

2nd Corinthians

Auditorium Class
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DRILL QUESTIONS

(We will work on learning these by memory throughout the course.)

1. Describe Corinth's location and be able to find it on a map.
2. Describe salient features of the city of Corinth economically, politically, and religiously.
3. When was the church established at Corinth? (AD date)
4. Who established the church there?
5. Where do you read about the establishment of the church at Corinth? (book, chapter)
6. Who wrote 1st Corinthians?
7. When did he write it?
8. Where did he write it from?
9. Why did he write it?
10. Who was the messenger that carried the letter and reported as to its reception?
11. Give a brief outline of its contents.
12. Who wrote 2nd Corinthians?
13. When did he write it?
14. Where was it written?
15. Why did he write it? Give a chapter and verse that focuses on this purpose.
16. Who brought the letter to Corinth?
17. Give a three point outline of the letter.
18. What are some valuable lessons derived from its study?
19. What motivated Paul?
 - a. Love for his brethren - **2:4; 7:3; 11:2; 12:14-15,19**
 - b. The glory of his ministry – **3:14f** (see **4:1**)
 - c. His hope - **4:16f**
 - d. The certainty of judgment - **5:10f**
 - e. The love of Christ - **5:14-15**
20. From Ephesus, on his third journey, what was Paul's first itinerary? His second itinerary? Why the change?
21. What threatened the confidence of the Corinthians in Paul?
22. What had threatened the confidence of Paul in the Corinthians?
23. What particular incident served as a test case of the Corinthians obedience?
24. In chapter three, with what ministry did Paul contrast his ministry and on what basis did he claim his ministry to be more glorious? (Name several reasons.)

25. What is a key word in chapters three through six that highlights the theme of this letter?
26. In discussing his ministry, Paul said, “we have this treasure in earthen vessels,” **4:7**. Explain this imagery and why he used it.
27. Paul said, “we are ambassadors for Christ,” **6:20**. Who are the “we” and in what work were they engaged as “ambassadors”? What does that term connote?
28. When did the collection of chapters 8-9 take place? (Approximate dates)
29. Where else in the N.T. do you read of this collection?
30. Who was this collection for?
31. Besides relieving the needs of the saints, what else was being accomplished by this collection?
32. There is a difference in the tone of chapters 1-9 and chapters 10-13. Why?
33. What two figures of speech are employed freely in chapters ten through thirteen?
34. Based on chapters ten through thirteen, on what grounds did Paul’s detractors attempt to discredit him?

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS

1. Suggestion: Start your own notebook on 2nd Corinthians. Make notes as you read, study, and participate in class, and preserve them along with your class material for future reference.
2. Review introductory notes on 1st Corinthians.
3. Read 2nd Corinthians.

It would be advantageous if you read it more than once (Once each day the week before the first class would be great!). Suggestion: read it the first time in a free translation like the *Today's English Version*, *Living Bible*, or the *New International Version*. Then read it in a conservative version like the *New American Standard*, *English Standard Version*, *American Standard*, *New King James*, or the *King James Version*.
4. As you read, note the personal nature of the letter—Paul “opens his heart” so to speak. See **6:11-13**. Note the three major divisions (see outline below). The middle section focuses on one special issue, and the first and last section differ in tone—explanation, appeal, commendation versus stinging vindication.
5. Make notes of any features that particularly struck you or questions you wish to resolve as you study.
6. Where was the letter written from? **2:12-13; 7:5; 8:1; 9:3-5; Acts 20:1-3**.
7. The letter was probably written in the summer or fall of 57 A.D. Read **1 Cor. 16:8; Acts 19:22-23...20:1; 1 Cor. 16:5-6; Acts 20:2-3**. Note the correlation between the verses in Corinthians and those in Acts.
8. The letter was written as a defense of Paul’s ministry (see outline). He wanted to (1) commend them for their reception of his 1st letter, (2) urge them to complete the collection, and (3) defend himself against the charges being made against him. He anticipates coming to Corinth soon (**9:4, 12:14, 13:1-2**). If the letter can prevent further inroads by the false teachers and accomplish further repentance among those who need to, he will not have to be as severe as he might would upon his arrival (**3:1; 5:12; 6:14ff; 10:2,8-11; 12:19-13:3,10**).
9. The letter was likely delivered by Titus. He took the first letter (**7:4ff**), and he agreed and desired to go again (**8:16-17,23**). Moreover, he is called Paul’s “fellow-worker among you” or “for you” (**8:23**, text and ftnt).

OUTLINE

2nd Corinthians is Paul’s letter in defense of his ministry . . . (12:19)

- **Chapters 1-7: By explaining his motives, defending his office, and commending their obedience**
- **Chapters 8-9: In the collection for the saints**
- **Chapters 10-13: Against his malicious accusers**

1:1-2 - Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. NASB

Who is the letter *from*?

Who is the letter *to*?

1:3-11 – God Comforts Us to Comfort You

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; 4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. 6 But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; 7 and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are *sharers* of our comfort. 8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; 9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; 10 who delivered us from so great a *peril of* death, and will deliver *us*, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, 11 you also joining in helping us through your prayers, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed upon us through *the prayers of* many. NASB

Mark the “we”/”us”/”our” pronouns.

Mark the “comfort” family of words.

Underline or circle the words that indicate *purpose*, e.g. “so that,” “it is for...,” “in order that.”

Why did Paul say God comforted “us”?

Mark the “affliction”/”sufferings” family of words.

Read Acts 19 for the background of “the affliction which came to us in Asia.”

What does Paul refer to in this section that served to comfort him in the midst of suffering?

What does he refer to in 7:47 that also served to comfort him?

What did being “burdened excessively, beyond our strength” to the point that they “had the sentence of death within ourselves” lead them to do?

Ultimately, how was God glorified?

Lessons

Effect of our conduct on others

- Paul on the Corinthians
- Corinthians on Paul

Value of suffering

- Enables to comfort with the comfort with which we are comforted
- Trust in God
- Thanks to God

God works through people

1:12-22 - We Did Not Mislead You

12 For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you. 13 For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end; 14 just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus. 15 And in this confidence I intended at first to come to you, that you might twice receive a blessing; 16 that is, to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you to be helped on my journey to Judea. 17 Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or that which I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yes, yes and no, no *at the same time*? 18 But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. 19 For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us--by me and Silvanus and Timothy--was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. 20 For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, 22 who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge. NASB

Paul had spoken very confidently about the Corinthians love and concern for him, v. 11. What gave him such confidence, v. 12?

List, or trace on a map, Paul's first planned itinerary alluded to in this section compared with his actual journey, Ac. 20:1-2; 2 Co. 2:12-13.

Why did Paul change his plans?

What did his accusers charge him of because he changed his itinerary?

Why was Paul so concerned about such charges?
(Before you answer this question, mark the pronouns in vv. 17-22, and to whom the "I, me, my, us, our, we" pronouns refer to.)

Note that Paul begins to defend his ministry in this section. This is the theme of this letter – see the outline. [OUTLINE](#)

Lessons

- Our conduct affects our relationship with others
- Judge people on the basis of facts, not rumors, esp. from their detractors
- Beware of impugning motives
- God's promises in Christ Jesus, delivered by the apostles and prophets of the New Covenant, are true and reliable

1:23-2:13 - Why We Wrote 1st Cor. Instead of Coming to You

23 But I call God as witness to my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. 24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm. 1 But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again. 2 For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful? 3 And this is the very thing I wrote you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy would be *the joy* of you all. 4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you. 5 But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree--in order not to say too much--to all of you. 6 Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was *inflicted by* the majority, 7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort *him*, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love for him. 9 For to this end also I wrote that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. 10 But whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it* for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11 in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes. 12 Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, 13 I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia. NASB

Remember the theme of this letter (see outline [OUTLINE](#)). 1:23-24 introduces this section and ties it to the theme.

Using the same color, continue to mark the family of pronouns in this section that you did in the last section.

Why did he say he wrote the first Corinthian letter? See 1:23, 2:2,3,4,9, and 7:12.

What is the background of 2:1-11? Compare 1 Cor. 4:14-5:13, 2 Cor. 7:5-12.

Mark the "sorrow" family of words. Include "affliction and anguish of heart."

Did the church unanimously participate in the punishment?

Was the action taken successful?

Was the action taken pleasant?

What is the danger growing out of this action?

Compare carefully 2:12-13 with Acts 20:1-2. What event is recorded in Corinthians that Luke does not record in Acts? This gives background for Acts 20:6-7.

Lessons

- Good and honorable motives may be misunderstood and misconstrued
- Sometimes the action needed is painful and sorrowful
- Sorrow can be beneficial, but can also be overwhelming
- Satan will attempt to use even good things to accomplish his evil schemes
- Acts is the background to the epistles

2:14-3:18 – God Made Us Adequate Ministers to You of the Glorious New Covenant of Life

2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. 15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? 17 For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? 2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. 4 And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 who also made us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 7 But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading *as* it was, 8 how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. 10 For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory on account of the glory that surpasses *it*. 11 For if that which fades away *was* with glory, much more that which remains *is* in glory.

Use different colors for each marking. Consider the entire section, 2:14-3:18, when marking.

Mark the “adequate” family of words.

- What is the question? 2:16
- Summarize the answer. 3:5-6

Mark the “ministry” family of words. Include “servants.”

- What did Paul say he was a servant of? (3:6)

Based on the situation at Corinth, explain how Paul was an aroma “to death” to some and “to life” to others. Interpret in the light of the second Corinthian letter. Compare, for example, 7:6,7,11 versus 10:5,6, 12:20-13:2. See 5:12.

Mark “old covenant” (v. 14) and the other words and phrases by which it is designated (3:6,7,9,11,13,15).

- Underline in the same color connected words and phrases that describe it, e.g. “in letters engraved on stones.” See 3:6,7,11,13.
- These markings show the correct view of the Old Covenant in contrast with the claim of Judaizing teachers.

Mark “new covenant” (3:6) and the other words and phrases by which it is designated (3:6,8,9,14,16,17,18).

- Underline in the same color the connected phrase that describes what it does (v. 6).
- Understanding the terms used synonymously with the Old and New Covenants, and the phrases that further describe them, serve to focus on how each should be viewed.
- Realizing these terms are used by metonymy for the Old and New Covenants also help to avoid some of the false concepts that are drawn from these terms.

12 Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech, 13 and *are* not as Moses, *who* used to put a veil over his face that the sons of Israel might not look intently at the end of what was fading away. 14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. 15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; 16 but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. NASB

Mark the “glory” family of words and underline in the same color the connected phrase discussing that glory, e.g., “fading as it was.”

- Two “ministries” are compared. What does he say about the glory of one versus the glory of the other?

Lessons:

- New Covenant ministered by the apostles not of their own invention, but from God
- Different appraisals of the New Covenant and its record of the apostles’ work—both then and now
- Glory of the New Covenant versus the Old, and thus of the apostles’ ministry
- Error of making “letter” mean the written word and “Spirit” mean inward, subjective illumination
- Christians live under the New Covenant, not the Old
- Rejoice and give thanks to God for the life, righteousness, and glory of the New Covenant

4:1-5:19 – Our Unrelenting, Selfless Devotion to This Ministry

4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, 2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; 8 *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death works in us, but life in you. 13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore also we speak; 14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. 15 For all things *are* for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. 16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. NASB

Continue to mark the "we/us" family of pronouns in the same color used in the last section.

Mark the "ministry" family of words in the same color you used for this marking in the last section.

- In 4:1, "this ministry" refers back to ch. 3. Based on ch. 3, what is "this ministry"?
- How does he describe this ministry in 5:18,19?

Continue to mark the "glory" family of words and note what it says about his ministry.

Mark the phrases indicating the unrelenting nature of his devotion to this ministry, e.g. "do not lose heart," 4:1. See 4:8,9,13,16; 5:6,8,11,13,15. Observe the selfless, self-sacrificing character of this devotion.

Now go back and note the reasons he alludes to for such unrelenting devotion.

- 4:1,4,6,7,10,11
- 4:16-5:4; 5:6-8,10-11
- 5:14-15

Using a colored pencil, underline the words and phrases in 4:2-7 that are synonymous with "our gospel."

Why did he say God put "this treasure" in "earthen vessels," 4:7? This sets the stage for what follows.

"Death" and "dying" occur in 4:10-12. Mark these words and then in the same color mark the words best associated with death and dying in vv. 8-9. Compare 1 Co. 15:31; Ro. 8:35,36; Php. 2:17; Mt. 10:39.

1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; 3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. 4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. 6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-- 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight-- 8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. 9 Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. 12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but *are* giving you an occasion to be proud of us, that you may have *an answer* for those who take pride in appearance, and not in heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. 16 Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him thus* no longer. 17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. NASB

How could he consider the things he suffered (such as those mentioned in 4:8-12 – see also 11:22-28) “momentary, light affliction”?

Mark the words and phrases synonymous with “the earthly tent which is our house,” 5:1. See 4:16, 5:2,4(two phrases),6,8. What is “the earthly tent which is our house”?

Note 5:12, where he gives a reason for writing this defense of his ministry.

What does “know” mean in 5:16?

Define “reconcile.”

Did the “us” of 5:18 include the Corinthians? Note that it is tied to “the ministry” of reconciliation.

Lessons:

- Unrelenting devotion to a high and noble ministry
- Maintain high standards in the presentation of God's Word
- The glory and importance of the message versus the messenger
- Dying for Jesus
- Do not get discouraged in the face of disappointment and trial
- Our sure hope that anchors the soul
- Judge others fairly, not according to rumor and unfounded insinuations
- The love of Christ as a controlling force in our lives
- The glorious gospel of reconciliation in Christ

5:20-7:3 – We Plead With You to Receive Our Ministry

5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

6:1 And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain-- 2 for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU"; behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"— 3 giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not discredited, 4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, 5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, 6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, 7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, 8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true; 9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, 10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things. 11 Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. 12 You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. 13 Now in a like exchange--I speak as to children--open wide *to us* also. 14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "THEREFORE, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

Continue to mark the "we/us" family of pronouns in the same color used in the last section.

Mark the "ministry" family of words in the same color you used for this marking in the last section.

- Why was he "giving no cause for offense in anything?"
- What did he appeal to as commending himself and his co-workers as servants (ministers) of God? (Just write down the range of verses or in some way mark them on the text on this page, e.g., with a bracket).

Mark the phrases of pleading, e.g., "we beg" 5:20, "we urge you" 6:1. See also 6:2,13,14 (negative, in contrast), 7:1,2.

- What was he pleading for them to do in 6:1-3, 7:2?
- What was he pleading for them NOT to do in 6:14f?

Verses 14f is an appeal NOT to do something. Contextually, it is in contrast with what appeal? This helps in interpreting this section.

Using two different colors, mark the contrasts in vv. 14-16.

Lessons:

- The ministers of the New Covenant are Christ' "ambassadors." To reject the ambassador—and *their authorized documents*—is to reject the one who commissioned him!

7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. **2** Make room for us *in your hearts*; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one. **3** I do not speak to condemn you; for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together. NASB

- Reconciliation to God and salvation can only be had in an open reception of *this* ministry. Beware of any thing or person that would close our heart to it!
- Do we discredit OUR ministry by our attitude and conduct?
- Are our hearts “open” or “restrained” toward our brethren? What if they have reproved us or rebuked us, like Paul did the Corinthians in his first letter? Is our attitude unjustly influenced by others, like Paul’s detractors attempted to do in Corinth?

7:4-16 – I Have Confidence in You

4 Great is my confidence in you, great is my boasting on your behalf; I am filled with comfort. I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction. 5 For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within. 6 But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more. 8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it--*for* I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while-- 9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of* God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. 12 So although I wrote to you *it was* not for the sake of the offender, nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God. 13 For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14 For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be *the* truth. 15 And his affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you. NASB

Mark the “confidence”/”boasting” phrases, e.g., “Great is my confidence in you.” See vv. 4, 14,16.

- What had occurred that made him feel so positive concerning them?

Mark the “comfort” family of words. You may want to use the same color you did for this marking as you used in ch. 1.

- What is it that brought him comfort?
- Note how this also affected Titus.

Mark the “sorrow” family of words in vv. 8-11.

- What are the two kinds of sorrow he discusses?
- What is the difference in them as to their result?
- Observe six things the right kind of sorrow produced. You may find it helpful to number them in the text.

Lessons

- Does our attitude and conduct beget confidence in others relative to our obedience?
- Does our response to godly teaching and reproof cause comfort or grief in others?
- Being “sorry” is not necessarily an indication of a right attitude.
- Even godly men of faith experience internal turmoil at times and appreciate the comfort provided by godly people.
- Causing people to be full of sorrow may be a GOOD thing.

Chs. 8-9 - The Collection for the Needy Saints

8:1 Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, **2** that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. **3** For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability *they gave* of their own accord, **4** begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, **5** and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. **6** Consequently we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well. **7** But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, *see* that you abound in this gracious work also. **8** I am not speaking *this* as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. **9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. **10** And I give *my* opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do *this*, but also to desire *to do it*. **11** But now finish doing it also; that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability. **12** For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a man* has, not according to what he does not have. **13** For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality-- **14** at this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your want, that there may be equality; **15** as it is written, "HE WHO *gathered* MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO *gathered* LITTLE HAD NO LACK." **16** But thanks be to God, who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. **17** For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. **18** And we have sent along with him the brother whose fame

Read the following. These discuss this same collection.

1 Co. 16:1-6; Rom. 15:22-32; Acts 24:17. Comparing these passages, observe:

- Same contributors
- Same recipients
- Same apostle serving to see that it is accomplished
- Same time frame

The recipients are specified seven times in these passages: three times in Romans; once in 1 Cor.; three times in 2 Cor. Who are these funds specifically for? List the verses. 2 Co. 9:13 must be interpreted in this light.

Mark the recipients the three times they occur in 2 Cor. 8-9. Underline in the same color the phrases used to refer to this ministry, e.g., "support of the saints," 8:4, "this gracious work, 8:6. See also 8:10,19,20; 9:1,12,13.

Using a different color, mark all the words used to describe the gracious attitude Paul urges and commends, e.g. "grace," v.1, "joy," "liberality," v. 2. See 8:3,4,5,7,8,9,11,12,19,24; 9:2,5,6,7,13,14.

Instructive and important lessons concerning giving can be learned from these chapters. Giving according to the will of God is a matter of:

- Grace, 8:1-4; 9:5-7
- Priorities, 8:5
- Importance, 8:7
- Honesty, 8:8
- Discipleship, 8:9
- Service, 8:13-15
- Faith, 9:8-11
- God's glory, 9:12-15

in *the things of the gospel has spread* through all the churches; 19 and not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness, 20 taking precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; 21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent, because of *his* great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, *they are* messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. 24 Therefore openly before the churches show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

9:1 For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; 2 for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, *namely*, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. 3 But I have sent the brethren, that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, that, as I was saying, you may be prepared; 4 lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to speak of you) should be put to shame by this confidence. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, that the same might be ready as a bountiful gift, and not affected by covetousness. 6 Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. 7 Let each one *do* just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; 9 as it is written, "HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ABIDES FOREVER." 10 Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed

Lessons:

- Giving is a reflection of our hearts.
- Giving can serve as proof of our claims of love and desire to serve.
- Giving serves not only to meet physical needs, but to encourage others and to glorify God.
- Churches of Christ in the New Testament engaged in benevolence to needy saints, not general benevolence to the world.
- Though all may be honest, in matters pertaining to money it is wise to take precautions that all be done in a way that is honorable in the sight of men.
- Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of gracious, self-sacrificing, loving giving.

for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; 11 you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. 12 For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. 13 Because of the proof given by this ministry they will glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, 14 while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. 15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! NASB

Chapters 10-13 – Paul’s defense focuses on his malicious, pompous accusers

10:1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ--I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent! 2 I ask that when I am present I *need* not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, 6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. 7 You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ’s, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ’s, so also are we. 8 For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame, 9 for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. 10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible." 11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons *we are* also in deed when present. 12 For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding. 13 But we will not boast beyond *our* measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; 15 not boasting beyond *our* measure, *that is*, in other men’s labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, 16 so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, *and* not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another. 17 But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD. 18 For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends. NAS95

The marking will help to:

- Show the thread of thought that runs through chapters 10-13 tying these chapters together
- See Paul’s focus in this section
- Interpret and apply consistently with the context

Mark in chapters 10-13:

- The “bold”/“boast”/“confident”/“commend” family of words (e.g. 10:1,2,7,8,12,13,15, 16,17,18; 11:10,12 ... etc.)
- In the same color underline phrases that indicate what the boasting was about (e.g. “that he is Christ’s” v. 8; “about our authority” v. 8; see 11:5; 12:11,12)
- In a different color, mark the “foolish” family of words (e.g. 11:1,16,17, 19,21, etc.) This is connected to the “bold/ boast” thread of remarks.
- In another color, mark the weak/strong family of words, i.e. words and phrases connoting weakness or power (e.g., 10:2,3,4,10; 11:5,6,,21, 29,30 ... etc.)

Reading the chapters several times will help to discover these threads of words and consequently to see more clearly Paul’s line of thinking.

Define:

- “Sarcasm”
- “Satire”
- “Irony”

Note to the side of the text or list examples of these throughout chapters 10-13.

Compare 10:1,2...6...11... 12:19-13:2...10. What was Paul’s purpose or goal in writing what he did here?

11:1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin. 3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity *of devotion* to Christ. 4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear *this* beautifully. 5 For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6 But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not *so* in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made *this* evident to you in all things. 7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? 8 I robbed other churches by taking wages *from them* to serve you; 9 and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. 11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows *I do!* 12 But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds. 16 Again I say, let no one think me foolish; but if *you do*, receive me even as foolish, so that I also may boast a little. 17 What I am saying, I am not saying as the Lord would, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting. 18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also. 19 For you, being *so* wise, tolerate the foolish gladly. 20 For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, anyone devours you, anyone takes advantage of you, anyone exalts himself, anyone hits you in the face. 21 To *my* shame I *must* say that we have been weak *by comparison*. But in whatever respect anyone *else* is bold--I speak in foolishness--I am just as bold myself. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ?--I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. 24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? 30 If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, 33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and *so* escaped his hands. NAS95

12:1 Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a man was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know how such a man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows-- 4 was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. 5 On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to *my* weaknesses. 6 For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain *from this*, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees *in* me or hears from me. 7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. 11 I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody. 12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. 13 For in what respect were you treated as inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not become a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong! 14 Here for this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for *their* parents, but parents for *their* children. 15 I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? 16 But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit. 17 *Certainly* I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I? 18 I urged Titus *to go*, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit *and walk* in the same steps? 19 All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. *Actually*, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved. 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, angry tempers, disputes, 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, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.

13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. 2 I 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*, 3 since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. 4 For 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

directed toward you. 5 Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test? 6 But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test. 7 Now 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. 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but *only* for the truth. 9 For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete. 10 For 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. 11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. 13 All the saints greet you. 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. NAS95

Lessons:

- Beware of those who put themselves on a par with the apostles and their authority!
- Do not be swayed by the superficial signs of greatness and power – dynamic speech, wealth, approval by peers, bold claims, etc.
- There are true apostles and “false apostles.” Do not be dismayed—it has always been true. Know the “signs of a true apostle” and place your faith in the gospel they preached once for all.
- There are times when sarcasm, satire, and irony are justified.
- What men may judge as “weak” and “inferior in your faith and ministry to Christ may not be weak at all, but rather a means for the power of your faith and ministry to be displayed.
- If ever anyone would be in a position to expose Paul as a fraud, these men would have been able to. They lived at the same time he did, knew his background, lived among the people where he had worked, and being Jews, had the knowledge, sources, and power of Judaism. We are seeing what they considered their strongest assault in this letter. What is interesting is what they did NOT challenge: his miracles, which were the “signs of a true apostle.” This is the acid test of true apostleship!
- Be grateful for these men who sacrificed themselves to serve as apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for God’s wisdom in choosing and using such men!