



SECOND CORINTHIANS

The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People



Part 2 — “Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians” — 17 September 2023

Introduction: Jan III Sobieski and the Battle of Vienna (12 September 1683)

Main Point: The Lord calls believers to exercise the virtues of courage and faithfulness in the _____ that He entrusts to us and in the _____ that He provides.

Paul’s Correspondence with the Corinthian Church

“Paul’s relationship with the Corinthian Christians, which stretched over a period of several years (c. AD 50-57), was a very complex affair. The apostle made three visits to Corinth. Emissaries of Paul made visits to Corinth, and members of the Corinthian congregation visited Paul while he was in Ephesus. In addition, Paul sent several letters to the Corinthians during this period, and received at least one from them.”

—Colin G. Kruse

- **Having established the church in Corinth and then returned to Antioch, Paul’s ministry of correspondence with them began during his Third Missionary journey and his time in _____ (Acts 18:24-20:1)**
 - (1) *Paul’ wrote a letter to the church at some point after he had been in Ephesus, warning them about their conduct and associations.*
1 Cor. 5:9—I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people
 - (2) *Paul then received numerous communications from various groups within the Corinthian church.*
1 Cor. 1:11—For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.
1 Cor. 16:17—I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence
⇒ Reports were made about immorality in general and one instance of it in particular, (1 Cor. 5:1) as well as divisions within the church in connection with the Lord’s supper (1 Cor. 11:18).
 - (3) *Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in light of these issues of which he had become aware.*
“It was to clarify the intention of his ‘previous letter,’ respond to news brought by Chloe’s people, deal with issues raised in the Corinthians’ letter, and head off emerging criticism of his own person and ministry that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians...” —Colin G. Kruse
 - (4) *Paul sent Timothy to visit the church and, based on his report, he felt he must visit them himself.*
1 Cor. 16:10—When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am.
2 Cor. 2:1—For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you.
“Distressing news about the church, conveyed to Paul in Ephesus by Timothy, prompted the apostle to travel to Corinth and to confront the Corinthians about the matters...reported to him. That visit did not conclude well.” —Guy Waters
 - (5) *Paul’ then wrote a ‘severe letter’ in light of the arrival of false teachers who were attacking both his doctrine and apostolic authority.*
2 Cor. 7:8—For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while.
 - **Paul maintained contact with the Corinthians throughout his time in _____ (Acts 20:2)**
 - (1) *The arrival of Titus encouraged Paul because it seemed that the ‘severe letter’ had its intended effect.*
2 Cor. 7:5-6—⁵For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. ⁶But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,
 - (2) *Paul wrote 2 Corinthians in order to rebuild his relationship with the church and to encourage and exhort them.*
“Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia around AD 56, having received news from Titus that [they] had responded positively to his “severe letter”...He [also] wanted to deal with criticisms of himself that had been aired in Corinth (1:12-24)...[and] to urge the Corinthians to carry out their previous intention to contribute to the poor believers in Jerusalem.” —Colin G. Kruse
 - (3) *It is likely that Paul returned to Corinth once again for a final visit.*
Acts 20:2b-3a—²...he came to Greece. ³There he spent three months...
“Apparently either as a result of his letter or because of his presence in Corinth for a third time, the problems in Corinth were settled for the time being. This can be inferred from Paul’s letter to the Romans, written from Corinth during these months...If Paul spent three months in Greece in a frame of mind to write Romans...the situation must have improved markedly.” —Colin G. Kruse
- Key Point:** Having faithfully proclaimed Christ and taught the Corinthians to live as His people, Paul continued to _____ for them privately in prayer and publicly through rebuke, exhortation, and instruction.

I Corinthians

Author/Date: Paul, c. AD 53-54, written from Ephesus

Content: “a letter of correction in which Paul stands over and against the Corinthians on issue after issue, mostly behavioral, but which are nevertheless betrayals of the Gospel of Christ and life in the Spirit.” —Fee & Stewart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*

Theme: Christ (*Messiah*) has sanctified His people in their _____, can do so in their _____, and will ultimately do so for all _____.

I Cor. 1:2-3—²To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Points of Emphasis:

1. The Gospel of God's _____ to us in Christ is the display of His wisdom in the world (1:18-2:16)
2. Stop acting like _____ in your divisions, immorality, associations, etc. (3:1-11:1)
3. Your gathered _____ should be reverent and orderly, with all things done in love (11:2-14:40)
4. Your ultimate hope is not in the things of this life, but in the _____ (15:1-58)

Key Point: God has called us into _____ with His Son, we should therefore walk in it until it is made consummate.

I Cor. 1:4-9—⁶...the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Corinthians

Author/Date: Paul, c. AD 54-55, written from Ephesus

Content: “...deals primarily with Paul's tenuous relationship with the Corinthian church and in the process touching on several other matters as well (Paul's ministry, the collection for the poor in Jerusalem, and some [false teachers] who have invaded the church.”

—Fee & Stewart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*

Theme: God has _____ His people through Christ (*Messiah*), they can now _____ one another by the work of the Spirit in and through them.

2 Cor. 1:3-4—³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Points of Emphasis:

1. Christ (*Messiah*) has come in order that God's _____ of salvation and the indwelling of the Spirit given in the OT might be fulfilled (1:3-3:18)
2 Cor. 1:21-22—²¹And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²²and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.
2 Cor. 3:5b-6—...but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
2. Although the blessings of these promises are often displayed through _____ in a fallen world, believers live with _____ in what remains unseen (4:1-5:21)
2 Cor. 4:7—But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.
2 Cor. 5:6-7—⁶So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight.
3. Believers who have been comforted by God's grace should _____ in accordance with it and extend it to others (6:1-7:16)
2 Cor. 7:1—Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.
To the Repentant (7:10) *To the Needy* (8:6-7)
4. Believers should recognize that the true marks of an apostle are both the _____ and _____ of Christ (10-13)
2 Cor. 13:3-4—³since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. ⁴For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.

Key Point: Since we have _____ with God in Christ, we should live in _____ with one another in the church.

2 Cor. 13:11—Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Concluding Thought

- The _____ of Paul should serve as an encourage to us to look to and trust in Christ to be our strength for faithful service in our vocations!

I Cor. 11:1—Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.



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