love for each of us on the cross, [1 John 4:19](#); [John 3:16](#); [Eph 5:25](#); [Gal 2:20](#)
"Then all were dead;" When we believed we died with Christ [Gal 2:20](#)

v15 Our death with Christ gives us life with Him. [Rom 6:4](#); [Rom 7:4](#). We should now live for Him. [1 Thess 5:9,10](#)

v16,17 We share in His new creation, we have a different life now, we worship a glorified Saviour on His throne. We should look at others as Christ sees them, 'lost sinners' not friends or enemies.

v18-21 Our Ministry

v18 *Reconciliation*, man was the enemy of God, but through the cross and the sacrifice of Christ man can now be brought back to God if he wants. A man must come through Jesus, no other way of "religion" will allow a man be "reconciled" to God.

v19 "Imputation" a word used in the banking system, meaning "put into a persons account." When Christ died on the cross all of our sins were imputed to His account.

v21 From God's position it was Christ who had committed the sins, so Christ could

take the punishment for them. The demands of God's Holy law was met on the cross.

[Rom 4:7,8](#)

v20 Because of this we are now ambassadors for Christ, we represent Christ in this world who is at war with God. [John 20:21](#). If we are not rejecting the world we are really rejecting Christ.

Chapter 6

Working together

Paul now makes three appeals in love to the Corinthian Church.

v1-10 Gratitude

v1,2 The Corinthians seemed to have forgotten what Paul had brought to them in the Gospel, he still considered them working with him but was concerned that they might be possibly subjected to some judgement by God. Paul had been God's ambassador to them [2 Cor 5:18-21](#), The Judaizers had come in afterward claiming them and now Paul was worried that some were not truly the children of God.

v3-4 There are people who will take any reason or excuse not to listen to the gospel, Paul is telling the church to make sure that their behaviour, their bad example does not give an excuse for the sinner, even if this means suffering. [Rom 14:1-23](#). Paul is saying that he has not lived a life which discredited (caused blame) the ministry.

v6,7 Paul reminds them that he had suffered trials for them, not giving up when it got hard. But he had used the tools of the Holy Spirit and had been able to survive. [Eph 6:10ff](#) v8-10 A list of what man is saying about Paul and what God is saying, "an evil report" by men, "a good report" by God. Always full of joy for Christ yet willing to become *poor* so that the Corinthian church members could become *rich* [1 Cor 1:4-9](#); [2 Cor 8:9](#).

Paul is not here seeking praise, the people were taking all his time and efforts for granted, this often happens in churches today, Paul was just reminding them how costly the ministry was to him, how much had the Judaizers suffered? none, they had just stolen the church.

Despite the treatment he had received Paul has great love for these people, tenderly he is asking for them to open their hearts to him. They were withholding their love because they had a split heart, the false teachers had stolen their hearts, they were turning back to the worlds unrighteous desires. Paul tries to show them why they should be separate from the world.

v11-18 The believers desires and nature. What we are interested in, our nature decides what we want to mix with, light does not mix with dark, or Christ with Satan. A Christian has a divine nature [2 Peter 1:3,4](#) they should not be *yoked* joined together to an unbeliever whether in work, friendship, marriage.

v16 "The temple of God," Paul is talking about the body of a Christian 1 Cor 3:16,17, how can God mix with evil and idols of Satan.

v17 "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," [Is 52:11](#) Through out the Bible God is regularly telling Israel, His people to separate themselves, but they just ignored Him and so they suffered punishment, ending up with Israel being sent to Assyrian

capture and Judah being sent to Babylon.

The religious people of Israel had taken this separation to an ultimate, the Pharisees and Sadducees at the time of Jesus had produced a false separation, Jesus warns against this [Matt 16:6,11](#); and prays for the Christian and separation in [John 17:14-17](#). The various letters to churches which we have in the New Testament also emphasis separation and purity, [Rom 12:1-2](#); [Rom 16:17-20](#); [Col 3:1,2](#); [1 Tim 6:10,11](#); [Titus 2:14](#); [1 Peter 4:3-6](#). However, we must not isolate ourselves so much that we are unable to take the message of salvation to the sinner. [Luke 7:33,34](#)

v17,18 God became our Father when we put our faith in Jesus, but to be a Father we must also be willing to obey Him and fellowship with Him. [John 14:21-23](#)

Chapter 7

v1 This chapter continues from Chapter 6, we must make ourselves clean, we can ask God for help but it is our own desires, we must chose to cleanup our own life, remove contact with anything which encourages us to sin or separates us from God's fellowship. This is not just a single event, we must be doing it continually. [Rom 13:14](#); [2 Peter 3:17,18](#)

. v2-16 Open your hearts to us

v2-4 Paul encourages the church to receive him, they had previously accepted Titus v13 now he is asking them to accept him. He has never done anything wrong to the church, not defrauded, told lies.

How can you persuade people to accept you? Paul had not condemned their actions, he had great desire to help them, even willing to die for them. He even boasted of them in other places "great is my glorying of you.", but still they were full of criticism.

v5-10 Paul was having a hard time in Macedonia but God had given him great encouragement by the report from Titus when he arrived from Corinthia, Titus was able to report how the Corinthian church had received him after reading Paul's "painful letter," they had taken Paul's words to their hearts. Paul said that he was very sad that the letter had cause them pain, but was happy that it had made them repent of their wrong. Their repentance was not just a passing regret it was a true godly sorrow for their wrong.

v11-16 Titus was full of joy for the encouragement the church had given him, they were so full of zeal, desire to please God. Paul had obviously boasted to Titus that they would correct the wrong and he was pleased to be proved right. They had handled the discipline perfectly v11. Paul had suffered a great deal because of the situation and how he had had to respond to the problem, but he was very pleased with the result, he hope it would show his love for the church and restore the fellowship.

Chapter 8

v1,2 Giving under personal pressure

Paul is using the Macedonia churches as an example, they had been under great pressure , a "great trial of affliction," possibly due to rejection by the local people who worship idols. Poor, "deep poverty," but they gave with joy, they were so full of the grace of God.

v3,4 It is possible to give a great deal of money to a ministry but do it with no enthusiasm (reluctantly), the Macedonia churches were very willing in their giving, they were actually begging to be involved v4. They were giving because they wanted to give, the grace of God opened their hearts to the need of others.

v5-9 the Macedonian Christians were giving themselves to God and others, giving in the same way Jesus willingly gave Himself for them. The Corinthian church had developed other priorities (things important) to them, spiritual gifts, 1 Cor 1:4-5 God had blessed them with many Spiritual Gifts, but they were not interested in their promise and the 'grace of giving.'

Paul reminded them that because God had been very generous with the gifts they should be even more generous in their giving. Paul was careful not to make it an order to give, he just compared the hearts of the Macedonians with the Corinthians. They should compare themselves with the way Jesus gave all He had for us.

[Rom 8:14-17](#) just how *rich* a Christian is, heirs of God.

v10-12 In v6 Titus had been told the previous year that the Corinthian church would make a collection, Paul says it is easy to make a promise but any collection must be made in a willing way, not by force, all in the will of God, a giving of the heart. [Phil 2:12,13](#) God sees what your heart wanted to give, not just what you actually gave.

v13-24 How to Give

v12,13 A person must not give more than he has, it is unwise for a Christian to go into debt to help someone else.

v14,15 At the time the Jewish church was suffering while the Gentile church was being blessed, this might be reversed in the future. God does the equalizing according to His will. In [1 Cor 16:1-3](#) Paul made suggestions on how the collection should be taken in any church. In the Old Testament the Law set a tithe, 10% of your income, but the New Testament does not mention any value, the person gives "as God has blessed a him or her." Grace giving is a matter of faith, we accept that God is in control and will supply all our needs. We must not waste or mis use what God gives, it is right to save as God guides, but centring our desires on money can destroy a Christian. [James 5:1-6:1 Tim 6:10](#).

V16-24 From v16 Paul turns to giving practical instruction on making the special collection.

v16-17 Titus had a desire to assist in the collection, no force was needed.

v18 An un-named brother, who had a good testimony was also involved, obviously known by all the churches.

v19 This brother, chosen by the churches, is doing this work to honour God.

v20-22 Paul welcomes these representatives from the churches, he wants to make sure that he cannot be blamed for any problems. He wants others to see what he and Titus were doing, not just in God's sight but also in the eyes of men.

v23-24 This collection of 'relief money' was to be a cooperative (working together) between the Gentile churches, it was to be "the proof of your love" and to "the glory of Christ."

Chapter 9

Paul continues to encourage the Corinthians church in their giving, it seemed strange that they had received so much from God yet were not prepared to share with others.

v1-5 Encouraging others.

In [Heb 10:23-25](#) we are told not to be in competition with each other, Paul had at one time used the Corinthian church to encourage the Macedonia churches, but now he is using it the opposite way, using Macedonia to challenge the Corinthians.

Paul had already sent instructions on how to make the collection, [1 Cor 16:1-4](#), The Corinthians had boasted of their giving but nothing had appeared. Paul was afraid that his boasting of the Corinthians share would mis-fire on him.

Paul wanted the collection to have been made by the time he arrived, to save the church any embarrassment, to this end he had sent Titus and some others to Corinth to encourage the giving. The church was sure to benefit from the grace of giving spiritually.

. v1 Note that Paul called it a "ministering to the saints," a service to other believers.

v6-11 You will be blessed.

Jesus made a promise in [Luke 6:38](#), this still holds true, the return that God gives may not be in money or material, but He promised more than we gave. We must remember that our grace giving is not done just to get more back, we are doing it to please and glorify God.

v6 What ever you sow you will reap, the more we put into the Lord's work the more

He will bless us. [Phil 4:19](#). Remember what God did if you feel not to give, [Rom 8:32](#)

v7 Why do you give? the reason for your giving is also very important, it must come from the heart in love.

v8-11 A farmer, when he plants the seed, has to wait many months to get the harvest, but God is able to send the return from the first giving, there can be no delay.

v9 God's righteousness is given as a ' return.'

v10 You will reap what you sow, but God is able to supply all your needs so unlike a farmer, a poor harvest this year does not mean less seed to sow the next year.

v11 God can give a blessing to a person and this will help others. As a result of this God will be glorified. You cannot out give God.

v12 Paul sees this giving as a spiritual sacrifice, just as an Old Testament priest offers a thanks sacrifice to God. Christians do not offer animals as thanks gifts but the giving of material gifts can also be a gift of thanks.

v13 Giving will glorify God, [Matt 5:16](#). "liberal distribution unto them and unto all men," Paul wants the gift to be spread between the Jewish churches to help all those in need.

v14,15 Giving helps remove any splits in the churches, The Jewish church was very different in culture to the Gentile church, it was easy to split the churches but this gift will unite the Body of Christ.

Chapter 10

Paul now challenges the leadership of the divided Corinthian church, especially those who were against his apostolic authority. Paul does not hide the fact that the Judaizers were Satanic ministers and wanted to destroy the church and God's work. [2 Cor 11:12-15](#)

Paul has to correct a lack of understanding in three areas of the Christian ministry.

v1-6 **Our war is Spiritual**

v1,2 and 10,11 Paul was being accused of being very bold when he wrote letters but not when he was in Corinth.

v3,4 This is a spiritual battle, not with physical bodies, true spiritual power comes with meekness and gentleness v1. Jesus lived a life of meekness and gentleness [Matt 11:29](#) but we do have a record that there were times when he showed anger [Matt 15:1-11](#); [Matt 23:13-33](#); [Mark 11:15-19](#); [John 2:13-21](#)

v3-6 Tells us what spiritual battle is all about. It is usual for people to look on the outward appearance of someone's behaviour, "according to the flesh," a good speech or sermon, strong leadership, or others recommendations are what many look for in a person, but these are all flesh, none show the true heart of the person. Paul's power was from God [Eph 6:10-20](#), he does not use the 'wisdom of man' v5.

The meek Jesus had far more power than Pilate at the crucifixion trial [John 19:11](#) He could have called the powers of heaven to release Him but He was obeying His Father God, He must die on the cross.

v5 Pride in a person immediately allows Satan access to the person.

v6 Paul was ready to punish the offenders once the church had realized their wrong and submitted to the Lord.

v7-11 **Authority**

Power and authority for a Christian do cause problems, in God's kingdom position and power do not always indicate authority. Jesus gave a warning to his disciples [Mark 10:35-45](#). Jesus came as a servant and looked after others. Paul is trying to get the Corinthians to have the same attitude but they were thinking that his loving and meekness was a sign of weakness.

Paul was being accused of not being a true apostle because he showed no authority. However, this meant that if Paul was not a Christian and had deceived the church then the church was not a true church with saved members.

Paul said that he has had to send "weighty and powerful" letters because that was what was needed at the time, but they were all written with love.

The Judaizers had 'letters of recommendation' for their authority, Paul's authority came from God, his commission came from God and his life was sufficient to show his authority.

v12-18 **How to measure a ministry**

It is one of man's attitude to work, measuring the result, statistics, it often causes problems as 'statistics' can be in error, only if you ask the 'right questions' will you get the 'truth.' As Christians are working for God then all the work has a miracle edge to it, how do you measure a 'miracle.' Also God's method of measurement is not the same as man, compare how the Lord saw the seven churches in [Rev 2-3](#).

v12 Measuring errors, It is very easy to measure 'outward' activities, especially if you compare "yourself" with "yourself," people often keep records of how many there at meetings, but this does not reflect the hearts of the people, only God knows that. [Eph 4:11-20](#)

v13-18 True way to measure

v13-14 Am I where God wants me? Paul was given the ministry of apostle to the Gentile, [Act 9:15](#); [Act 22:19-21](#); [Eph 3:1ff](#); [Rom 15:15-17](#). The Corinthians had also been included in the 'Gentiles.'

v13 "a measure to reach even unto you." Paul had brought the message of salvation, not the Judaizers.

We are not competing with each other, or church with church, God gave us the gifts and abilities to do the task he has given each of us, we cannot therefore judge against each other.

v15-17 Does my ministry glorify God? Paul tells us not to boast about things which are not part of the God given ministry, The Judaizers were stealing other peoples convert's. What ever work you do must be done to the Will of God and to His glory. v17 comes from Jeremiah 9:24.

The spiritual fruit we produce must always be to His glory. [John 15:1-8](#)

v18 Can my work be praised by God? How does God test the work as deserving praise? by His testing, possibly by tests of a personal faith. What ever tests come the final test will be at the judgement seat of Jesus.

Chapter 11

Paul says that he is like a spiritual father, as a "father" he could encourage them and make rules that may need punishment if broken. [1 Cor 4:14-21](#). But as a father he had great love for them.

Real love should not be jealous, but love can be jealous for those who are loved, a husband for his wife and any threats to her.

Paul paints a picture of him being a loving father who has a daughter about to be married, he feels that it is his task to keep her pure for her future husband. Paul sees the Corinth church as this bride awaiting the return of Jesus the bridegroom. [Rom 7:4](#); [Rev 19:1-9](#)

If the bride does not keep herself pure for the bridegroom she is unfaithful. [Rev 2:4](#).

The person behind the loss of purity was Satan, as he attacked Eve v3

How does Satan work?

[2 Cor 2:10,11](#), weigh down a Christian with their sins.

[2 Cor 4:4](#) Blind the minds of unbelievers.

[2 Cor 11:3](#) Beguile, charm a persons mind to do something they do not normally do.

[2 Cor 12:7](#) To attack the Christian physically.

v4 Satan has an "imitation" or "alternative" gospel [Gal 1:6-12](#), the Corinthians had welcomed this "gospel" which was a mixture of grace and law. There is only one Gospel [1 Cor 15:1ff](#)

v13-15 The preachers of this false gospel are described, claiming to be from God and that all others are false. Satan himself can make himself very attractive, v14 and he can make his ministers into very attractive people. Their plan is not to glorify God but personal gain. [2 Cor 2:17](#);

Read and consider [2 John 5-11](#)

Paul is worried for the church [2 Cor 11:16-33](#)

v28 "My heart is troubled about the churches. That is a load I carry every day.", the key thought of this section.

Paul was always happy to boast about Christ but because of the situation he talks about himself more than usual. The immature (not grown up) and unspiritual attitude of the Corinthians has made Paul to write about himself, though he first said "sorry" before he started v1, and again admitted that boasting was not the Lord v17.

v23-25 Suffering for Christ. Paul suffered all these because he was an apostle for Christ. Only one beating is recorded [Acts 16:22](#); and once stoning [Acts 14:19](#).

v25-27 Suffered due to weather etc. [Acts 27](#) only records one shipwreck, but travel in New Testament times was very hazardous and full of danger. Any travelling was hard work, often taking weeks to travel just a few miles, no wonder Paul was so tired and in pain.

v28-31 The mental and physical strain must have been great, but Paul says that his greatest load he carried was his love and care for the believers and churches, he felt very close to each person.

v32,33 Paul's final suffering was the humbling experience of being smuggled out of Damascus, a hunted man. [Acts 9:22-25](#)

He had proved his love for his Lord and the believers, it was now up to the church to prove their love for Paul.

Chapter 12

Paul is not happy to use his personal experiences to show the Corinthian church about his apostolic position, he does not want it to appear that he is showing off with what God has been doing in his life, in addition some people are sure to say that "he is exalting (praising) himself." Paul can see no other way to show proof so speaks about the events as if they are being told by another person, a third person, "I knew a man in Christ."

v1-6 Honour from God.

The Judaizers came with "letters of recommendations" 2 Cor 3:1, they were looking for honour from men, but Paul lets God do the honouring, "visions and revelations of the Lord."

On the day he was converted He saw the glorified Christ, [Acts 9:3](#); [Acts 22:6-8](#).

He had further visions from God for his call to Macedonia [Acts 16:9,10](#). Then encouragement visions for Corinth [Acts 18:8-11](#) and after the arrest Acts [23:10,11](#).

v2-4 God gave Paul a special honour by taking him up to heaven about 14 years before this letter, about 43 A.D., there is no record in Acts of this event but it must have happened between [Acts 9:30](#) and [Acts 11:25,26](#) - the *third heaven* is the same as *Paradise* where God dwells, the 1st heaven in the earth's atmosphere and the 2nd heaven is space.

v5,6 Paul has not mentioned this event before but it is interesting that Paul suffered from a *thorn in the flesh* v7. Some people may have said that the "thorn" was a punishment from God, but it was to make sure that Paul was not full of pride "I've been to heaven" v7. Yet Paul still gives God the praise.

Paul visited heaven during his life, but [Eph 2:4-8](#) tells us that as far as God is con-

cerned believers are already in heaven with Him.

v7-9 God makes sure Paul has no pride because of his time in heaven. God allows Satan to attack Paul in some way, "a thorn in his flesh." [Rom 5:1-5](#).

We are not told what this problem was but it appears to have been a physical problem which may have caused Paul pain. [Gal 6:11](#) suggests Paul may have had an eye problem.

v8 Paul asks God for the problem to be taken away three times but God gives a wonderful answer, v9 "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

v9,10 Paul feels therefore that the 'problem' is a gift from God and wants to use it to give glory to God.

God has never promised that the believers life will be perfect, if anything the exact opposite, [Matt 8:19-22](#); [Luke 9:57-62](#); [Rom 8:32ff](#). You will find that believers are suffering and appear to not be healed sometimes. [Phil 2:25-20](#); [1 Tim 5:23](#)

Help from God. God sent a message following Paul's prayers, God will provide all our needs when we need them. God had to make Paul 'weak' to give him strength. [1 Peter 5:10,11](#); [Heb 4:16](#); [2 Cor 5:1ff](#)

We learn from this passage that a physical problem does not stop a believer using their life in service for God.

v11-21 Ashamed of their actions

v11-12 Paul is very proud of the Corinthian church, boasting about them to other churches but now the Corinthians were only boasting about the Judaizer "super apostles" who were running the church. Was Paul not as good as these Judaizers? No way! he had done many signs and wonders when he was with them proving his position as an apostle [Heb 2:1-4](#) and they owed their salvation to him.

v13 Paul is a little sarcastic (uses words which mean the opposite) "*the only way I could be of poor quality was that you never gave any money to help me live while I was with you.*" the more he did for them the less they appreciated (value) him.

v14-18 Paul was about to make his third visit [2 Cor 13:1](#) instead of being pleased the church members were angry for him changing his plans. Paul treats the church as his children, but these do not care for their 'parent.' Paul had great love for this church but they did not love him.

Paul wanted to sort out the problems in the church, no matter what it cost him. But he did not want his visit to cause any burden (work load), money or work, to be put on the members life. He had also made sure that any others that he had sent earlier had not caused the church any financial or extra work as some people may have said he was using these visitors to collect finance for Paul.

. v19 Defending ourselves, Paul has been speaking as in the sight of God, he knows how his words must only build up the Body of Christ.

v20 Growth for a Christian must always include the removal of *poisons*, the problems listed in this verse were the ones that had caused Paul to write the 1 Corinthian letter, perhaps these problems were still present and hopes that the church will finally clear the problems before Paul's next visit.

v20 Paul has great pride in his converts [2 Cor 7:4](#); [2 Cor 8:24](#). Anything wrong with

the church hurt this pride, humiliating him. Paul was very sad that the people with wrong lives were still present in the church, he felt that they were spiritually dead.

Chapter 13

v1-8 I'm giving you warning

Paul gives two warnings

1) *"I will not spare"*

v1 If the church members had followed the instructions of Jesus in [Matt 18:15-20](#) most of the problems would have been solved without Paul. In dealing with a problem of sin in a church we must have all the true facts and not just stories, Paul is quoting [Deuteronomy 19:15](#), the presence of witnesses help make sure that the truth is obtained. see also [1 Tim 5:19](#)

v2 Paul's approach to the church had always been gentle and humble but now he warns the church that he "will not spare--" if necessary to solve the problems.

v3,4 Christ will make His presence felt amongst you through Paul. When on earth, in a human body, Jesus may have appeared weak, and His crucifixion an even bigger weakness, but from this weakness comes great power from God. "We shall live," live in this power of the living Christ.

2) *Examine yourself*

v5,6 Paul tells them that they have been looking and examining his life, now look at yourself, first make sure that Christ is in your heart, [Rom 8:7-16](#). Many church problems are caused by people who claim to be saved, but who have never repented and trusted Jesus as Saviour, v5 Paul calls these people 'reprobates,' which means *counterfeit, false copies* and again he refers to them in v6 and v7. It is important that a person knows for sure. [1 John 5:10-13](#) v7 Do not fail this test and become a 'reprobate,' neither 'appear to live' a very pure life. Live a life which is in and through Christ.

v8 God's truth will always win, so why work against it?

v9-14 Paul gives encouragement

v9 Paul is offering prayer for the Corinthians, 'wish' means 'prayer.' He is praying for their 'perfection.' This does not mean sinless life but maturity in a spiritual life, the Greek word used means *to fit out*

v10 This letter, written by Paul, comes with the same authority as if he were present at Corinth, Paul is hoping that it will have the same effect as him being there, he hopes that it will avoid the need for more serious discipline (punishment). Paul had the Word of God as his authority, but God's Word may need to *tear down* before 'building up' a person or church. Paul had to pull down the wrong thinking before he could build up the truth. [2 Cor 10:4-6](#)

v11-14 Final closing message from Paul.

Paul sent encouragement, *farewell* means *grace*, a common greeting to grow in grace. *Be perfect* reference v9.

Be of good comfort, is to be encouraged.

Live in Peace, an instruction really needed for this church., see [2 Cor 12:20](#)

v12 The early church used the greeting of a 'kiss of peace' to show their love for each other as the Body of Christ.

v13 All the saints, with Paul, probably unknown to those at Corinth yet one in Christ.
v14 One of the most used and loved benedictions (end of meeting) of modern churches, it shows the Trinity and what is awaiting those who believe, 'the grace of Jesus,' 2 Cor 8:9, the first stage to a Christian life. This grace brings a believer to know 'The Love of God' [John 3:16](#). The 'communion of the Holy Spirit,' [Acts 2](#) brings all the brethren to one Body in Christ.

This last verse is not really a prayer but a statement of fact, **go forward in Christ on this foundation.**