

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

October 5, 2022

Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*

The Corinthian Letters

The Last Letter (Second Corinthians)

Text – 2 Corinthians 13

Lecture Fourteen – Chapter Thirteen – Paul's Final Warning and Conclusion to the Letter

Memory Verse – 2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

I Paul's Final Warning (vs. 1 – 8)

II Paul's Foremost Wish – Their Perfection (vs. 9 – 10)

III Paul's Farewell Words (vs. 11 – 14)

Introduction

This last chapter of 2 Corinthians is unique among most of Paul's letters. He spends little time with his usual good-byes and greetings. The letter, which began with a very positive tone of victory and rejoicing, ends with a stern warning; not to everyone in Corinth, but certainly to those few who were still either unsaved or at least very carnal. 2 Corinthians is almost two letters in one: it is a note of praise and encouragement for most; but it is also a strong rebuke to some.

I. Paul's Final Warning (vs. 1 – 8)

A. Paul warns of his presence a third time. (v. 1)

B. Paul warns of a powerful proof of His authority. (vs. 2 – 4)

1. Paul may have appeared weak; but he will prove to be powerful.
2. Jesus appeared weak to men at the crucifixion; but he proved powerful in the resurrection.

C. Paul warns of possible reprobates. (vs. 5 – 6)

The word *reprobate* means unapproved or ejected (Romans 1:28; 2 Timothy 3:8; Titus 1:16; Hebrews 6:8). The Greek word is *adokimos*, which can mean reprobate or castaway (1 Corinthians 9:27). It seems that in English the word *reprobate* is clearly a reference to someone who is lost whereas *castaway* could refer to someone who is saved but is away from the Lord.

II Paul's Foremost Wish – Their Perfection (vs. 9 - 10)

Paul did not really care that he appeared weak. It wasn't about him; it was all about their spiritual maturity and completion. The word *perfection* has to do with being equipped with everything they needed; and it has to do with being repaired from any damage.

III Paul's Farewell Words (vs. 11 – 14)

- A. Be Complete in Perfection (v. 11)
- B. Be Comforted in Part (But Be Convicted in Part also – v. 11)
- C. Be Combined in Purpose (v. 11)
- D. Be Cooperative in Peace (v. 11)
- E. Be Charitable in Purity (v. 12)

Conclusion

These letters by the Apostle Paul show us God's concern for those who have or are straying from the faith. Every parent who has grown children can identify with the passion of the Apostle as he labors and fights to bring this church back to a right position. The letters to the Corinthians show us clearly that real love will not just make us feel good about ourselves; but will tell us what we need to hear. God did not give up on this church; and neither did His Apostle. Would to God that we would have this same passion for our ministries. Would to God we would *earnestly contend for the faith*, not to prove that we are right; but to convince those that still have hope. Paul helped many people through these tough letters; and God has used these truths for two millennia in helping his children come back to the faith. I hope God will be able to say about our churches:

"I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things." (2 Corinthians 7:16)