

**"Cleansing the Church"**

**Part 2**

**2 Corinthians 13**

**Introduction:**

The last time we were together in our study of 2 Corinthians we stepped into chapter 13 and we briefly looked at the first two verses.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 13:1-2**

In these verses Paul was warning the Corinthians that if they refused to repent of their sin he was coming a third time and when he arrived he would not spare anyone. Paul had in mind here the words of Moses in Deuteronomy and the Words of Jesus in Matthew 18.

**Deuteronomy 19:15**

*<sup>15</sup> One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.*

**Matthew 18:15-17**

*<sup>15</sup> Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

*<sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

*<sup>17</sup> And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*

Paul was ready to exercise church discipline and he would not hesitate to do so. He had confronted others before and he knew it would be necessary in Corinth if there was no repentance. There were two categories of sin at Corinth. One affected the unity and the other affected the purity. These sins would destroy the church if they were permitted to continue.

**Application:**

When we looked at this in our last study we considered the importance of church discipline being exercised when it is needed today. Too many times however sin is ignored because

churches are fearful of losing people. But to allow sin to exist is deadly to a church and it is unloving to the person involved in sin.

**Leviticus 19:17**

*<sup>17</sup> Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*

Let me show you a letter that was sent to a church that had exercised church discipline. This letter was shared by Ray Stedman.

*"My fellow Christians,*

*Several years ago, the congregations of two churches took public action against me in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20. The charges against me were true.*

*I cannot reverse history and relive the events that led me to my downfall. I have harmed many people and brought ruin to myself. Because I was an outspoken, prominent member of the Christian community my sins have been all the more deplorable and horrendous.*

*After I became a Christian some 18 years ago I failed to deal thoroughly with lust and covetousness. In time I became self-deceived, proud and arrogant. Moreover, eventually God shouted upon the housetops that which I had tried desperately to keep hidden. God finally let me go into alcoholism and sexual immorality, both of which were worse than I experienced before my conversion. Twice I went through the horror and hell of manic-depressive psychoses (as Nebuchadnezzar did) that I might learn that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.*

*I am very fortunate to be alive. I came very close to suicide and should have died in disgrace except for the scripture which says, "Dost thou work wonders for the dead? Do the shades rise up to praise thee? Is thy steadfast love declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in Abaddon?"*

*I am in need of your forgiveness for I have wronged you all. I earnestly desire your prayers for wholeness and complete deliverance from homosexuality. The church widely believes today that there is no cure for homosexuality beyond arrested development as a celibate. I am certain that God can do much more than he has already done for me and for countless others in this area who are afflicted with this crippling disease.*

*It is impossible for me to retrace my footsteps and right every wrong, however I welcome the opportunity to meet and pray with any individuals who have something against me that*

*needs resolution. I am looking and waiting for the further grace and mercy of God in this matter. What you have bound on earth has been bound in heaven, and I now know your actions were done in love for my own good and that of the Body of Christ.*

*Sincerely..."*

Let us now get to where we are in our study tonight.

### **Notice 2 Corinthians 13:3**

The false apostles had caused the Corinthians to request to see more power in Paul. He was too meek and humble for their liking. So, they urged the Corinthians to request to see the power of Christ in Paul. Paul told them they would see the power of Christ when he came for if they did not repent then he would spare none of them.

When I read this and I stop and consider what the false apostles had done it makes me wonder how Paul felt. He had spent 18 months with them and they had seen the power of Christ working through Paul. Really the power of Christ was seen in three ways. It was seen in their salvation, in the signs of an apostle which Paul had showed to them and it was seen in their sanctification. But the critical comments of the false apostles had caused them to forget and overlook these three evidences. Paul had given so much to this church and he had taken nothing from them so I am sure his heart was broken over the accusations that were being made and because of the sin that existed. Let me remind you what Paul wrote earlier.

### **2 Corinthians 12:15-16**

*<sup>15</sup> And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.*

*<sup>16</sup> But be it so, I did not burden you:*

All of this suggests the words of Paul from 1 Corinthians.

### **1 Corinthians 15:33**

*<sup>33</sup> Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*

When believers spend time with those who are not saved it will certainly have an impact upon the way we view others and the way we think.

This thought also reminds me of the military manual which God gave to Israel before their entrance into the land of Canaan.

**Deuteronomy 18:10-18**

*<sup>10</sup> When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.*

*<sup>11</sup> And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.*

*<sup>12</sup> And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:*

*<sup>13</sup> And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:*

*<sup>14</sup> But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.*

*<sup>15</sup> Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.*

*<sup>16</sup> But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:*

*<sup>17</sup> But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:*

***<sup>18</sup> That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.***

The military manual seemed rather harsh but it was for the protection of the Nation of Israel. They failed at following this by the way and they did come to practice the abominations of the Canaanites.

Let us now get back to our study.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 13:3 again.**

This attack by the false apostles was a direct attack against the authority of Paul. The false apostles wanted to teach their lies but while the church trusted Paul they could not

do what they desired. So, they attacked him. Here they attack his authority. They claim that he is not a spokesman for Jesus Christ.

Here in this verse Paul is reminding them that the Word of God that he spoke to them was already a demonstration of the power of Christ in him for it changed their lives when they were saved.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 13:4**

Here in this verse Paul will give an analogy for them to consider. He points to Jesus Christ and how He came as a Lamb. He came the first time in meekness and humility. He took upon Him the form of a servant.

**Philippians 2:5-8**

<sup>5</sup> *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

<sup>6</sup> *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

<sup>7</sup> *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

<sup>8</sup> *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Jesus came in weakness the first time as He allowed the soldiers to nail Him to the cross. But He was resurrected in power and when He returns He will return in power and great glory.

Paul is simply stating that what they have seen is Christ in him. Paul came to them the first time in weakness and practicing humility just the very way Christ came the first time. But when Paul returns he would be coming in power to judge their sin just as Jesus will return at the end of the Tribulation in great power to judge the world. Let me show you how this will happen then we shall apply it to what Paul is stating here.

**Revelation 19:11-15, 21**

<sup>11</sup> *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*

<sup>12</sup> *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.*

<sup>13</sup> *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.*

<sup>14</sup> *And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*

<sup>15</sup> *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

<sup>21</sup> *And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

When Jesus returns those who have rebelled against Him will be judged and destroyed by the Word of God.

This is exactly the parallel which Paul is making here in our text. When he arrived the third time he would come to judge the sin and he would be swinging the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and they would then see the power of Christ in him as he spoke the very Word of God. Notice the words of **Hughes** on this thought:

*"When Christ comes again He will not spare. The two things go together in Him, the infinite patience of the cross, the inexorable righteousness of the throne. So too Paul who is one with his Master in the weakness of compassion and patience and long-suffering desiring the repentance of all is one with Him also in the power of authority and judgment. If his first visit appeared to be marked by weakness, the defiant ones in Corinth will find that his impending visit is marked by power."*

### **Notice 2 Corinthians 13:5**

The Corinthians were consumed with examining Paul's life so in this verse he exhorts them to examine their own lives to be sure they were saved. The word "reprobate" here means "to not pass the test or to not be approved". While many of them knew the Lord, Paul was very concerned that there were some mixed within that did not know Him.

The true evidence of a believer is Christ in them. It is not a question of whether they have walked the isle, it is not a question of whether they have filled out a decision card. The question is, "Can Christ be seen in their lives?"

### **2 Corinthians 5:17**

<sup>17</sup> *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

The writer of Hebrews had the very same concern about those who would read his letter.

**Hebrews 10:26-31**

*<sup>26</sup> For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*

*<sup>27</sup> But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

*<sup>28</sup> He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:*

*<sup>29</sup> Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*

*<sup>30</sup> For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.*

*<sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

The writer of Hebrews was concerned his readers were apostates which are people who come to know the Truth and then turn their backs upon the Lord never coming to salvation.

Paul was concerned some at Corinth were reprobates which were people who were exposed to the Truth but never saved and living among the true believers professing to be believers. They would be the tares among the wheat.

**Conclusion:**

Every person should consider their lives to be sure that Christ is in them. There will be many people who will be terribly surprised when they die.

**Matthew 7:21-23**

*<sup>21</sup> Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

*<sup>22</sup> **Many** will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

*<sup>23</sup> And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*