

PREPARATION FOR LESSON: Read 2 Corinthians 1 - 13**BACKGROUND**

Paul had started the church in Corinth c. 51 AD. In early 55 AD Paul was on his 3rd missionary trip. While in Ephesus, he heard about serious problems in Corinth. Church members had salvation, but there was no evidence in their daily lives. So Paul wrote them a letter of reproof and sent it with Timothy. It is our book of 1st Corinthians. Within a few weeks Timothy returned and said the church refused to accept this reproof. Paul makes a quick personal visit and confirms their defiance. Many are now involved in immorality. False teachers have taken over and have changed the gospel message. They claim to have more authority than Paul. During Paul's visit, they insult him in front of the congregation. Further confrontation will only make it worse. So Paul returns to Ephesus and writes a harsh letter (13:10) which he sends with Titus. Because it deals with people and their personal problems, it is not included in Scripture. Paul wonders if the church will respond to his harshness or if they will become more rebellious.

Several months later, as Paul is teaching in Ephesus, a riot breaks out against him. Knowing his life is in danger, Paul leaves town immediately. He heads north and then west to northern Greece where he waits for Titus to bring news about Corinth. The recent events have taken their toll – anxiety and tension about Corinth, fear of losing his life in the Ephesian riot and physical illness – all of this has left him discouraged and depressed. (1:8; 7:5)

Finally Titus arrives and tells him the majority of church members in Corinth have changed their attitude. They want to follow Paul's leadership and message. However not all the problems have been resolved. Church members continue in immorality. A small group still follows the false teachers. Their accusations against Paul are being heard everywhere. They say Paul is not an apostle; he is a liar, a coward, is planning to embezzle money and in reality is insane.

In response to this situation, Paul writes yet another letter of reproof in early 56 AD. It is our book of 2nd Corinthians.

THEME Reproof to the rebellious who are following false teachers and those continuing in immorality.

OUTLINE

- I. Reproof thru **EXPLANATION** 1 - 5
 - Why he changed his travel plans
 - Why he wrote them a harsh letter
 - Why they need to restore the disciplined church member
 - Why he (Paul) had to use his authority
 - Because God called and gifted him to be a church leader
 - Because of God's Reviewing Stand
- II. Reproof thru **INSTRUCTION** about... 6 - 9
 - ...their relationship to him
 - ...their relationship to non-believers
 - ...their giving
- III. Reproof thru **DEFENSE** - he ... 10 - 13
 - ...is not a coward; if necessary, he will come with boldness 10:1, 11
 - ...has knowledge even if they do not accept his speaking skills 11:5-6
 - ...did not receive a salary so he could undermine the false teachers 11:12
 - ...is equal to the "super-apostles" in work, experience and power 11 - 12
 - ...is not dishonest 12:17-18
 - ...is not an impostor; Jesus is speaking thru him 13:3

EXPLANATIONS

Chapter 1 Paul changed his travel plans so that when he got to Corinth, it could be a time of joy rather than reproof.

Chapter 2

- He wrote the harsh letter because he loved them; "tough love" gives reproof when needed.
- He explains what they should do about the man disciplined for incest, who has now repented.
 - Action: the church is to forgive and restore him.
 - Reason: so he does not think he is beyond forgiveness and Satan cannot use it to divide the church.



EXPLANATIONS *continued*

Chapter 5 The Reviewing Stand of Jesus; Bema, Rostrum (usually translated *judgment seat of Christ* or *tribunal*)

- 5:10 *It is necessary that the true character of all believers be revealed. It will happen in front of the Reviewing Stand of Jesus (Bema) in order that each of us receives our wages. They will be based on our choices, how we made them and how we used our opportunities. What we have done will be shown either to be worthy of wages or worthless.*

Evaluation Salvation is a gift; it is what we do after salvation that gives us rewards and wages.

Rewards, praise and honor for godly desires and motives in what we did and said.

...for wisely using opportunities that God gave us.

Wrong desires and motives of what we did or said **shown** to prove they are not worthy of wages.

All sin confessed to the Lord has been forgiven and erased, so it will never be displayed.

Vindication, apologies and justice for loss of reputation, accusations and injustice in this life.

- We are told about the Reviewing Stand to encourage and motivate us; wrongs in this life will be corrected.

Chapter 6 **Stop teaming up with non-believers** because you will pull in one direction; they will pull in another.

- The Corinthians have done this in:
 - ...prostitution at the temple of Aphrodite
 - ...taking lawsuits to the pagan jury to settle trivial church problems
 - ...joining others involved in vice, dishonesty and idolatry
 - ...seeking and marrying a non-believing spouse
 - ...following false teachers
- In relationships that involve goals and decisions...
 - Mature believers want to do what is right; to please God.
 - Non-believers want to do what works best or is convenient.
 - Join in relationships where you have the same goals.

Chapter 9:7 God loves a cheerful giver

The Greek word for *cheerful* is *hilarón* from which we get the word *hilarious*. Believers should not give out of pressure or guilt; they should give out of joy. In the New Testament, there is no set amount or percentage.

Chapter 11:14 Satan masquerades as an angel of light. He tempts us with things that look innocent, appealing and good.

He originally was the highest, most powerful angel, *Lucifer; the one who bears light*. When he tried to be God, he became God's *adversary* (Satan). He appears as an *angel of light* but in reality, he is the *prince of darkness*.

Chapters 1 - 13 Accusations against Paul

- fickle, a liar 1:17
- no letters of recommendation 3:1
- insane 5:13
- coward and afraid to come to Corinth 10:1
- unimpressive in person 10:10
- lesser than the *super-apostles* 11:5
- not a professional orator 11:6
- so inferior he did not deserve a salary 11:7
- dishonest 12:16
- an impostor; Jesus did not speak thru him 13:3

APPLICATION Two benefits of salvation

Answered prayer

Salvation does not guarantee our prayers will be answered the way we want.

Salvation guarantees God's grace and power will always provide what we need.

God says to us, *My **grace** is sufficient for you; My power will be everything you need in your weakness.* 2 Cor. 12:9

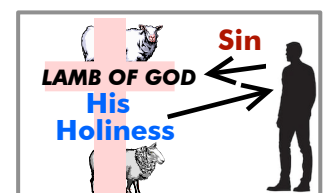
We meet God's standard of holiness

The Sin and Burnt Offerings in the Old Testament were a picture.

Jesus came as the perfect Lamb of God.

All of our sin was transferred to Him on the cross.

All of His perfection and holiness is credited to us, when we accept His payment.



God took the sinless Christ and poured onto Him our sins.

Then in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us. 2 Cor 5:21 (Living Bible)

