

## 2 Corinthians 13

Title ideas:  
Strength through Unity!  
Stronger Together!

## 2 Corinthians 13:1-14 -

### Scriptures:

Numbers 16:3-5 -

They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" 4 So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face; 5 and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him."

Numbers 16:31-35 - Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. 33 So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. 34 Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up also!" 35 And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense.

<sup>1</sup>This will be the third time  I am coming to you.

"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every

word shall be established."

2476 – to  
acknowledge the  
validity of  
something

### Notes:

Rebellion against God's appointed authorities, whether they are civil or religious is rebellion against God Himself. There are consequences to rebelling against God's appointed authorities (Num. 16:3-5; 31-35).

Paul wanted to come to them and to be gentle with them, but he is preparing them for a harsh visit if they are not repentant when he gets there. He will find out from 'two or three witnesses' what is going on and then address it.

Scriptures:

<sup>2</sup> I have told you before, and foretell as if I were

Notes:

Paul wants to spare the Corinthians an uncomfortable visit. This is an expression of mercy and grace to Paul's detractors. They have time to repent!

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—

5339 – 'To save or relieve from an experience or action.'

Scriptures:

<sup>3</sup> since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me,

1382 - evidence

Notes:

who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

770 -

1414 – be powerful, be strong

Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 2:15-17 - For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

<sup>4</sup> For though ~~He~~ was crucified in weakness, yet ~~He~~

Notes:

By challenging Paul's authority based on their perception of his weakness in trials, suffering, and persecution, they are actually challenging Christ.

Both the cross and the resurrection are displays of God's power. Both Christ's suffering and resurrection were displays of His power.

In a way this is a picture of Christ's first and second advents. Christ came the first time as a humble servant – Paul served in Corinth with humble servitude, not building himself up, but spending and being spent for the Corinthians. Jesus is coming again, but the next time will be in judgment – Paul is coming back and if necessary, to judge the rebellious in Corinth if they do not repent before he gets there.

“To disregard Paul will be to embrace death.” (Hughes, 2006) page 228 (2 Cor. 2:16)

~~lives~~ by the power of God. For ~~we~~ also are weak

1411 - δύναμις  
(dynamis)

in ~~Him~~, but ~~we~~ shall live with ~~Him~~ by the power

of God toward ~~you~~.

Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 -  
Moreover, brethren, I  
declare to you the gospel  
which I preached to you,  
which also you received  
and in which you stand,  
2 by which also you are  
saved, if you hold fast that  
word which I preached to  
you—unless you believed  
in vain.  
3 For I delivered to you first  
of all that which I also  
received: that Christ died  
for our sins according to the  
Scriptures, 4 and that He  
was buried, and that He  
rose again the third day  
according to the Scriptures,

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by  
grace you have been saved  
through faith, and that not  
of yourselves; it is the gift  
of God, 9 not of works, lest  
anyone should boast. 10 For  
we are His workmanship,  
created in Christ Jesus for  
good works, which God  
prepared beforehand that  
we should walk in them.

Romans 10:17 - So then  
faith comes by hearing, and  
hearing by the word of God.

<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the

3985 – to test

 faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know

1381 - examine

yourselves, that Jesus  Christ is in you?—unless

indeed you are disqualified.

96 – worthless, of  
no use, unfit –  
'Fraudulent;  
having a  
misleading  
appearance.'

Notes:

Paul's detractors had judged Paul as  
inferior to them in all ways – his  
appearance, his eloquence, his  
financial success, his lifestyle.

The only true test is whether our  
conscience confirms that Christ is in  
us. Unfortunately, this subjective  
standard is open to delusion and  
abuse. And because it is so  
subjective, only God knows for  
certain.

How do you know if Christ is in  
you? Ultimately, it comes down to  
faith – what do you really believe to  
be true? (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-9;  
Rom. 10:17)

Basically, Paul is saying that if you  
are saved, then Christ was and is  
working in me. If you are hypocrites,  
if you are not real Christians, then  
Christ did not work in me.

Their attitude toward Paul was not  
simply a discredit to Paul's ministry  
but to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Scriptures:

<sup>6</sup> But I trust that you will know that we are not

disqualified.

Notes:

If the Corinthians examine  
themselves and discern that Christ is  
in them then they must also admit  
that Christ is in Paul because he was  
the one who introduced Christ to the  
Corinthians.

Scriptures:  
Matthew 5:44-45 - But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

<sup>7</sup> Now **I** pray to God that **you** do no ~~evil~~, not that

2556 – wicked, immoral, wrong

**we** should appear approved, but that **you** should

1384 – judged worthy

do what is honorable, though **we** may seem

2570 – good, fitting, proper

disqualified.

Notes:  
Paul is praying that his detractors would repent. If they do Paul will not need to be harsh and judge them upon his next visit. Paul was not about to show off the miraculous power of Christ that rested upon him – even if that made him look weak to his detractors. Paul's prayer is that this would not result in his detractors accusing him of being weak because his doesn't do some mighty work of judgment.

Instead of praying for vindication or retribution, Paul is praying that they would not do evil – he is praying for them. He may be referring to his detractors in this prayer, because most of the people in Corinth were trying to do the right thing. Paul is praying for those who have belittled and despised him and brought harm to the church in Corinth. That is the heart of a pastor and of Christ (Matt. 5:44-45).

Scriptures:

<sup>8</sup> For **we** can do nothing against the ~~truth~~, but for

2596 -

225 -

5228 -

Notes:

the ~~truth~~.

Scriptures:

<sup>9</sup>For **we** are glad when **we** are weak and **you** are

Notes:

strong. And this also **we** pray, that **you** may be

made complete.

2676 – improved  
to completion

Scriptures:

<sup>10</sup> Therefore **I** write these things being absent, lest

Notes:

being present **I** should use sharpness, according to

664 – harshly,  
severely,  
rigorously

the authority which the  Lord has given **me** for

edification and not for destruction.

3619 – building  
up

2506 – tearing  
down



Scriptures:  
Philippians 4:4 - Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Ephesians 4:1-3 - I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Matthew 22:35-40 - Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

2 Corinthians 7:6-7 - Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

<sup>11</sup> Finally, **brethren**, farewell. Become complete.

5463 – more accurately, 'rejoice!'

2675 – make adequate

Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace;

3870 – be encouraged

5426 -

and the God of love and peace will be with **you**.

The result of that effort is 'the God of love and peace will be with you.'

"God imparts His unique inner qualities to His children as they actively do His will." (Hughes, 2006) page 233

Notes:

Corinth had been a tough city for Paul to minister to. Their culture was so similar to our own that they could have been called First and Second Californians.

'brethren' – addressed to everyone in the church.

The church in Corinth was a mess, partly because they were allowing the culture to influence the way they thought, but mostly because of the influence of the 'super-apostles'. These admonitions in the for of one-word imperatives were a call to unity with a promise for doing it. As imperatives – they are in essence commands.

'farewell' – would be better translated 'rejoice'. To Paul, rejoicing was a choice, not to be influenced by our current circumstances. From a Roman prison he was inspired to write (Phil. 4:4).

Mankind was created to be in intimate communion fellowship with God and each other. We are completed through unity. 'Become complete.' Was going to require the Corinthians to things back together in their proper order. That takes reconciliation and restoration. Was going to take work on the part of the Corinthians (Eph. 4:1-3).

You cannot be in unity with God and out of unity with others (Matt.22:35-40). How we are loving others is a reflection of how we are loving God.

Wherever there is disunity there is hurt. 'Be of good comfort.' = comfort one another – encourage one another. Some were right and some were wrong, and it is not uncommon for those in the wrong to inflict emotional harm upon others. Paul regularly talked about our need to comfort one another (2 Cor. 7:6-7).

Paul is not saying they have to agree about everything, just on the important things.

"So this command to 'agree with one another' was not a call for harmony for the sake of harmony, but for unity in the apostolic truth that Paul has been teaching in this letter." (Hughes, 2006) page 233

God's word must be the standard by which the church functions and where we gather in unity.

'live in peace' – is possible only as we rejoice in our unity in Christ, strive to comfort and encourage one another, and gather around the truth found in God's Word. This applies to individuals, as well as churches.

As imperatives, they cannot be achieved passively – unity won't - just happen' in the church, or in our marriage, or family, or anywhere else. It is achieved through faithful, intelligent, submission to God's will and the Spirit's leading in the name of Christ.

Scriptures:  
Galatians 3:28 - There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> Greet one another with a holy kiss.

782 – to say  
farewell to

40 -  
pure

5370 – of a  
familial kind

Notes:  
'holy kiss' – Paul uses this phrase four times (see also [Rom. 16:16](#); [1 Cor. 16:20](#); [1 Thess. 5:26](#)).

Paul appears to be the first ethical teacher to encourage 'the kiss' in the diverse setting of the church. It is a demonstration of the unity in the church and the reality of the oneness of believers ([Gal. 3:28](#)). And it could lead to true reconciliation and restoration.

Scriptures:

<sup>13</sup> All the saints greet you.

40 – dedicated,  
consecrated

Notes:  
'saints' = believers who are with Paul.

Scriptures:

<sup>14</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love

Notes:  
The Benediction - Trinitarian

The order of the benediction reflects the order believers come to experience God in salvation. First, we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Then we are able to experience the love of God. Finally, as we grow in faith we experience growing communion with the Holy Spirit and the associated power of that communion.

of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be

2842 - κοινῶνία  
(koinōnía) – 'The act of sharing in the activities or privileges of an intimate association or group, especially used of marriages and churches.'

with you all. Amen.