

LESSON THIRTEEN
2 CORINTHIANS 13: 1 - 14

The false teachers had accused Paul of being “bold by letters when absent, but humble and meek when present” (10:10). Evidently, they considered Paul to be bluffing when he hinted at threats of punishing the impenitent. In this chapter Paul reminds them that he is coming to them again and that those whose guilt can be established by witlessness will not be spared!! He will exercise his apostolic authority in punishing the offenders (vs. 1-2). If they wanted proof, Paul was going to give it to them. Although weak in himself, he had power given to him by Christ. Just as Christ appeared weak when crucified, He showed divine power when raised from the dead. So also, Paul in one sense is weak, and in another sense is full of power (vs. 3-4). To avoid this punishment, Paul encourages them to examine and test themselves to prove that Christ lived in them. He says “you should know this, unless you are disqualified (a reprobate) (vs. 5).

Paul trusted that they would acknowledge him as an apostle, and that he sought to do them good (vs. 6-7). Paul’s prayer for the Corinthians was that [a] They would do no evil. It wasn’t important whether Paul appeared to succeed or fail, but that they would do what is right. This power was given to him and could be exercised only for the truth. (vs. 8). [b] Paul prayed that they would be perfected, or complete, meaning restored (vs.9) [c] Paul prayed that they would understand his purpose in writing to them; he did not want to deal sharply with them, but he would because the authority was given to him to build them up, not to cast them down (vs. 10).

Paul then concludes this wonderful letter by encouraging them to become complete, to be of good comfort, and to live in peace. If they did this, then God will be with them. What a tremendous encouragement for us. Amen.

KEY PHRASES:

1. “Every word will be established” - Either the charges against Paul will be cleared, or the charges against the false teachers will be proved by at least two or three witnesses. Most likely Paul means the latter.
2. “We are also weak in Him, but shall live with Him by the power of God...” - Just as Christ appeared weak when crucified, Paul will not put aside his weaknesses of his patience, and forbearance and will exercise his power and authority toward them.
3. “Christ is in you...” - (vs. 5) - Despite their sins (of some) Christ was still with the Corinthian church, unless the entire church had become disqualified.
4. “In the faith...” (vs. 5) - Not referring to that faith prompts one to become a Christian, but the faith of a Christian.
5. “No that we should appear approved...” - What Paul wanted was that everyone would repent. If this were to happen, Paul’s honor would not be dramatically demonstrated, but he would come to them once again as his kind, patient, tolerant self.
6. “...but for the truth” - Paul would only exercise his authority (miraculous power) for the truth. Miracles were not to impress, they were to heal, they were to be used for the purpose of confirming the truth.
7. “Complete” - perfection, restored.

APPLICATION:

1. No accusation against anyone should be accepted based on the word of only one person.
2. We need to constantly examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith.
3. Church discipline should never be looked forward to, but at the same time it can not be ignored.
4. Properly exercised church discipline builds the body up.

QUESTIONS:

1. In verse 11 when Paul says “be of one mind” does he say we should all agree on everything? What does he mean?
2. Does Paul believe in a three person God Head? What verse shows how Paul believes?
3. What does Paul mean in verse 7 when he says, “though we may seem disqualified”?
4. When Paul tells the Corinthians to examine themselves to see if they are “in the faith”, what does he mean?