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# 2 Corinthians

**O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.**  
2 Corinthians 6:11

In what is the most personal appeal in his letters, Paul directly and openly calls out to the Corinthians. In only two other letters does he directly name his recipients - Galatians 3:1 and Philippians 4:15. But this address to the Corinthians is most personal in nature. The term "we have spoke openly to you" is literally "our mouth is opened to you." It is a way of saying that a free and full use of language has been imparted to them, holding nothing back.

It is his way of saying that everything said thus far has been candid and unreserved, culminating in the words of the previous verses which showed everything that the apostles had gone through for the sake of their hearers, which included those in Corinth. From there he said, "our heart is wide open." More literally, "our heart has been expanded." The Pulpit Commentary helps to explain this -

"After writing the foregoing majestic appeal, he felt that he had disburdened his heart, and as it were made room in it to receive the Corinthians unreservedly, in spite of all the wrongs which some of them had done him."

The use of the words "mouth" and "heart" in the same thought is not unique to this verse. It is also used by Jesus in Matthew 12 in a negative sense -

"Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Matthew 12:34

Also, Paul uses it concerning the process of salvation in Romans 10 -

"...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:9, 10

Life application: Sometimes it is good to clear out our thoughts to others before we can tell them how much they mean to us. Paul tenderly corrected his hearers on points of contention, but he then moved to his words of love and tender affection for them. If we follow this pattern, we can get such difficulties behind us and move on with the freedom of hearts which are no longer burdened.

**You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your *own* affections.**

2 Corinthians 6:12

Paul just exclaimed in the preceding verse that the hearts of the apostles were wide open to those in Corinth. In contrast to this, he says, "You are not restricted by us." The sense of this is that though their hearts were wide, allowing room enough for loving the entire congregation, there was a restricting of the hearts of the Corinthians which wasn't allowing for the same affections towards them.

Instead he says, "...but you are restricted by your *own* affections." In this, he means that they were the cause of their own closing of heart towards the apostles. It had nothing to do with the apostles at all, but was a chronic problem with their own congregation. Through their own errors and misapplications of what Paul and the others had instructed them, they had gotten off the proper path of doctrine. This caused a conflict to arise between the two parties and had

thus caused them to withhold their affections from being as broad as they should be.

For the word "affections," Paul uses the Greek word *splagchnon*. In years past, some older translations, such as the KJV, use the unfortunate word "bowels" to translate it. This is a regrettable and actually meaningless way of translating the Greek. Albert Barnes explains the proper rendering of this word -

"The word used here (σπλάγχνα *splangchna*) commonly means in the Bible the tender affections. The Greek word properly denotes the upper viscera; the heart, the lungs, the liver. It is applied by Greek writers to denote those parts of victims which were eaten during or after the sacrifice - Robinson (Lexicon). Hence, it is applied to the heart, as the seat of the emotions and passions; and especially the gentler emotions, the tender affections, compassion, pity, love, etc. Our word "bowels" is applied usually to the lower viscera, and by no means expresses the idea of the word which is used in Greek."

It is always good to remember that being captivated by one translation will inevitably lead to bondage of thought. It is far better to put away nonsense teachings that one version is the only one which should be used and to study with diligence what the true intent of the original languages is.

Life application: Often, our hearts will become hard to other Christians because of our own faulty doctrine. When this occurs, it is always wise to evaluate ourselves and what we believe, knowing that we could be in the wrong. Paul shows the Corinthians this so that they will lovingly reach out in order to be corrected and returned to a state of true fellowship with others.

**Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.**

2 Corinthians 6:13

In the previous two verses, Paul has noted that the apostles had opened their hearts wide to the Corinthians and that they had not withheld their affections for them. On the other hand, the Corinthians had withheld theirs. Now Paul notes what would be good "in return for the same." Some translations say "for a recompense," but this leans toward implying a repayment. Rather than a repayment, Paul is simply asking for a like-return. The NIV does a good job with the thought using the words, "a fair exchange." As if in a fair exchange, he says to them "you also be open."

This is no different than any other social grace which is given out. If someone says to their neighbor "Hi Tom," all he would expect in return is a "Hi Paul!" And with each different level of openness between friends, one would expect there to be an exchange in kind for a kindness shown. And in the case of Paul and the believers in Corinth, there is an added reason for this which is implied in the words, "I speak as to children."

Paul was, as it were, a spiritual father to the congregation. In such a relationship, one would expect the children to give their parents the same kindness that the parents had given to them. If not, then the relationship would be unbalanced and would easily become an unsatisfying one.

Paul uses the same father/child metaphor with them in 1 Corinthians 4:14 and he also conveys it to those in Thessalonica in 1 Thessalonians 2:11. He considered the churches he established as his family and those in them as his own dear children. To the Galatians, he speaks in a very similar manner concerning the idea of becoming like him -

"Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I *became* like you." Galatians 4:12

Paul was a man of passion for those he shared the gospel with. He cherished them and he desired them to reciprocate with the same feelings of affection.

Life application: One-sided relationships will eventually wear out the one who is always on the giving side. Unfortunately, the giver is often unwilling to ask for a fair exchange of affection in fear of losing the relationship. But Paul shows us that it is right and proper to speak one's heart in times like this in order to find a happy balance in such matters.

**Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?**

2 Corinthians 6:14

After speaking to the Corinthians about opening wide their hearts, Paul now seems to take on a completely different line of thought which some scholars find out of place, as if something was later taken out or added. But there is no reason to assume this. His last words prior to this verse said, "Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open."

With that thought in mind, he simply shows them how to be open. He has gone from petition to instruction. The words of instruction are to "not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers." The word for "unequally yoked together" is *heterozygḗō*. It is a word only found here and nowhere else in ancient Greek. It was probably made up by Paul for this very verse.

HELPS Word Studies provides the following concerning this word -

*heterozygḗō* - (from */héteros*, "another of a *different* kind" and */zygós*, "a yoke, joining two to a single plow") – properly, *different kinds* of people *joined* together *but unevenly matched*; hence "unequally yoked" (not aptly joined). ... *heterozygḗō* ("mis-matched") is used figuratively of Christians *wrongly committed* to a partner holding *very different values (priorities)*, i.e. that run contrary to faith (the *kingdom of God*).

Adding to this, Vincent's Word Studies shows that the word "unequally" needs to be properly defined - "Unequally gives an ambiguous sense. It is not inequality, but difference in kind, as is shown by the succeeding words."

Paul's mind was certainly on Old Testament passages which contain this very idea. One from Leviticus and one from Deuteronomy give us a better sense of what he was thinking about -

"You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you." Leviticus 19:19

"You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together." Deuteronomy 22:10

In the first example, it is showing the need to keep from corruption of individual kinds. In the second, it was showing that different kinds have different strengths and are thus designed for different purposes. To join a donkey with an ox would wear out the donkey or frustrate the ox, or both.

Thinking on a human level, we can make logical comparisons to both OT references. And so, in order to direct our thoughts in what he means, he will next ask five questions which will provide insights into the precept. The first three will contain the argument he is making and the last two will support the conclusion.

Before entering into the questions, it should be noted that the word for "fellowship" is also found only here in the NT. It is *metoché*, and it means "sharing, partnership, fellowship." It represents "a close relation between partners, i.e. people sharing something held in common; joint-activity."

Paul is saying that an unequal yoking arises because of different goals and priorities based on one's world view. A Christian will have one world view and a non-Christian will have another. Therefore, for a Christian to marry, start a

business partnership, or otherwise closely associate with a non-Christian in an important way can only be considered an unequal yoking. Later Paul gives the opposite of such yoking in Philippians 4:3 -

"And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life."

In support of his argument, Paul next asks the first two of his five questions. He begins with, "For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?" The obvious answer is "none." Believers are justified by faith and have been imputed the righteousness of Christ. The sin of unbelievers remains and they stand in a state of unrighteousness before God. There can be no true fellowship in such a state.

His next question is, "And what communion has light with darkness?" This is a theme which permeates Scripture - light and darkness. The two are completely incompatible; where there is one, the other cannot exist. As Christians are "light" and the unbelieving world is "darkness," there can be no true fellowship between the two. A union of the two only causes confusion and breakdown of the intrinsic nature of one or the other.

Life application: When making important life decisions, we must always consider our position in Christ first. If it is difficult for marriages to survive even when both are agreed on their devotion to the Lord, how much more difficult will a marriage be when only one is wholly devoted to Him? The same is true with business partnerships and any other major aspect of our life where we must entrust our lives to an important goal. Let us first and foremost consider ourselves from a Christian perspective and make our alliances based on that.

**And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 2 Corinthians 6:15**

In this verse, Paul will continue with his five rhetorical questions which are based on the statement, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers." The first question here contains the argument he is making by asking, "And what accord has Christ with Belial?" The second will support the conclusion by asking, "Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?"

In the first, he uses the term "Belial" and asks what accord Christ has with Belial. The answer is obviously, "None." There can be no true accord when one in Christ is yoked to one in Belial. The word for "accord" is *sumphónésis*. It is a word unique to the New Testament and by simply speaking it one can determine that it implies "harmony." It is the noun form of a verb which is found six times in the New Testament, and it is the root of where our word "symphony" comes from. There can be no harmony between the two. Rather, there can only be discord.

This proper name, Belial (in Greek, Beliar), is not found anywhere else in Scripture. However, Belial is used in the Old Testament as a combination of two words which together mean "without profit" and thus "worthless." There are several possible reasons for the name being given as Beliar. The first is that the change from an l to an r is based on the Syriac pronunciation of the word where the "l" sounded more like an "r." Another reason is that the word is derived from Belyar, Lord of the forest. It would then be a synonym for Satan.

The second option seems more likely because the premise of the Bible is that we are either "in Christ" or we belong to the devil. There is no other position that we can be in as human beings. Either way, there can be no harmony between Christ and such a foe.

Paul's second question is, "Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?" The answer is that one has no part with the other. The word "part" indicates the division of a country or an estate. But what belongs to Christ will not be apportioned out to those who don't believe in Him. The unregenerate have their part in this world and then eternal doom. Those who have called on Christ have a heavenly inheritance. Therefore, the two have no part with one another.



Life application: Paul's questions continue to put the spotlight on our associations. He is asking us to consider our position in Christ and then to evaluate those associations based on that state. If we are to become yoked to someone who has a different set of priorities and allegiances, then there can be no true harmony with them. They will be working towards one goal while we should be working towards another.

**And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:**

**“I will dwell in them  
And walk among them.  
I will be their God,  
And they shall be My people.”**

2 Corinthians 6:16

Paul asks his fifth rhetorical question here with the words, "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols." The word for "agreement" is *sugkatathesis*, and is only used here in the New Testament. It has a kindred verb which is found in Luke 23:51 and it literally means "...a putting down or depositing along with one. Hence of voting the same way with another, and so agreeing" (Vincent's Word Studies).

Throughout the chapter, Paul has demonstrated a mastery over the Greek language with his use of special words to convey his thoughts clearly, accurately, and unambiguously. In this, his question is basically asking, "Why would you throw your lot in with idols?" In chapter 8, he will speak of conscience and how our actions towards idols, and things offered to idols, are to be handled. Now in order to avoid any misperceptions or abuses of what he said, he shows them the folly of being joined to idols. And the reason is explicitly stated, "For you are the temple of the living God."

We are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. Because of this, it would be contrary to unite with idols. It would show a divided loyalty and Jesus Himself said that a man can

only serve one master. Even the Old Testament shows us this clearly. Time and again, the true God is set in contrast to the false gods of the surrounding people. A classic example of this is found in 1 Kings 18 -

"And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." 1 Kings 18:21

This is not the first time Paul has told them that they are the temple of God. In his first letter to them, he mentioned it also -

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16

He repeated the thought in 1 Corinthians 6:19 as well. It is certain that he wanted them to know this and not forget it. Therefore, in his letters to those in Corinth, and throughout his other writings, he warns against mixing with the powers of darkness, with worldly things, and etc.

And in order to show that this was something that had been prophesied about before the coming of Christ, he returns to the Old Testament. The words he selects show that his analogy of us being the temple of God was anticipated long before and that it would apply not only to Jews, but to Gentile believers as well.

His words are a composite of various verses from the Old Testament and convey the idea without being exact quotes. Three of the passages that were surely on his mind were Exodus 29:45, Leviticus 26:12, and Ezekiel 37:27. These are speaking to Israel about the Jewish nation. However, the book of Hosea shows that Gentiles being "My people" also applies. He deals with that concept more fully in Romans 9, citing Hosea at that time.

Life application: Because of Jesus, God has come to live within the people of the world. His Holy Spirit indwells us and has sealed us for the day of redemption. As this is true, why would we again join ourselves to forms of wickedness which are prohibited in Scripture? Paul's five questions beg us to think on who we are as the redeemed of the Lord and to act in a manner appropriate to that state.

**Therefore**

**“Come out from among them  
And be separate, says the Lord.  
Do not touch what is unclean,  
And I will receive you.”**

2 Corinthians 6:17

Again in this verse Paul uses a composite quoting of Scripture. Much of the quote is from Isaiah 52:11, 12, but it also draws on Leviticus 11:8, and the ending "I will receive you" resembles the Greek version of Ezekiel 11:17 and Jeremiah 24:5.

He begins with "therefore" to show a sequence of thought. In essence, the words of verses 14-18 will lead naturally to the result found in this verse. If we "come out from among them," meaning the associations warned against in those verses; if we are separate from such things; and if we refrain from touching that which is unclean - if we do these things - then the Lord says, "I will receive you."

It is through coming near to Christ, trusting in Him, and receiving His forgiveness that we draw near to God. In doing this, we naturally have separated ourselves from the ways of the world and thus God draws near to us. God is holy and we are to draw near to Him in holiness. This is done through faith in Christ. If we fail to make this step, then God will not draw near to us and we will remain un-adopted and forever separated from Him.

Life application: Sometimes after calling on Christ we fall back into our old ways. When this happens, we may feel we have fallen out of favor with God. However,

once we are "in" Christ we can never be separated from the love of God again. We have become children by adoption. Let us endeavor to live our lives in holiness, but when we stumble and fall, let us pick ourselves up and press on in His loving salvation.

**"I will be a Father to you,  
And you shall be My sons and daughters,  
Says the LORD Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:18**

Paul closes out this chapter with one more set of thoughts which is derived from several verses of the Old Testament. These include 2 Samuel 7:14; Isaiah 43:6; and Jeremiah 31:9. The term "Lord Almighty" would be from the Greek version of 2 Samuel 7:8.

This word, "Lord Almighty" is *pantokrator*. Paul uses it here and then it is only used again in Revelation by John. There he uses it nine times. It is a title which means "ruler of all, ruler of the universe, the almighty."

Paul's words touch at the heart of what Jesus came to do for fallen man. Through Christ, we are adopted. Our Creator becomes our Father through His work. And to ensure that this term "Father" isn't misunderstood as merely a title without the true meaning of the bonds of family, he restates the thought from the opposite angle by saying, "And you shall be My sons and daughters."

This verse brings us to the complete assurance that our adoption has taken place because of Christ, and it is one which bears the full honor of having been accepted into a personal, family relationship by the Ruler of the universe. He has become our adopted Father. If nothing else should stir our souls to gratitude for what Christ did, this certainly should do it! How marvelous is God's plan of salvation that we should be called sons and daughters of God!

Life application: The bonds of family hold us to the Creator. Be assured that if you have been saved by the blood of Christ, that you will continue to be saved by the blood of Christ. Nothing in all of heaven or earth can separate you from the love of God which is found in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

2 Corinthians 7:1

"Therefore" is given at the beginning of this chapter, asking us to reflect on what has thus far been presented in verses 6:16-18. The promises that Paul cites there are for those who are willing to set aside that which is unclean in order to be acceptable to the Lord and to be considered a true child of God, in right standing with Him. Go back and read those three verses in order to reflect on this "therefore."

And so, "having these promises" which have been presented, Paul calls the recipients of his letter "beloved." It is a term of endearment, probably used to temper the note of stern warning in his words. It is what a father may say when speaking to his disobedient son. By adding in a term of endearment, it will help calm any tension between the two. After that, more guidelines can then be given, just as Paul does here.

He says, "...let us clean ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." All of us need to constantly work towards purifying ourselves as we walk in this sin-stained world. Jesus gave us an example of this on the night before His crucifixion. During that encounter He said -

"He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean." John 10:13

By using two different words in the Greek for "bathed" and "wash," He was telling us that salvation is a done deal. We are purified unto salvation once and for all. However, we need to continually strive to wash away the impurities which come into our lives as we carry on in this earthly existence. It is the same thought which John later writes out in his first epistle -

"And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." 1 John 3:3

We are saved once and for all time, but we are to constantly be purifying ourselves as we continue in our saved state. The end-goal of this process is declared by Paul. It is to be "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." The word for "perfecting" indicates bringing something to an end or to finish something. We are to constantly strive to bring in holiness until it is all that is left. And this is to be done "in the fear of God."

Just as a child shows a respectful fear to his father who is trying to steer him in the right direction, we are to show a much greater, reverential fear toward our heavenly Father. We are to strive to be like Him and not flaunt our sin in His face. Rather, we are to abhor it and work to put it behind us once and forever. In Romans 12:9 we are admonished to "abhor what is evil and to cling to what is good."

The race is set before us and we should strive to do our best in it, just as Paul is recorded as doing in Philippines 3 -

"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."  
Philippines 3:12-14

Life application: God has saved us to join Him in the eternal ages ahead. In doing so, He asks us to turn from our sin and to purify ourselves from all unrighteousness. What a terrifying corruption we have in our hearts that would keep us from accomplishing this to the very best of our abilities. Pray for strength and wisdom to be obedient to His call.

**Open *your hearts* to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. 2 Corinthians 7:2**

Paul now makes a most emotional appeal to his beloved brethren at Corinth. He begins with the words translated here as "Open *your hearts* to us." The words "your hearts" are inserted by the translators. The word "open" means "to make room." And so the thought is "Make room for us (in your hearts)." They had once make sufficient room for Paul and the other apostles, but through infighting, divisions, etc. they had closed them off. Paul is begging for this to be undone.

Following this appeal, he justifies his request by stating three thoughts in rapid succession. In the Greek, each begins with the term "no man." Thus "no man" is in the emphatic position. In essence, "No one we have wronged, no one we have corrupted, no one we have cheated." By stating it this way, he is intentionally showing that no individual can lay a charge against them, much less the whole. They have acted in a blameless manner toward all people and each person.

His first of the three thoughts is "we have wronged no one." This may be a refutation of any charges of greed which had been levied against him or any of the other apostles, as if having swindled them in some way. They also proclaimed only the truth of the gospel without adding in anything which would defile it. Each person was treated in the same caring way, and no individual could come forward and state that they had been individually mistreated by them.

Secondly, he says that "we have corrupted no one." This word carries the sense of defilement. There was nothing impure in how they acted towards any person. There were no sexual advances made, and there was only that which could be

regarded as pure and undefiled in their attitude and treatment of each and every person they encountered.

Finally, he says that "we have cheated no one." The word used here for "cheated" is used only by Paul, in 2 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians. It adds in the concept of seeking gain or exploiting another which isn't specifically implied in the other two verbs. There was no hint of acting in a deceptive manner in order to obtain personal gain.

In these three examples, Paul has wisely placed "no one" in the emphatic position to show that no individual could come forward and say that. "I may not have been cheated, but I'm sure he cheated someone else." If that were true, then "someone else" would have the ability to come forward at the reading of the letter to show that he had been wronged. In writing to all, he has also addressed each individual personally.

Life application: How good it would be if we could all make the same claim that Paul has made. This is especially true with our spiritual leaders. Instead of defrauding the flock, pastors and other spiritual leaders should be building them up and tending to them with gentle care.

**I do not say *this* to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 2 Corinthians 7:3**

Paul just said to the Corinthians, "Open *your hearts* to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one." Having said this, he must have suddenly thought, "They may misperceive these words as a note of condemnation, assuming that I meant that I am responding to specific accusations against us."

To ensure they take his words in a general rather than a specific manner, he says, "I do not say *this* to condemn." Some translations (like the KJV) insert "you" at the



end of this thought (I do not say *this* to condemn *you*), thus making it sound specific. However, "you" is not in the original, nor does it seem to be the intent. Instead, he is leaving his words vague in order to avoid specificity, and so they are to be taken in a general sense only.

Continuing on, he says, "...for I have said before that you are in our hearts." He could be referring to his first epistle, or even to his words spoken directly to them while he was with them. However, he gives a general sense of this thought twice so far in this letter -

"You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men..." 2 Corinthians 3:2

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O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. <sup>12</sup> You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your *own* affections. <sup>13</sup> Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open." 2 Corinthians 6:11, 12

He also conveyed this same thought to those at Philippi -

"...just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace." Philippians 1:7

Paul carried his flock with him wherever he went and he treasured them in his heart like a father who loves his own son, so much so that his love for them extended to the thought that they were "to die together and to live together." Paul was willing, if necessary, to give up all for his beloved brothers. If it meant spending the rest of his life with them and eventually dying with them, he would even do that in order to establish them in Christ.

Certainly, he felt that his letters and occasional visits would suffice, but he was willing to go to whatever extreme in order to prove his love to those he had evangelized. He writes a similar note of affection to the congregation at Thessalonica -

"So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us." 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Life application: To what extent are you willing to go to ensure that Christ is properly proclaimed? Missionaries need to be funded. If good ones lose their means of support, it may mean that only doctrinally unsound missionaries remain. Has the Lord possibly called you to give something up in order to ensure that a Bible study need is met? Is there a task which needs to be accomplished on Sunday morning left undone because you are unwilling to help out? Continuously evaluate the circumstances around you and be aware of the things that are lacking and which you could help with to be met. You are serving the Lord, so serve the Lord!

**Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.**  
2 Corinthians 7:4

It should be noted that thus far Paul has been speaking in plural terms, "we this, and we that." However, he now changes to the first person singular for the first time. In his words, which pertain specifically to himself, he begins with "Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you." This isn't an apology for the boldness of his words; instead it is a confidence that he is using his words appropriately and in a sound manner. It is the same type of thought that is conveyed in 1 Timothy 3 -

"For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 3:13

After this, he again uses the first person singular and states, "...great is my boasting on your behalf." Paul has already boasted of the Corinthians in his letters, and he certainly boasted of them in his words to others as well. He was confident that they were on a sound path, even if doctrinal correction was necessary. He was sure that his admonishments would be taken in their proper light and be acted upon accordingly. Thus he knew he could continue to greatly boast in them.

Next he says, "I am filled with comfort." Paul was consoled in the fact that they were ready and willing to listen to him. He didn't fear that they would reject his words, but rather respond to them favorably. In verses 5-7, he will continue to explain this particular thought to them.

Finally, he finishes this verse with, "I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation." It seems like a paradox to say such a thing! The Greek word "exceedingly" is *hyperperisseuó*. It is found only here and in Romans 5:20. It is a superlative way of saying that his joy is abounding to the highest measure. The words of this clause then are given based on the two preceding clauses.

To be exceedingly joyful in affliction is something unique to the Christian experience. Others may claim they have it, but it cannot compare to that which the Christian possesses. There is a hope which transcends the earthly afflictions we face and which are grounded in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have the same guarantee and thus we can rejoice even in such times of trial. He gives a note of such joy during affliction in Philippians 2 -

"Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup> For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me." Philippians 2:17, 18

Life application: If we are truly sure of our salvation, then why should we despair over anything which comes against us in this life? Sadness, trials, and woes may come, but they should never rob us of our highest joy. Instead, we should have something more deeply instilled in us which allows us to look to the future with hope and joy.