**Second Corinthians**

**Chapter One**

**The God of all Comfort**

**1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:**

**An apostle of Jesus Christ:**A sent one. When Paul was in Corinth originally, he showed the Corinthians his apostleship by his patience, signs, wonders, and mighty deeds as is recorded in chapter twelve of this epistle.

**By the will of God:** 1st Corinthians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, Colossians 1:1 & 2nd Timothy 1:1.

**The church of God:**A called out assembly of believers**.** 1st Corinthians 1:2 & 1st Timothy 3:5. The church atJerusalem was also called a church of God. 1st Corinthians 15:9 & Galatians 1:13.

**2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Grace be to you and peace:**This is the dispensation of grace, and God is not at enmity (war) with us. Paul never mentions grace and peace as coming from the holy Spirit because he is dwelling in them that are in the body of Christ.

**From God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ:** Grace and peace does not come from Paul, but rather it comes from God the Father, and Jesus Christ.

**3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;**

**The father of our Lord Jesus Christ:** Psalm 2:7, Matthew 3:17 & Ephesians 1:3.

**The Father of mercies:** Real mercy originates from God, for He alone is qualified to bestow it upon whomsoever He chooses. He was merciful to us in saving us when we deserved hell. Blessed be His name.

**The God of all comfort:**He can comfort us in any situation we find ourselves in here on the earth concerning physical things and he can also comfort us concerning all spiritual things.

**4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.** *2nd Corinthians 7:6 & 13.*

**That we may be able to comfort them which are also in any trouble:** Our tribulation can bring us comfort from God, and it is also for the benefit of others around us so that they might see Christ in us during our tribulation.

 We are able to comfort others when we tell them of the tribulation we went through and how God brought us through it.

**5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.**

**The sufferings of Christ abound in us:** There were many persecutions that Paul and his helpers endured, and Paul calls those sufferings, the sufferings of Christ.

 Paul filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for the body’s sake, which is the church so that he could make what Christ did for us known to the world. Colossians 1:24.

**So our consolation also aboundeth by Christ:**If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. 2nd Timothy 2:12.

 Our consolation is what we receive because we have suffered for Christ. Eternal life, rewards. Romans 15:5, 2nd Corinthians 7:7, Philippians 2:1 & 2nd Thessalonians 2:16.

**6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.**

 Paul was not teaching that consolation and salvation may be obtained by the Corinthians at the expense of Paul being persecuted for bringing the gospel to them.

 Salvation was already secured for them in the person of Christ when he suffered and died for the sins of the world, but Paul was saying to the Corinthians that there is reward (consolation) for the suffering they endured.

 As Paul and Timothy ministered and were persecuted, people were saved because of their willingness to suffer persecution repeatedly. They will be rewarded for their sacrifice as will you for yours.

**7 And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.**

**The consolation:**The reward in the end. 2nd Timothy 2:12.

**8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:** *Acts 19:23*.

**Our trouble which came to us in Asia:** The Corinthians drew strength from the testimony of Paul and Timothy that they endured the persecution at Philippi and in Ephesus (which is in Asia), and yet they came out on the other side still praising God.

**9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;**

**We had the sentence of death in ourselves:**Paul and Timothy came to the point that there was no way they could deliver themselves and God stepped in and delivered them. 2nd Corinthians 4.

 If God can raise someone from the dead, then saving their life would be a breeze. Paul learned from this that God would be there for him to help him accomplish his will for his life.

**11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.**

**The gift bestowed upon us:** The offering that was taken up.

**12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. 13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; 14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.**

 Paul was speaking about his previous letter to them in verse thirteen and that he realized that some had received his first letter and had repented while unfortunately the obedience was only in part.

 Some had not yet repented, but Paul rejoiced in those that had repented, and that they could now rejoice as they ought to in having gotten right with God and man.

**In the day of the Lord Jesus:**The rapture of the body of Christ.

**15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit;**

**A second benefit:**Paul wanted to impart more truth to the Corinthians, but the time was not ready because there was still too much going on in Corinth that needed to be corrected before they could receive something new from Paul.

 There were still some babes in Christ that needed to get off the bottle spiritually speaking.

**16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea. 17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, and nay? 18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.**

**And of you to be brought on my way toward you:** The Corinthians were to help Paul get to Judaea financially.

**That with me there should be yea, and nay:** Paul spoke for God and there was no “back and forth” going on, just Paul telling them like it was about that which God expects of us. He did not say he would come based on his fleshly desire.

 It was his prayer that he could go if God wanted him to go at that time because there were some that were not ready for Paul to visit yet. He truly wanted to go only when God thought it to be best not himself or someone at Corinth.

**19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. 20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.**

**In him was yea:** A promise from Christ to either Paul for the body of Christ is a guarantee. What God says will happen, will happen. Amen!

**21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; 22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.**

**He which stablisheth us with you in Christ:**Paul talked about the Corinthians being stablished by God’s word in Paul’s gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery. Romans 16:25.

See also 1st Thessalonians 3:13, 2nd Thessalonians 2:17 & 3:3.

**And hath anointed us:**We were anointed when we were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. It means we were set apart (consecrated). 1st Corinthians 12:13.

**Who hath also sealed us:** Ephesians 1:13 & 4:30.

**And given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts:**The earnest is a down payment of the Spirit that we received when we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body. 2nd Corinthians 5:5 & Ephesians 1:14.

 The rest of the payment and the best are yet to come when we step into the heavens one day.

**23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. 24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.**

**I call God for a record upon my soul:**A similar thing is said by God and Moses.Deuteronomy 30:19 & 31:28.

**Dominion over your faith:** Paul did not use his office as the apostle to the Gentiles to demand things of people that would provide comfort for him in his life in fact the opposite was true.

 Paul didn’t want anyone to have a reason to doubt his sincerity in bringing them the gospel of the grace of God.

**Helpers of your joy:** Paul rejoiced that he was able to help minister unto the people of Corinth just like Christ who came to minister and not be ministered unto.

**Chapter Two**

**Forgiving in the Person of Christ**

**1 But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. 2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?**

 Paul was sending the church in Corinth this letter in lieu of a visit for the time being because the atmosphere Paul discerned was not ready for his return.

 He had hoped this epistle would show his desire for those who had not repented of their previous deeds in allowing sin to fester in the congregation and who even gloried in what they professed to be their liberality in Christ.

 They would now understand that salvation does not give us the right to condone sin in our midst. These according to this epistle were Paul’s chief opponents in the church.

 He had also hoped that those who had repented and who had exercised church discipline on the man who was living in open incest would now forgive that man and restore him seeing how he had repented of his gross immorality.

 A judgmental attitude and an attitude of condoning any sin is sin itself. Satan is a master at using the sin in a church committed by one or a small handful of believers and allowing others to sin concerning their attitudes concerning that sin.

 Those that had done the right thing in disciplining this man Paul was happy about, but then some of those same people now would not forgive the person and allow him back into the congregation once he had repented which was just as wrong.

 Others thought the whole thing was a waste of time because they were under grace and acted as if they could do what they pleased, and God would not care.

 Paul wanted every aspect of this sin, which turned into a multitude of sins, to be resolved biblically by all so that they may be joy in the church at Corinth again.

**3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all.**

 If each party continued in their sin, then Paul would of course be sorrowful and not joyful when he returned to Corinth.

 He would address each area of this problem with the word of God as his tool to bring about a healing to the seemingly insurmountable rift that had developed about a man who now was very remorseful over his sin.

**4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.**

 The more Paul loved the church at Corinth the more he would care that they would make the right decisions. Paul not only loved the church at Corinth because he was the one that established it, they were like family to him.

 He had the responsibility as their apostle to see that they continued in the faith and practices that were delivered unto them by him. Some in this church were acting like rebellious teenagers who want no authority in their life but themselves.

**5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. 6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.**

**I may not overcharge you all:** One man’s sin had turned a church upside down and Satan was gaining a stronger foothold in this church, even after the person had repented. 1st Corinthians 5:1.

**Such a man:** If the self-righteous crowd were to continue in their ways unchecked, then the repentant persons sorrow could lead to his departure because of his overmuch sorrow.

**8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.**

 Paul wanted the church to go to him and ask him to return to the church and to confirm that they love him in the Lord. It is one thing to say you have forgiven someone and it is another thing to show them you have forgiven them.

**10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.**

**Lest Satan should get an advantage of us:**Forgiveness is a shield that deflects the wiles (devises) of Satan, so it doesn’t hurt us.

**A door was opened**

**12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.**

**Christ’s gospel:**The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

**A door was opened unto me of the Lord:** 1st Corinthians 16:9 & Colossians 4:3.

**I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus:**Titus told Paul that the Corinthians were remorseful after Paul’s first letter to them.2nd Corinthians 7:5-7.

**14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?**

**The savour of his knowledge:** When we do the right thing in the right way God accepts our offerings and it is a sweet savor (smell) to him and to those around us who are saved or lost.

**A savour of death unto death:** For the lost it shows them both the love of God and eternal consequences of rebelling against his will.

**17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.**

**Many, which corrupt the word of God:** Those who corrupt the word of God were those who gloried in the sin of this man early on because it justified their sins.

 They used this situation to get what they wanted instead of what God intended. God’s word did what was intended once it was acted upon.

**Chapter Three**

**Able Ministers of the New Testament**

**1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?**

**Do we begin again to commend ourselves:**They once recognized Paul’s apostleship when he first came there and began their church. Acts 18.

**Epistles of commendation:** Paul should not have to list his credentials to this church because he started it at God's leading, and many there knew that, but it didn't take much for Satan to lead people away from their foundation.

 Paul's apostleship was questioned by some at Corinth because he was not one of the twelve apostles to the nation of Israel.

 The twelve needed no epistle of commendation, but many that had been sent out to do a work from Jerusalem would often be sent with letters of commendation from the twelve verifying this person was speaking on their behalf, or with their approval.

 Paul did not need a letter of commendation for Corinth because Paul was not sent out as a representative of the church in Jerusalem, but he was sent out by Christ himself as the apostle of the Gentiles. Romans 11:13.

 It was Paul that had the responsibility to send out letters of commendation to churches on the behalf of those he had sent out to do a work among the Gentiles.

 In many of his epistles Paul recommends a particular minister to be received by a church as being sent from him. For example:

***Romans 16:1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.***

 Timothy (Timotheus) was sent by Paul to both Corinth and Thessalonica with letters of commendation from him to them to receive him as coming from Paul. 1st Corinthians 4:17, 16:10 & Philippians 2:19.

**2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:**

**Ye are our epistle:**The church at Corinth itself was Paul's letter of commendation written as Paul says in his heart which is far better than any letter that could be forged.

 Paul said that his epistle (the Corinthians) was first of all known of all men, and also read of all men in that area.

 Everyone knew of the church in Corinth because it was the largest of Paul's churches. Unfortunately, not everything that people knew about this church was good.

**3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.**

 God did a work through his holy Spirit in the lives of these Corinthian people in bringing them to Christ through Paul's ministry an everyone knew that it was God.

 Where were the twelve? They were busy still reaching out unto none but the circumcision (Jews) and Paul it was that was given the dispensation of the grace of God to take the gospel of the grace of God to the Gentiles.

**Not in tables of stone:** Notice Paul's comparison of the tables of stone (the law of Moses) with the fleshly tables of the heart.

 The dispensation of Grace is better than the dispensation of the law because we obey out of our heart of love instead of out of fear of not doing everything on a list written in stone.

**4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;**

**Our sufficiency is of God:** The Corinthian church itself was their letter of commendation to those who thought they needed a letter of approval from Jerusalem.

 Paul was not under the authority of Jerusalem, nor did they send him, God did, and he was all they needed.

**6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.**

**Able ministers of the new testament:** Christ died and shed his innocent blood, which was shed for all people in every dispensation.

***Hebrews 9:17 A testament is of force after men are dead: it is no strength at all while the testator liveth.***

**Not of the letter:**The letter of the law. In Jeremiah 31:31 God said through Jeremiah that he would make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.

 Which simply means the two nations will be re-united as one nation during the kingdom, but then it goes on to say that he will write the law in their hearts.

 That hasn't happened yet, and that is precisely why Peter and the other eleven apostles to the nation of Israel are not described as also being able ministers of the new testament.

 They will be one day when Israel is reunited in the kingdom, and they sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel but not today. Matthew 19:28.

**But of the spirit:** Today the church, the body of Christ, is made able ministers of the new testament by knowing God's plan for this age.

 We have to be able to rightly divide the mystery epistles given to the body of Christ from the Hebrew epistles. An able minister doesn't mix them with the new testament teachings regarding Israel's future in their kingdom.

**7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:**

**The ministration of death, written and engraven in stones:**The wages of sin is death. The law was given to show that there was none righteous, no not one.

 Galatians teaches us that the law (the first testament) was given because of transgressions until the seed should come.

 That seed was Jesus Christ, and he is the testator that had to die fulfilling the old to usher in the new which will be far better, because it will be written in their (Israel's) hearts and not on stone.

 While the testator died to redeem them that were under the law, he also died for us that would believe during the age of grace. Both groups are recipients of salvation because of his work on Calvary.

 This ministration (the law) is also referred to as “the ministration of condemnation” in verse eight below.

**The glory of his countenance:**His face that shined with God’s glory on it.

**Which glory was to be done away:**Just as the glory upon Moses gradually faded away so the law would wax old and vanish away. Hebrews 8:13.

**8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? 9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.**

**The ministration of the spirit:**This is also called “the ministration of righteousness” in verse nine.

**10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. 11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.**

**That which is done away:** The law. The new testament is for the house of Judah, and for the house of Israel when they are united again during the kingdom. Jeremiah 31:31.

 Paul teaches us today in the body of Christ that we are benefactors of the new testament as well as Israel howbeit in a different way.

 We are benefitted in spiritual ways in heavenly places while Israel will be benefitted in physical ways during the kingdom.

**Much more that which remaineth is glorious:** What we in the body of Christ have today under grace is much more glorious than what Israel had under the law.

**12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:**

**We have such hope:** We have the rapture of all saints at the end of this age. Israel under the law had to look forward to the seventieth week of Daniel before their kingdom.

 The promises of Jeremiah 31:31 were not made to the body of Christ. God will enable the Jew in the kingdom to keep the law that God will write on their hearts because of what transpired on the cross for them.

**13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:** *Exodus 34:33.*

**As Moses, which put a vail over his face:**A vail is meant to conceal what is underneath. While Moses dictated the law to Israel there was no veil upon his face and the people could see the glory of the Lord upon him as he spoke.

**To the end of that which is abolished:** When he had finished speaking unto them, he then placed the veil on his face at that time, so the people could not see the glory of the Lord departing.

 The law was abolished in Christ, remember what the leaders of Israel said when they heard Stephen preaching a message given to him by the Lord? Acts 6:15.

 We don’t have to put a veil over our face when we finish telling the wonderful ministry of grace that God has given to us because it will not fade away because it is more glorious.

**14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.**

**Their minds were blinded:** Israel could not see the fulfillment of the law in the Messiah because they chose not to see based on their flesh’s desire to keep themselves under the law because of tradition.

**For until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away:**It goes on to say, “in the reading of the old testament.”

 In Paul’s day the blindness of their minds was still there as they would read the old testament, but it didn’t have to be.

**Which vail is done away in Christ:**When a Jew today accepts Christ as their Saviour they are in Christ’s body (in Christ) and can see things they couldn’t see previously in God’s word.

**15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. 16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.**

**Even to this day, when Moses is read: the vail is upon their heart:** Paul isn't speaking to the individual Jew here, but to the nation as a whole. They have eyes that cannot see because they rejected God’s word in the past.

**When it shall turn to the Lord:** The “it” is a reference to Israel. There is coming a day when all of Israel will be saved and have that vail taken away at the end of the time of Jacob's trouble just prior to the beginning of the kingdom.

**17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**

**There is liberty:** This is not speaking of liberty to sin, but have liberty to serve God in love from the hearts and not out of duty to the Law.

**18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

**From glory to glory:** We do not have a vail upon our faces or on our hearts today as believers because we were never under the law in the first place.

 We look at what Christ has done, and we see it as clearly as looking in a glass mirror and we move from the glory of a created being to the glory of the new creature by the Spirit of the Lord.

**Chapter Four**

**The Light of the Glorious Gospel**

**1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.**

**Having this ministry:**The ministry of reconciliation. See chapter three.

**Handling the word of God deceitfully:**To not rightly divide the word of truth is to handle the word of God deceitfully.

 Sincere people are in the ministry, and they are deceiving the people they want to help but they have been deceived by someone in their past who did not know how to rightly divide the word of truth. 2nd Timothy 2:15.

**3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.** *Verse 6.*

 Paul here proclaimed to the Corinthian hearers that the gospel that we are supposed to preach today, the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:14), is hidden to them that are lost.

**Our gospel:** He called it here "our gospel" because it was different from the kingdom gospel that was still being preached back in Israel to the circumcision. The word gospel simply means good news. Matthew 4:23.

 The gospel that Paul preached was unheard of to the Jew under the law because Paul emphasized the cross as the means by which people could be saved.

***Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom,***

**The god of this world:** Satan is the god (small g) of this world as all who do not belong to Christ by being saved by believing Paul's gospel are following their father (god) the devil.

**5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.**

 While Paul magnifies his office and his message, he is careful never to magnify himself. Romans 11:13.

**6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** *Genesis 1:1-2.*

 Paul takes us back to the account of creation and compares it to our receiving the gospel.

 He also compares the gospel that he preaches today as a light that shines in our hearts and that shows the glory of God not on the face of Moses the law giver but an even more glorious light emanating from the face of Christ.

**7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.**

**This treasure in earthen vessels:** This is the gospel of grace that he and we preach today, and the "earthen vessels" are the recipients that carry that good news.

 God could have chosen the angels to preach his gospel instead of fallen sinful man, but he uses the weak things of this world to confound the strong so that He gets all the glory.

**8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;**

 Paul, in his comparison of believers being similar to vessels informs us that even though we as vessels may be surrounded by danger, we don't have to cry out to the world to save us for He is there.

**10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.**

 Oh, that we would be found faithful to want to tell others of Christ's sacrificial dying on our behalf as well as his perfect life which he lived for us that we might have eternal life.

 They go hand in hand, you can't have one without the other. Remember it is our bodies that are the earthen vessels that carry about the glorious gospel.

**11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.**

 As we suffer and make sacrifices by dying to ourselves others will see that Christ like spirit of giving for others in us and they will be attracted to the Christ who dwells in us and lives through us.

 Many were risking their lives for the gospel's sake and people were receiving life because of it, eternal life.

**13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;** *Psalm 116:10.*

 Paul quotes king David where he is praising God for his goodness in life and death, and while David is alive, he plans to make the best of it and praise the Lord.

 He will not fear death while he is alive, and he will praise him in all his adversities. It wasn't silent praise, nor was it secret praise, David was public with his praise. We should be public with the gospel.

**14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.**

**He which raised up the Lord Jesus:**Here Paul talks about the blessed hope or rapture of the body of Christ (the church) as if he expects Christ to come in his lifetime by his use of the pronoun "us" in verse fourteen where he talks about being raised up. Romans 4:24.

**Shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you:** Romans 4:2 4 & Ephesians 5:22.

**15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.**

 Paul wants us to know that through our thanksgiving towards God for his grace others will see and understand the glory of God for themselves.

**Our outward man perish:**Our outward body is decaying daily because of the sin nature we inherited from Adam.

**The inward man is renewed day by day:** It is our inner man that he renews daily through his Spirit. Ephesians 4:23 and Colossians 3:10.

**17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;**

**Our light affliction, which is but for a moment:**The things wesuffer in this life are but a smallthing compared to the blessings of eternity.

**18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

**Temporal:**Temporary.

**Eternal:** They will last forever. There are rewards for our service and suffering for the cause of Christ which will be revealed one day when faith becomes sight.

 When we stand in his presence, we will clearly see the eternal investments that we have made in this life, and it will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

**Chapter Five**

**Ambassadors of Reconciliation**

**1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**

**If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved:**Our fleshly body is decaying, and it will dissolve in death or at the rapture.

**A building of God:** Our resurrected body is one that is eternal that will not decay, and it will live eternally in the heavens.

**Eternal in the heavens:** We will have bodies designed to live eternally in the heavens which should tell you that you will not live on the earth for eternity. We can come to the earth and New Jerusalem but we have an heavenly destiny in the body of Christ. Israel has an earthly destiny and inheritance.

**2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.**

**For in this we groan:**In this earthly house (our bodies), we ache and groan and so much more as this tabernacle (body) ages.

**Our house which is from heaven:** This mortal body will put on immortality.

**We shall not be found naked:** We will not go into eternity disembodied nor as an angel, but God has a body for us that is eternal that can survive in the presence of a holy God and move about in the heavens.

**4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.**

**Mortality might be swallowed up of life:** Our body naturally wants to get its permanent dwelling place that will not have the limits of this present one.

 This temporary tabernacle (physical body) will be swallowed up by our permanent house (resurrected body).

 Paul taught about it in his epistles to the Romans where he referred to our body’s transformation as our adoption, i.e., the redemption of our body (Romans 8:23).

**5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.**

 Not only has he given us a new body but God who is so gracious has also given us something right now that is a guarantee to us that he will also give unto us a new body.

 God hath wrought or fashioned for us the selfsame thing that Christ himself has which is a glorious body like unto his according to Philippians 3:21.

**That is the earnest of the Spirit:** The word “earnest” means a down payment. We have received a down payment on the Spirit, and while we have all of him, he does not yet have all of us.

 That will happen when the change happens at death, or the rapture, and then we will follow God fully without the continual resistance of the flesh pulling us toward evil.

**6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:**

**At home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:**To be alive in this sin cursed body means we cannot be in the presence of the Lord.

**7 For we walk by faith, not by sight: 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.**

 Both death and the rapture will accomplish the same thing, the acquisition of the new body not made with hands but an eternal one in the heavens.

 Death means we will immediately be with the Lord in heaven. The rapture also places all of us immediately in the presence of the Lord.

**The judgment seat of Christ**

**9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.**

**Wherefore we labour:**We labor for the Lord because we want to be accepted by the Lord which has absolutely nothing to do with earning our salvation. He has done all that is necessary to earn our salvation.

**We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ:**All believers in the body of Christ for the last 2,000 years will be judge at the same time.

**That every one may receive the things done in his body:**This is speaking about the things that everyone has done in Christ’s body (the church).Colossians 1:24.

**11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.**

**The terror of the Lord:** The terror of the Lord is not going to be felt by a believer at the judgment seat of Christ, but it will be experienced for eternity by the one who dies having never accepted Christ.

 Therefore, we should all be about persuading men (mankind) to be reconciled to God.

 The average believer is not accepted by God in his service and will not experience an easy time at the judgment seat of Christ as he or she is called to give an account for their lack of service to the one who died for them.

 Sin or salvation will not be the subject for us at the judgment seat of Christ, but it will be our service after we have been saved. People will be judged for their work as to what sort it was, and if it was profitable.

 People who have promoted whatever was popular instead of recognizing Paul's ministry and patterning ours after his will suffer great loss on that day.

**12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. 13 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.**

 Paul was not bragging of his spirituality but rather he told them that they and he would all stand before God at the judgment seat and that he was warning them that who put on a good show in front of others would one day be humbled.

 Paul said that God is the judge whether or not he or they were sincere, and that he was only trying to get them to consider what lies ahead for those who continued in their disobedience.

**14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:**

**The love of Christ:** Christ’s love should constrain us into his service. Our love for Christ and what he did will never compare to his love for us. Romans 8:35 & Ephesians 3:19.

**If one died for all then all, then were all dead:** Christ died our death for us. So, we should live his life through us. In Romans 6:23 it says the wages of sin is death. Christ had no sin, yet he died for me a sinner.

 So, I died with Christ, but only the sinless Christ could pay the sinners wages because he owed nothing. Death had no hold on Christ so he could resurrection himself from the dead.

**15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.**

 Too many people today who name the name of Christ and who have received God's grace have kept it to themselves and preachers are partially to blame for not crying out to their congregations to get busy serving the Lord.

 They live unto themselves and not unto Christ who died for them. Live unto God it has eternal rewards!

**16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.**

**Henceforth know we no man after the flesh:**We no longer know Christ according to his earthly ministry, but we know him according to his ascended ministry, which was revealed to the Apostle Paul.

 Since he died for us, we as believers are all dead to the flesh, and we should walk in the Spirit, not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

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

**In Christ:**Those who are in the body of Christ by believing the gospel. 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

**A new creature:**The one new man. No longer a Jew, or a Gentile.

**Old things are passed away:** The old man.

 Have you quit sinning since you have gotten saved? No? Why not? Paul is not talking about you quitting all of your old sinful habits and getting new godly ones.

 He is talking about who you were before you were saved (the old man), and who you are now (a new creature). You are a saint.

**18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;**

**All things are of God:** This is speaking of the same “all things” that have become new in the new creature found in verse seventeen above.

**Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ:** God reconcile us to himself while we were his enemies.

**The ministry of reconciliation:**You (a new creature) have been given a ministry to do in Christ’s body (the church) and that is to reconcile the lost to Christ.

**19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.**

**To wit:** To know. Genesis 24:21. How is the one new man possible you may ask? God was in Christ, and he reconciled both Jew and Gentile unto himself by the cross.

**The word of reconciliation:** 1st Corinthians 15:1-4.

 For those of us who have put our trust in God's Son for our salvation God is no longer imputing our trespasses unto us in fact our sins were imputed unto Christ.

 We have been reconciled to Him and he has given the word of reconciliation to the apostle of the Gentiles to give to us to in turn give to the world to reconcile them to God.

**20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.**

**Ambassadors for Christ:**Workers for Christ. 2nd Corinthians 6:1.

**God did beseech you by us:**Because of what we have received we are to go out into this world as his ambassadors and spread the message that Christ Jesus was in the world reconciling people unto God.

 Jesus took our sin, and we got his righteousness.

**21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**

**He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin:** God made Christ to be sin for us. Christ was sinless. Hebrews 4:15.

 Paul ends verse twenty by beseeching the lost there in the church that are hearing this epistle read before the church to be reconciled to God or to be saved. He continues his plea for the lost in chapter six.

**That we might be made the righteousness of God in him:**Because we are in Christ’s body, we have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith.

**Chapter Six**

**The Ministers of God**

**1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.**

**As workers together with God:** Labourers with Christ in the ministry of reconciliation mentioned in the previous chapter. also 1st Corinthians 3:9.

**Receive not the grace of God in vain:** What a waste to hear of the wonderful grace of Jesus and not do anything with it (labouring for him). It is an empty selfish life lived when it is not lived for God. 1st Corinthians 15:3 & 10.

 Paul had clearly explained the grace of Christ to such a point that any lost person had heard enough to be saved even though the letter up to this point had been mainly written to the saved in Corinth.

 Paul knew there were lost people in their midst. Some were first time visitors, others had been there a few weeks, but some were deceiving themselves and sat in the congregation there week after week and were not saved.

**2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)**

 Paul usesa prophecy for Israel (Isaiah 49:8) as a practical application for us today in the age of grace.

**3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: 4 But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,**

**In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God:** Key word is “in” any situation an ambassador finds themselves in God has a way to endure it, and it is endured “by” the things mentioned in the next three verses.

 Paul was beat many times and imprisoned for his faith this would have been enough to get the average minister to have quit, but the apostle Paul, he wasn’t in it for the glory he was in the ministry because the love of Christ constrained him.

**6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, 7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,**

**By:** While there were the setbacks mentioned in verses four and five the blessings that come from God far outweighed them.

 When you see God do something that only he could do whether it was through his word or through something miraculous you can’t help but get excited about serving God.

**8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; 9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; 10 As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.**

**As:** The world sees us ambassadors as deceivers, but God knows we are telling the truth.

 As unknown (nobodies), but we will be well known in eternity while the famous of yesterday will be long forgotten, as dying, but we possess eternal life, as chastened by the, but we alive in Christ.

 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing because of those who we bring to Christ and our going to be with him, as poor, yet possessing all things as joint heirs with Christ. Romans 8:17 & 2nd Corinthians 8:9.

**11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. 12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. 13 Now for a recompence in the same, I speak as unto my children, be ye also enlarged.**

**Our mouth is open unto you:** Paul and his companions held nothing back from the Corinthians, in declaring to them the truth.

**Ye are not straitened in us:** They were not in a poor spiritual condition because of Paul, it was because of their own willingness to listen to these false teachers who had come in and deceived them.

**Be ye also enlarged:**Paul wanted them to be enlarged (rich) spiritually through the word of God.

**14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?**

**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:**Saved and lost people are going in opposite directions, and we are not to unite with the lost to accomplish the things of God.1st Corinthians 5:9-11.

**15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?**

**Belial:** Satan or Wickedness. Deuteronomy 13:13.

**Infidel:**An unbeliever, Pagan, or idolater.

**16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.** *Exodus 29:45 & Zechariah 13:9.*

**Ye are the temple of the living God:** 1st Corinthians 3:16-17.

**17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.** *Isaiah 52:7-12, Hosea 10:1 & Revelation 21:7*.

**Chapter Seven**

**Godly sorrow worketh Repentance**

**1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

**Having therefore these promises:** The promises of God's being a father unto us.

**2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. 3 I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.** *2nd Corinthians 6:11.*

 Paul had given his all for this church, and he would even die in service to them. He wanted them to know of his love and concern for them was just as parents would be for their children.

**4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. 5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.**

 Paul had the concern not only of the churches, but of his companions for their safety and effectiveness in proclaiming God's word because there was opposition from within (the churches) and from without.

**6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.**

**The consolation wherewith he was comforted in you:** Paul tells the Corinthians that after his first letter he had worried how some of them would respond.

 When Titus had come, he told Paul how many of the Corinthians had sorrowed to repentance, and that made him, and his companions rejoice.

**8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. 9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**

 Paul rejoiced that the first epistle brought about godly sorrow over their own sin and then the needed repentance.

 The man who was living in open sin with his stepmother was disciplined at the instruction of the apostle to them and they felt sorrow that their inaction may have caused Paul grief.

**Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation:** The man later repented, and Paul instructed them to receive him back into their fellowship unless he would be overtaken in grief.

 The sorrow of the world is a sorrow that they were caught, but godly sorrow is a sorrow is the realization that one has grieved God and others, and it is one that leads to repentance and the forsaking of such actions in the future.

**11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.**

 Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that they did the right things in this matter, and God's word did its work in this man’s life.

 They did not allow Satan to get a foothold in the church regarding this subject, which he would have, if Paul hadn’t addressed it out of love for them.

**12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. 13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.**

 Paul wanted those that they cared for to know that they had their best interests at heart and when Titus returned and told Paul of the Corinthian’s response, he was overwhelmed with much joy.

**14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. 15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. 16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.**

 Paul's confidence in the Corinthians was so strengthened by the report he received back from Titus that he could now say he had confidence in the Corinthians in all things.

 They truly were making a turnaround in the church, and it was evident to Titus and now to Paul.

**Chapter Eight**

**Grace Purpose Giving**

**1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.**

**We do you to wit:**To know. Paul reminded the rich Corinthians that the churches of Macedonia were giving liberally to the poor saints back in Jerusalem even though they were under severe persecution.

 Paul says that they gave joyfully even though they were in deep poverty. God loves a cheerful giver.

**The grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:** They knew what it meant to be persecuted and their hearts and wallets were knit together with the saints there.

 Macedonia is the place that God called Paul to come and minister when he wanted to head east into Asia, but God wanted Europe to hear the gospel first.

**3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; 4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.**

**To their power:**Their ability to give was increased by God because of their joy in doing so. They had to plead with Paul and his companions to take their offering and to give it to those suffering saints in Jerusalem.

 Paul wanted to let these saints in Macedonia get out of their promise to help the church in Jerusalem because they had not foreseen the trouble that would befall them soon after they had originally promised to send relief.

 They kept their commitment, and Paul was hoping their testimony would help the Corinthians to keep theirs. The Corinthians were not suffering like those of Macedonia, in fact Corinth was flourishing.

**5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. 6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.**

 Titus was initially used a year earlier in making the plight of the church in Jerusalem known throughout the churches in this region.

 It would be he, along with others, that would return at the end of the year on the first day of the week (Sunday) to gather up the offerings for the saints.

**7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. 8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.**

 Paul tells the Corinthians to abound in their giving as they have received bountifully from the Lord in so many other areas including their finances.

 Paul said others made a commitment out of love and later proved they meant what they said, and he was encouraging these saints to do the same as the poor saints in Macedonia.

 Giving money does not prove that you are spiritual, but hoarding it proves the opposite.

**9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ:** He gave his life for us. One year ago, the church under Paul’s leadership determined to send relief to the church in Jerusalem.

 Paul reminds the rich Corinthians that Christ was also rich, and he became poor so that they might become spiritually rich. Paul wanted the church in Corinth to honor their previous commitment.

 They had much, and Paul wanted them to be Christ like in their actions and make some poor people rich by them sending relief to the church in Jerusalem.

 The saints in Jerusalem would have a hard time ministering to the saints there and reaching out to any new ones if others would not help.

**11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. 12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.**

**Out of that which ye have:** We are not to make promises out of that which we do not have.

 Paul tells the Corinthians to give out of what they have, not out of what they don't have. Give what you are willing to give out of love in the area of missions.

**13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: 14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: 15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.** *Exodus 16:18.*

 Paul assures the rich Corinthians that he is not trying to put the entire burden on them alone. He reminds them that each should give according as God has blessed them.

 The shoe will one day be on the other foot and the Corinthians will be in need and other churches that are abounding then will then give to help the church there.

 The church in Jerusalem, after receiving a gift from the churches amongst the Gentiles would be knit together with those that had given to them and would naturally want to give when they could to help those who had helped them.

**16 But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. 17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. 18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;**

 God had put into Titus' heart a desire to help the Corinthians in such a way that was evident to all just as God has gifted each of us with some gift.

**19 And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: 20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: 21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.**

**This grace:** It was imperative that the “grace” (bounty or offering) that was bestowed upon the church in Jerusalem arrive unmolested. With churches supplying large offerings it was necessary that many accompany the offering.

**Providing for honest things:**They were abstaining from the appearance of covetousness by having others involved in watching over the financial gift as stewards.

**22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. 23 Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. 24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.**

**The proof of your love:** The money they had taken up.

 Then the necessary preparations could be made for both the gathering to be ready, and a place of rest and refreshment could be prepared for the wayfaring strangers before they headed on to Jerusalem.

**Chapter Nine**

**Sowing Bountifully**

**1 For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: 2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.**

**It is superfluous:**It was unnecessary for him to write unto them further, but Paul had reason to doubt the people of Corinth would follow through on their pledge to give which they had made a year ago.

**3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: 4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we that we say not, ye should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.**

 Paul sent men (Titus included) to help the Corinthians gather their love offering in advance of the other men arriving as representatives from other churches so they would not be embarrassed that they hadn’t even collected the offering yet that they had promised a year ago.

**5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.**

**And make up beforehand your bounty:** These men would gather the offering before Paul arrived so they would not have to have an offing taken in a hurry.

**6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.**

 This letter was meant as a sermon to be read in the church at Corinth. This would take the burden off of its leadership, which was dealing with a lot of issues, and this letter, if received, would alleviate those problems.

**7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.**

**As he purposeth in his heart:** This is what is known as grace purpose giving. It was a special offering for a specific need.

 It was not an outline on how we are to support the local church on a regular basis, but principles can be had from this account that definitely apply.

**8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 9 As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.** *Psalm 112:9.*

**God is able to make all grace abound toward you:** God remembers those who give sacrificially when they are in need later on, and he remembers the opposite as well.

**10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; 11 Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.**

**He that ministereth seed to the sower:** God is the one who administers the necessary seed to the sower, by putting a burden upon the heart of those who have to give to those that have.

 If you are not a sower of what you have been given, you will not be blessed with more seed to sow.

**Multiplying your seed sown:** The Corinthians would also be enriched by their obedience to God moving in their hearts to be a part of the work by multiplying their blessings from Him.

 God does not forget our labor of love and he rewards those that get involved in his work.

**12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; 13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; 14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.**

**The want of the saints:** The Corinthians would be blessed spiritually by the saints in Jerusalem who would glorify God for their deliverance.

**Their prayer for you:**The poor saints in Jerusalem would remember the Corinthians favorably in their prayers, who had they not gotten involved in the relief project, the saints in Jerusalem would not have had any reason to get to know the Corinthians.

**15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.**

**His unspeakable gift:** This is the gift of God of eternal life mentioned in Romans 6:23.

**Chapter Ten**

**Paul's Boasting**

**1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:**

 When Jesus walked this earth, he was approachable, as was Paul. Little children loved him because he was truly humble.

**Am bold toward you:** Paul’s words were meek and gentle at times, but they were also bold towards those who were in rebellion against the truth.

**2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.**

 Paul didn’t want to have to be bold when he was with them, because some hadn’t yet repented of their open sin. Paul was begging (beseeching) them to repent beforehand.

**As if we walked according to the flesh:** Some people thought Paul was walking (responding) in the flesh when they read his letters. He was telling them what he would do if they did not repent.

**3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.**

**We do not war after the flesh:** Paul would do his battling not in the church by gathering a big crowd behind him and kicking everyone out that didn’t agree with him that would be walking in the flesh (carnal).

**The weapons of our warfare:** Paul would enter into the spiritual arena to do battle on his knees and though his letters that were written with the sharpest sword ever used in battle, the word of God. Paul was destined to win.

**The pulling down of strong holds:**These are mostly doctrinal strong holds produced from seducing spirits and the doctrines of devils.

**5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**

**Casting down imaginations:** Most battles for the Christian take place in the mind long before they ever get to the flesh.

**And every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God:** Pride and lust begin to do their work in the mind and if our thoughts are not brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ we are doomed to fail.

**Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ:** How can we be victorious in our daily battles? Make it a habit of asking yourself when you are tempted.

 What does God's word say about this? If you don’t know the answer to something, then wait awhile and find out before listening to the flesh.

**6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.**

**Having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience:**Paul would not shirk his responsibility as the apostle of the Gentiles and overlook something that was hurting the Churches testimony.

**Your obedience is fulfilled:** This had to do with the offering that was being collected for the destitute kingdom believers back in Jerusalem who were suffering immensely.

 The Corinthians had agreed to give a gift, and Paul was reminding them they needed to honor their commitment to them.

**7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.**

 There were those in Corinth who began to look down upon the apostle Paul, because he was not as eloquent as the intellectuals of Corinth.

 Because Paul did not have their charisma, or possess a beautiful voice they began to criticize him as being out of touch, and that they knew better than Paul what they ought to do to serve God, after all they were Christians too.

 They had forgotten who Paul was to the body of Christ, and he reminds them as he defends his ministry in the next verses.

**8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: 9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.**

**Our authority:** Paul did not want to use his office to bully anyone around and make them do what he said because he was the apostle of grace and not law.

***Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:***

**10 For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. 11 Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present.**

 Paul was telling the group in Corinth that thought he was bluffing about coming and setting things in order that regardless of his size and weakness he would be coming.

 He would be coming to battle with every weapon the Lord would provide to him including his office as the apostle of the Gentiles.

**12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.**

**We dare not make ourselves of the number:** Paul was not perfect, but he has a perfect Saviour and God's word is perfect, and Paul knew he was standing upon God's word in this instance.

 Those who were comparing themselves in Corinth with other Christians and who were commending one another against the apostle Paul were not wise. They would get what was coming to them if they chose to persist in their rebellion to Paul's apostolic authority.

**13 But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.**

**Things without our measure:** Paul said he was not overstretching his authority and he was not bragging in the least bit as where those he was speaking to.

 They remind me of those who spoke against Moses and said you are not the only one God speaks through. The earth opened up and swallowed them straight down to hell.

**14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ:**

 Paul would only go as far as the Lord would allow in the area of finances. As more funds would come in Paul and those in Corinth would take the message to the regions beyond Corinth.

**15 Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, 16 To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.**

**Not boasting of things without our measure:**Paul started the church in Corinth and with every new believer that got saved after he left Paul’s ministry was enlarged as well as theirs.

 And with time the gospel would naturally begin to expand in those areas. Paul did not boast of the growth as coming about because of his efforts although he could.

 Others were complaining because they thought Paul was taking credit for their efforts in the area. Paul was excited for the work of others in the area.

**17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.**

**Chapter Eleven**

**The Simplicity that is in Christ**

**1 Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. 2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.**

**Bear with me a little in my folly:** Paul was saying. “Let me be foolish for a moment while I explain something.”

 Some have seen this verse and said, see the church is the bride of Christ. First of all, the term the bride of Christ is not mentioned in scripture. See all of Revelation 21.

 The bride of the Lamb is, however, found there. She is identified as the city of New Jerusalem. It is a very Jewish city with the number twelve found all over it. Twelve is the number of Israel.

**I have espoused you to one husband:** Paul looks upon the Corinthian believers as a father looks upon a daughter who is getting ready to be married.

 Paul had begotten the Corinthians through the gospel. He wants only what is best for his Corinthian children. 1st Corinthians 4:15. They were his children in the faith as Timothy was also his son in the faith. 1st Timothy 1:2.

 When did their espousal take place? The moment they were saved. They became a part of Christ’s body the moment they got saved.

**That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ:**Notice Paul carefully chose the word “as” (a similitude) to describe them. The Corinthians were “as” a chaste virgin. How did they become “as” a chaste virgin?

***Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things******unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:***

 Paul took his ministry as the apostle of the Gentiles as serious as a loving father did his to his daughter, and he used a “foolish” similitude to explain his relationship to them, and their relationship to God.

 The language can sound a bit confusing at first, but remember when you trusted Christ, you became one with him (you are literally in Christ).

 Paul used marriage language because it is a picture of salvation. How long are we saved for? How long is marriage supposed to last? Forever.

**3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.** *Genesis 3.*

**The simplicity that is in Christ:** Salvation is simple because it is in a person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

 Legalists came in from Jerusalem and began to tell them how they needed more than what Paul gave them and since they came from Jerusalem many in Corinth believed them and even began to be ashamed of Paul.

**4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.**

**Another Jesus:** They preached the same Jesus, but in a different way. When Jesus came, he came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and not to the Gentiles. He came under the law to redeem them that were under the law.

 He came and preached the gospel of the kingdom to a nation that was longing for the long-awaited kingdom to come.

 We today preach Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since before the world began, but which was revealed unto Paul to give unto the body of Christ (the church).

 There were those of the circumcision who were preaching Jesus Christ according to Israel’s prophecy that was under the law. Galatians 4:4.

 The mystery program is Jesus Christ's heavenly ministry as the head of the body of Christ while the prophecy program is preaching Jesus Christ according to Israel’s earthly kingdom program.

**Another spirit:** Obviously this is speaking of a seducing spirit.

**Another gospel:** There were different gospels for the different programs. The gospel of the kingdom is associated with Israel’s program, while the gospel of the grace of God is associated with the body of Christ. Galatians 2:7.

**5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. 6 But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been throughly made manifest among you in all things.**

**I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles:** Paul was not behind any of the twelve not even Peter. In fact, he was given more revelations than all of them and the people of Corinth were witnesses of Paul’s knowledge.

**7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.**

**I have preached to you the gospel of God freely:** Some of the people who had corrupted them with the Law also had letters commendation from Jerusalem.

 They were supported by the church in Jerusalem, and they challenged Paul’s apostleship because Paul wasn’t on the Jerusalem payroll.

 That kingdom church was now destitute, and it was relying on the Gentile churches to send relief back to Jerusalem of which Paul was leading the effort.

 These deceitful workers were no longer there in Corinth, but they had done their damage and had left just as soon as they had sown enough doubt in enough people’s minds in Corinth to give Paul a hard time.

 Paul worked a secular job for twelve years prior to this time so that he would not be chargeable to the Corinthians, and other ones as well.

 The poorest of churches supported Paul financially while the richest churches never even thought about helping him.

**I robbed other churches:** This should have floored them in Corinth to be told something they should have seen all along.

 Paul knew that this church was a carnal church and to add to it the responsibility to support its founder would just add to their problems. He willingly suffered for them; the deed was never reciprocated back to Paul by them.

**9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.**

**When I was present with you and wanted:** Paul had great needs while he was ministering to these saints, but he did not make any demands of those new believers in Corinth because he didn't want them to think he was in it for the money.

 All the while, the more spiritually mature church in Macedonia continually gave to the apostle Paul’s needs even though they were a poor church and Corinth was a very wealthy church.

**10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. 11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. 12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.**

 The very same people who claimed they came from God and that Paul was not with them became dependent upon Paul and the Gentile churches that he established for their very survival.

 Paul cared enough to not allow this church to defile itself with this false teaching concerning the law’s position in the church in this age of grace, and the Gentiles requirements concerning it. They were not under the law, and they never were. Romans 6:14-15.

**13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.**

**False apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ:** They transformed themselves into apostles. An apostle was a sent one. They sent themselves.

 These false apostles from Jerusalem claimed that Paul was a false apostle because he was not sent out from them, nor supported by them. Paul points out that it is they who were the ones preaching the wrong message to the wrong people.

 They were not preaching it to the lost sheep of the house of Israel as they were supposed to still be doing while Israel's kingdom hopes were still being offered, they were taking their message of law out to the Gentiles where it didn't belong.

**Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light:**He can change.

**His ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness:** Seducing spirits with doctrines of devils. 1st Timothy 4:1.

**16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. 17 That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. 18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.**

 Paul’s hand was forced here in that he now had to parade his credentials before them because of these troublemakers attacking his apostleship and he called it foolishness.

**19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. 20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. 21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, I speak foolishly, I am bold also.**

 Paul was explaining to the Corinthian hearers that all the things that these Judaizers were claiming as their credentials to be their teachers, that he had them beat in every area.

 Then he tells them that if he were to come there bragging of his credentials it would be foolish and then using them to run someone else down would be a reproach to God and his work.

**22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.**

**Paul’s sufferings**

**23 Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.**

 Paul is saying it is useless for people to spend time bragging about what they had done for the cause of Christ in their life. Their emphasis should have been put on what Christ has done through them.

 Since they were successful in leading folks away from the simplicity that Paul taught them about in Christ, he now would have to list his credentials which were his sufferings.

**25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.**

 Paul lists, against his will, all the sufferings he endured, not all of his building projects, baptisms, and church attendance.

**28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? 30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. 31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.**

 Besides all that Paul daily had the care of all the churches that he had started on his mind and heart, just as he was pleading for the Corinthians he also pleaded for many others.

**32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: 33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.**

 Paul recalled how that when he had just begun to minister God miraculously delivered him from the hands of his enemies when he could do nothing himself.

 God blinded the eyes of these soldiers while at the same time gave discernment to God's people as to how to get Paul out of there with his life.

 Paul gloried in his weakness of hiding in a basket because God in his strength chose a foolish basket to deliver him. Acts 9:23-25.

**Chapter Twelve**

**The Messenger of Satan**

**1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.**

**I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:** Paul had at least three visions of the risen Lord in which he had receive revelations of the Lord according to scripture. It is stated here that there were more visions and revelations to come.

 There was the time of his calling on the road to Damascus, as well as the time when he was in the temple in Jerusalem and was told to get out of Jerusalem in a vision because the Jews would not hear him.

 Paul wanted to stay in Jerusalem and convince his own people and he thought he was the best person for the job because he had recently been the church’s greatest enemy, but God knew better.

 The third time was while he was imprisoned where he received further revelations concerning the mystery program.

 These are called his prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon). These could have all been received at different times.

**2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth; such an one caught up to the third heaven.**

**I knew a man in Christ:** The man was “in Christ”. Both kingdom saints and grace saints were both “in Christ”. Just in a different way. Kingdom saints were to abide “in” Christ. We are in his body, the church.

**Above fourteen years ago:** The timing is important here, so find out where Paul was, what he was doing, and with whom he was and you can narrow down the list of who it may have been, but scripture narrows it down to only one person I believe.

**Whether in the body, I cannot tell: or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth:** Paul is stating that he doesn’t know if this person was in their physical body or caught up in a vision.

**Such an one caught up to the third heaven:** The third heaven is a reference to that which is beyond both the first (earth’s atmosphere) and second heaven (outer space).

 The third heaven is the place where the throne of God is and where we as believers go to at the moment of death.

**3 And I knew such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth; 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.**

**Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell:**Paul repeats himself in back-to-back verses like in Romans 6:14 & 15 because what he is saying is important for us to understand.

**He was caught up into paradise:** Paradise is where the kingdom saints went when they died. Since paradise was now in heaven, hell could enlarge itself. Isaiah 5:14.

 John is the only person according to the scriptures that the Paul knew who fits the description perfectly. Paradise is mentioned only two other times in scripture, and paradise is referred to here as being somewhere in the third heaven.

 Paul, as a member of the body of Christ would not go to paradise when he died, but to the presence of the Lord in heaven.

**5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.**

**Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory:** Twice Paul says he will not glory accept in his infirmities or (weaknesses) (V:9) so the very words of Paul himself prove to us that he is not speaking of himself, but of another, if words have any meaning at all.

**6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.**

 It is a natural thing for our flesh to want to glory in itself or to receive glory from others but all that is foolish when God is the one deserving the glory.

 Paul was right in correcting any errors these people were spreading concerning his office as the apostle of the Gentiles.

 Because of the natural tendency to glory in the flesh when you do something that will be seen by the public, Paul wanted to make sure they did not start to exalt him instead of God.

**7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.**

**The abundance of the revelations:** All the mysteries concerning the body of Christ that were revealed to him.

**A thorn in the flesh:**God allowed Satan to send a messenger to buffet him that was comparable to a thorn in the flesh.

 Many people key on the word flesh, and totally ignore the word “messenger” which denotes personality, and the being that this messenger was sent by Satan.

 Three times Paul has had to deal with this problem at Corinth that exalted itself against Paul and his ministry even challenging Paul’s authority there as an apostle.

**The messenger of Satan to buffet me:** The obvious conclusion is that Satan sent one of his ministering spirits to thwart the work of Paul in the area.

 These spirits are behind all the deception preached in every false organization that masquerades as a Church of God.

**8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

 Was it a physical ailment such as his eyes? That is very possible. Was it something like a satanically lead opposition in the church at Corinth? That is also possible.

 But whatever it was doesn’t really matter because the only thing that matters is that God’s grace is sufficient to get us through anything we face in life, and it can also humble us if we need it.

**10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.**

 Here we see Paul combining physical infirmities alongside of reproaches and persecutions among other things as things that God can use to keep us humble.

**11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.**

**I ought to have been commended of you:** Paul tells them the position of honor he should have had in their eyes and hearts had they been obedient to God as their apostle.

 Because they were not obedient to God, they naturally would not be obedient to someone who would remind them of their sins.

**12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.**

**The signs of an apostle:** Paul spoke in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:18), he raised a man from the dead, he cast out devils from those that were possessed, and he healed many people in his early ministry.

**13 For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.**

 Paul reminds the rich Corinthian that while he was there, he didn’t require them to financially support him which they should have, and he regrets not having them do so.

 They now felt no obligation to help the church in Jerusalem by sending them what they had originally promised. Paul felt partially to blame for that.

**14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.**

**I seek not yours, but you:** Paul knew some of his opposition would claim Paul was in the ministry for the money as a way to undermine his authority.

 Paul took that excuse away from them by telling them in advance that he wanted nothing from them but their obedience to God.

 He wanted to give to those who were acting like disobedient children towards him instead of receiving from them.

**The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children:** Paul was their father in the faith having begotten them through the gospel. 1st Corinthians 4:15.

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

 This is true in many areas of life. The food that is good for us many do not like. The medicines that will make us well often taste sickening.

 The words we need to hear sometimes never get uttered and when they are on rare occasions they are rarely followed.

**16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. 17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? 18 I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?**

**Being crafty, I caught you with guile:** Paul asks the Corinthians to think back to what Paul had done for the church and to ask themselves, was Paul and his assistants trying to get gain for themselves while they were here?

**19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. 20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:**

 The people needed to business with God and Paul had a calling from God to see that they were reconciled to God. Paul truly loved these people, even ones who despised him.

**21 And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.**

 Here is the root cause of their opposition to Paul. They had followed the world’s example of lasciviousness and had refused to repent of it, so they began to attack the only person who would stand up against their sin, Paul.

**Chapter Thirteen**

**Examine yourselves**

**1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.** *Deuteronomy 19:15.*

**This is the third time I am coming to you:** Here Paul quotes an old testament precept where Moses was instructing the children of Israel. Christ also quoted this same verse in Matthew 18:16 with regard to judgment in the kingdom.

 Nothing is said about Paul's second visit to Corinth, but it doesn’t appear to have swayed the rebellious to repent and Paul was hoping they would get right with God and one another before he came.

**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:**

**I will not spare:** The guilty thought Paul was unable to do anything to them. The people of Corinth were challenging Paul because when they saw him last, they saw the frail frame of a man and somehow thought he would be afraid of their numbers.

**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.**

**Ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me:** While Paul was weak in the flesh, he reminds them that Christ was also weak in the flesh when he was crucified, but he was able to accomplish great things through his weakness.

**He was crucified through weakness:**His flesh was human, and it was weak.

**He liveth by the power of God:**He lives today by the power of God in the resurrection.

**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?**

**Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith:** Paul was genuinely concerned for these people in the church because they saw no need of repentance for their deeds and even gloried in their rebellion and mocked the apostle of the Gentiles.

**Jesus Christ is in you:**All saved people who have believed the gospel of the grace of God have Christ living inside them. Colossians 1:27.

**Except ye be reprobates:** A religious unbeliever who is still in his sin.

**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.**

**Your perfection:** Paul wanted the believers in the church to be spiritually complete, or mature.

**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.**

 Paul did not want to be sharp with them and do more damage than good. When you write a letter there is more time to think and to choose your words more carefully.

**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.**

**Be perfect:**The word “perfect” means to be spiritually mature.

**12 Greet one another with an holy kiss. 13 All the saints salute you. 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.**

**Greet one another with an holy kiss:** Paul is the only one who says this in scripture, and he does four times. Romans 16:16, 1st Corinthians 16:20 & 1st Thessalonians 5:26.

**The communion of the Holy Ghost:**All believers have the Holy Ghost residing in them, so they have that in common and it is a strong unifying factor.

***The second epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.***

 Philippi was the city where Paul and his companions in the ministry were shamefully entreated.

**The End**

 II Corinthians

Chapter One:

1. What is the theme of Chapter one:

2. How are believers able to comfort others?

3. What will those who suffer be partakers of? V:7

4. What did Paul despair of in Asia?

5. Who accompanied Paul to Corinth to preach? V:19

6. What is the "earnest of the Spirit"?

7. What did Paul want to be to the Corinthians?

Chapter Two:

1. What did Paul determine not to do?

2. What should the Corinthians do so someone will not be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow?

3. Why should they do this? v:11

4. What did Paul find when he came to Troas to preach the gospel?

Chapter Three:

1. What did Paul call the Corinthians in verse 2?

2. What did God make them? V:6

3. What does Paul say is more glorious?

4. Where is vail today upon many Jews?

5. What does it mean to be changed from glory to glory? v:18

Chapter Four:

1. Who is the god of this world?

2. What has Satan done concerning the gospel?

3. Who does Paul say will raise believers from the dead?

Chapter Five:

1. What is the "building of God" that Paul talks about?

2. While we are "present" in the body what should we be doing? V:9

3. Where will all believers appear one day?

4. What should we do since Christ died for us?

5. What is a person if he is in Christ?

6. What ministry was given unto us?

7. Where was God when he was reconciling the world unto himself?

8. Why did the sinless Jesus become sin for us?

Chapter Six:

1. Why should a believer not be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever?

2. What is the Temple of the living God today?

3. What benefit is there in coming out from among the unbelievers?

Chapter Seven:

1. What did Paul face in Macedonia?

2. What made the Corinthians sorry?

3. What happened after they were made sorry?

Chapter Eight:

1. What did the poor churches of Macedonia do that the Corinthians needed to do?

2. How could the Corinthians prove the sincerity of their love?

3. How does Christ serve as our example in giving?

4. Where the Corinthians supposed to give out of what they didn't have yet or out of what they did have?

5. How were believers to give unto this work?

Chapter Nine:

1. Why did Paul want the Corinthians prepared to give their offering to the saints in Jerusalem when they arrived?

2. What principal does Paul teach us concerning giving?

3. How should people determine what they should give?

Chapter 10:

1 How do we war against the devil?

2 What are the weapons of our warfare?

3 How should a believer glory?

Chapter Eleven:

1. Why was Paul jealous for the Corinthians?

2. What did Paul fear?

3. How did Paul preach the gospel to the Corinthians?

4. How do the false apostles deceive people?

5. How did Paul escape Aretas hands?

Chapter Twelve:

1. Who was Paul talking about that was caught up to heaven?

2. Where was that person caught up to?

3. What did God give to Paul to keep him humble?

4. What did God tell Paul when he asked to have it removed?

5. When do we have strength to do God's work?

6. What does Paul say about himself concerning the other apostles?

**Chapter Thirteen:**

1. How can every word be established?

2. What are people to examine themselves concerning?