

"The Conclusion of the Letter"**2 Corinthians 13:11-14**

Introduction: Tonight, we have arrived at the final message from the letter of 2 Corinthians. At first glance the verses which Paul uses to close this letter seem to be just a causal conclusion but as we take a closer look we shall see these words are far from casual. Within these last four verses there is much for us to consider and to learn as Paul gives his closing statement to the church at Corinth. Within these closing verses we see what Paul desired for the church at Corinth. As we study these words let us keep in mind this is the Corinthian's pastor's desire for the flock. I point this out because what we find here should be the desire of every pastor for the local church that God has entrusted into his care. In these verses we shall see three desires of Paul.

I. Paul Desired to see Perfection.**Notice 2 Corinthians 13:11**

The exhortation "BE PERFECT" is the main thought found within this verse. It could be seen as the heading for this verse and everything else within the verse connects to this statement. The word PERFECT has a very interesting meaning. Let me show you the definition from Strong's Dictionary.

to complete thoroughly, i.e. repair (literally or figuratively) or adjust:—fit, frame, mend, (make) perfect(-ly join together), prepare, restore

The idea is "they were to put in order that which was out of order". They were to mend that which needed mending. Let us notice another place where this word is translated in a different way which will help us to grasp what it is that Paul is saying here.

Hebrews 10:5

⁵ *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:*

This verse speaks of Jesus coming into the world to die for our sins and the need for the Father to PREPARE for Him a body so that Jesus could accomplish the will of God. This is exactly the idea in 2 Corinthians behind the word PERFECT. These people were to set in order that which needed to be set in order so that they could come in line with the will of God concerning the church.

These people had many things which were out of order and until they were made right or until they were mended they would not function within the will of God. Let me refresh your mind on what needed to be mended.

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

² I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

³ For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

⁴ For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

They were carnal. There were divisions, strife, envy, and favoritism along with many other problems. All of this was to be addressed and mended.

There is a thought here that need to be mentioned:

- ✓ **Paul never exhorted them to go out and change the city of Corinth.**

They were exhorted to change what they could change and that was what was happening within the body of Christ. They were never called to transform the city of Corinth they were called to walk in the will of God and the Holy Spirit would transform them into the image of Christ. If the church mended what was broken and came to function within the will of God everything else would fall into place. They would then be the examples they needed to be.

Application:

Let us never lose sight of the fact that we are to keep a close watch upon our own lives and when things need mended we must be quick to mend them. This is something that needs attention always. We must understand that when our lives are out of order then we are not effective because we are functioning outside the will of God.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Notice 2 Corinthians 13:11 again.

Now as we look closer at this verse we will see several points which Paul made which the church needed to focus upon.

1. Joy

The word FAREWELL is a word of greeting and a word of departure. But it has a very interesting meaning. The Blue Letter Bible defines the word as *"to rejoice, to be glad, to rejoicing exceedingly"*.

Let us notice a few other translations of the very same word.

Matthew 2:10

¹⁰ *When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*

Matthew 5:12

¹² *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

Here in these two verses we see that the very same word is translated REJOICE. Now let me show you another verse.

Matthew 28:9

⁹ *And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.*

When the women met Jesus after the resurrection He greeted them by saying, "All hail or ALL REJOICE". They were to REJOICE because He was alive. This then became the greeting between fellow believers. They would greet one another by saying, "REJOICE" and they would depart by telling one another to, "REJOICE". This was all connected with the resurrection. Jesus was alive, so they were to REJOICE.

Here in 2 Corinthians 13:11 Paul is telling the Corinthians that they too were to rejoice. They had problems and they faced many trials, but Jesus was alive, so they were live in a way that others could see the joy within their lives. This reminds me of the exhortation which Paul gave to the Philippians.

Philippians 4:4

⁴ *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*

We are to be people who reflect an inward joy for all the world to see. We are not to be sour, and grumpy. Our hope is alive, and we have so much to look forward to. Let me show you what Peter wrote to his readers who were under the persecution of Nero.

1 Peter 3:14-15

¹⁴ But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

The joy which Paul desires for the Corinthians to show forth is a joy that comes from being grounded in theology. It comes from knowing the Word of God and knowing God in an intimate way. It comes from knowing that whatever happens in my life it is in God's control and in whatever the circumstances I am more than a conqueror. God will use the pressure I am facing to make me more like my Savior. This theology brings joy in the believer's life no matter what it is that they face.

2. Strengthen one another.

Notice 2 Corinthians 13:11 again.

They were to "be of good comfort". This means, "to come along side or to strengthen". There were strife and divisions within the church and that was to be replaced with care and love for one another. Let us notice some verses to see how important it is for believers to love and care for one another.

John 13:34

³⁴ A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Romans 13:8

⁸ Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

These are just two verses but from these we can see that our Lord desired that we love and care for one another. He desired that we come along side of those who were weak and weary and strengthen them.

Let me show you what the writer of Hebrews exhorted his readers to do.

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but **exhorting one another**: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

The word EXHORT here means "TO COME ALONG SIDE". The Hebrews were growing weary under the persecution and those who were strong were to come along side and strengthen the weak. This is exactly what Paul desired of the Corinthians and this is exactly the way the church is to function today.

There are those who are tired and weary, and we are to be there for them. We must be careful not to get so caught up in our own lives that we neglect to minister to those around us.

3. They were to be of one mind.

This does not mean they were to just all think alike but it means they were to be unified under the authority of the Word of God. There had been a lot of different ideas within the church at Corinth. Some had bought into what the false apostles had taught some were confused about what to believe and others had remained solid in their theology. They were to unite in their thoughts under the authority of the Word of God.

Application:

If a church is going to be effective for God, they must be rooted and grounded in solid theology. There are many churches today that have very weak doctrinal statements. There are certain doctrines they refuse to address because they are fearful of offending someone. They are willing to accept people no matter what their theology is. That kind of church accomplishes nothing for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. When the church is unified in it stand for the Truth it is then filled with peace.

Notice 2 Corinthians 13:11 again.

The end of the verse contains a promise for all believers if they were willing to mend their ways and address the issues which Paul had mentioned. God would be with them. The idea here is that God would work through them. In other words, they would be a light amid the dark world they lived in. The opposite would be seen in the warning given to the church of Ephesus.

Revelation 2:5

⁵ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and **will remove thy candlestick out of his place**, except thou repent.

II. Paul desired to see affection.

Notice 2 Corinthians 13:12

The holy kiss spoke of here was between those of the same sex. As they would meet they would kiss one another on the cheek. It had become a way to show affection from one believer to another. It apparently had become the way in which believers greeted one another as one means of showing their love. Let me show you what Peter wrote in 1 Peter.

1 Peter 5:14

¹⁴ Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Then in Romans we see Paul encouraged the holy kiss among the believers.

Romans 16:16

¹⁶ Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

Getting back to 2 Corinthians we must keep in mind there were divisions and factions within the church along with much pride. The idea was they were to forgive one another, and they were to show the affections of love.

III. Paul desired to see them enjoy the full blessings of their salvation.

Notice 2 Corinthians 13:14

Here in this verse Paul point out the Trinity and as he does so he also reminds the believers of their salvation.

We are saved by the GRACE of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of the LOVE of God the Father. We are then brought into fellowship as we are given the Holy Spirit who places us in the body of Christ. Every Person of the Godhead is involved in our salvation.

I want you to see what it is however that Paul is praying for here. He wants them to enjoy the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit. He is praying that they will enjoy all the blessings that are given to them as believers.

I am reminded here of some of what Paul wrote in Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:3, 16-20

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

¹⁶ Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

Getting back to 2 Corinthians, I find it very interesting that Paul did not pray for worldly riches, he did not pray for good health, he did not pray that life would be easy, but he prayed they would experience the fulness of their salvation in Christ. To experience the fulness of our salvation is far greater than anything of this world.

Conclusion:

I pray that all of us experience the fulness of our salvation as we live lives surrendered over to our Lord.