**Week of Nov 3, 2019**

**2 Corinthians 13:1-11**

**Key Verse:** “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\*?”

(2 Corinthians 13:5)

**1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. 2 I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again\*, I will not spare: 3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. 4 For\* though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth 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, 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\*? 6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. 7 Now I pray to God that ye do\* no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. 8 For we can do nothing\* against the truth, but for the truth. 9 For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection. 10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction. 11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.**

**Understanding the Scriptures**

On Paul’s first trip to Corinth, he planted the church located there. Paul’s second trip to Corinth was very painful because of the open rebellion against him that caused him to suffer and leave without retaliating. In today’s message, Paul is letting the Corinthians Church know that he is coming for a third visit. Unlike his encounter with the church during the first and second visits, Paul emphasized that during this visit he would deal harshly with unrepentant sinners.

Paul’s insistence on having witnesses showed that he was serious about dealing with conflict that were happening with in the church. In the past, the people wanted Paul to prove that Christ was speaking through him. Paul let the people know that this time the proof that he was acting on Christ’s behalf would be revealed in discipline. As was customary during this time, Paul could do different things to address the people’s disobedience. Paul could confront the people by publicly denouncing their behavior. He could exercise church discipline by calling the people out before the church leaders or excommunicating them from the church.

Paul encouraged the people to take an honest look at their lives to determine if they were reflecting Christ’s example in the way they lived and treated each other. Paul told the people that true believers are united to Christ, and the Holy Spirit lives in believers to help them live a Christ-centered life. If there is no evidence that people are being guided by the Holy Spirit, and their lives do not reflect Christ, then they are not truly Christians.

Paul closed his letter by stating his intention for his third visit. Paul’s purpose was to encourage obedience, rather than to punish or criticize. His primary goal was to build up the church, and as an apostle, he had received from God the rightful authority to do whatever was necessary to accomplish that goal.

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