

2 Corinthians 13:1-10

- 1 This will be the third time I am coming to you. 'By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.'
- 2 I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare—
- 3 since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.
- 4 For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.
- 5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.
- 6 But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.
- 7 Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified.
- 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.
- 9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete.
- 10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

A Warning and A Test **2 Corinthians 13:1-10**

INTRO:

Paul draws his letter to a close with a dual warning. First, he warns the Corinthians if he comes, he will come with severity. The Apostle the false apostles called weak in presence was not going to be weak, but powerful. There were going to be some spiritual

fireworks, they did not want to see. Second, he wanted the Corinthians believers who knew the Lord Jesus and wanted to serve Him to be ready when Paul came.

I. A Warning (verses 1-4)

II. A Test (verses 5-10)

I. A Warning (verses 1-4)

2 Corinthians 13:1–4 *“This will be the third time I am coming to you. ‘By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.’ I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare—since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.”*

A. This is a solemn warning. Paul seemed to be done playing games with the Corinthians. He closed **Chapter twelve** asserting that he is coming the third time and he is not coming to defend himself, but to deliver them from their misconceptions over sin and the false apostles who had deceived them and slandered Paul. It would serve us well to hear what Paul said.

2 Corinthians 12:20–21 (NASB) *“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; 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”*

The Corinthians were plagued by some of the same sins which seem to abound in our churches today. In the face of this, Paul issued his warning.

B. Paul’s warning is not just aimed at those who indulged in sexual sin. It is aimed at the entire church.

“This will be the third time I am coming to you. ‘By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.”

While Paul quotes this statement from the law, he is not saying that he is going to be collecting witnesses. He is drawing a parallel between his visits and this principle. If Paul comes with severity it will not be without much warning. This is why he mentioned his previous visits and letters

v. 2 *“I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare.”*

C. The false apostles attacked Paul, accusing him of not displaying the power of Christ in himself and his ministry. This is why he inserted **verses 3-4**.

“Since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.”

Christ’s ministry was first a ministry of meekness. Jesus Himself told us, ***“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*** (Matthew 20:28) When He returns, He will return in power and great glory and will make all things right.

D. What will Paul’s apostolic authority look like when he comes back to Corinth? We do not know, but the situation in **Acts 5** may indicate something like Paul, an apostle might have to do.

II. A Test (verses 5-10)

2 Corinthians 13:5 ***“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.”***

A. What kind of test did Paul ask the Corinthians to take? Surely, it wasn’t, if you feel saved, you are saved. We do not know exactly what criteria he taught them to consider. There are some special points he gave to the Corinthians. For example, He wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:14-17**,

“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

One evidence of our salvation is a new transformed life.

B. Two other writers in the New Testament spell out criteria for us to judge whether we are ***“in the faith.”*** In **1 John** the various tests are tied to the word ***“Know.”*** For example, John wrote in **1 John 2:3-6**.

“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in

Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”

John’s categories are: a changed life, a life not dominated by sin, a love for Christ and God, doctrinal purity.

C. The second writer is Peter in **2 Peter 1:9**, wrote ***“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.”***

Peter referred to the steps of spiritual growth in **1 Peter 1:3-8**. If we are growing through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in God’s Word in us, it gives us great assurance we are in the faith.

D. Paul then spoke of the problem assumptions made by the false apostles of his own approved status as one who is in the faith. There very standing with God was because Paul was indeed in Christy and had planted the church in Corinth. He concludes in **verse 10**.

“Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.”

In effect, Paul wrote this so they would be ready for his coming.

E. How could they be ready? First, they had to pass the self-test that they were indeed ***“in the faith,”*** and ***“that Jesus Christ is in you.”*** Second, they need to make sure their accounts were caught up with the living God.

What Do We Take From This?

1. Do we know we are in the faith? We too should be able to pass these tests. Do we see Christ in us? Is there a change in who we are and what we do? Are we growing?

2. Do we keep short accounts with the Lord? Confession of sin is a continual practice in the life of a believer.

3. Do we consciously realize how serious sin is? Sin is the reason Ananias and Sapphira died in **Acts 5**. The whole church feared because they realized as the Psalmist wrote in **Psalm 130:3-4**,

“If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared”.

Hymn #512 My Savior’s Love