

Parson to Person
2 Corinthians 13 – Part 3
(The Measure of God's Work)

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Corinthians 13:11).

The Measure of God's Work

Many ask if the Corinthians heeded Paul's counsel and repented of their disobedience—moving away from the carnal lifestyles they had tolerated/embraced. The best answer is yes! Moreover, it seems that their repentant posture continued for several years—at least until there was another uprising against the Church leadership. We have this information based upon an extra-biblical source: Clement, the Bishop of Rome.

Paul's Third Visit

It is reported that Paul's third visit to Corinth lasted about three months (at which time he wrote his epistle/letter to the Romans).

When writing to the Romans, Paul signed off including a mention of the Corinthians' financial contribution to the support he had asked of them. He wrote, *“For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem”* (Romans 15:26). Corinth was the capital of Achaia. It is likely Paul took position of the “gift” then—and later delivered it to the needy saints.

Secondly, an extra-biblical but reliable source declared: “Sometime between AD 81–96, Clement, bishop of Rome, wrote a letter to the church in Corinth, and described their [then] recent past as being marked by excellent faith, piety, hospitality, obedience, and submission to their leaders. In fact, for several decades, they seem

to have been determined to maintain Christian unity and avoid the sins of their [earlier years.] [We note:] ‘all rebellion and division were detestable to you’” (1 Clement 2.6). Therefore, Clement recognized how the Corinthians viewed the early concerns Paul had addressed.

Years later there was another uprising and sinful manifestation. Again, I cite, “It is shameful, beloved, extremely shameful and unworthy of your conduct in Christ, that it should be reported that the well-established and ancient church of the Corinthians, because of one or two people, is rebelling against the presbyters [elders]” (1 Clement 47.6).

With this in mind, please note Paul’s concluding remarks in this final letter:

Brethren

The fact that Paul concludes this letter by addressing the Corinthians as “*brethren*” reinforces the fact that they were believers. This fact we have well established in the previous weeks. However, still remaining is the erroneous teaching that believers who sin forfeit the salvation provided them in Jesus—by faith alone, through grace alone.

Farewell

The Greek word used here is “χαίρετε”/“chairō.” Here we get the word “farewell”. A better translation might be suggested: “rejoice,” or “be glad.” The Greek is in the active voice and imperative mood. It is therefore a polite command: “I want you to rejoice,” “I want you to be glad,” or “I want you to be happy!” It is closely related to “χάρις”/“charis” where we get the word “grace.” Simply put, this was a commanded blessing gifted to the brethren. It is the same as saying, “I love you,” “I want blessing for you,” or “I want good for you.” Thus, Paul followed with, “*Become complete. Be*

of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Corinthians 13:11).

Become Complete

The focus here is the continued growth of the Corinthians. They were growing and Paul knew the growth would continue. “Become complete” is the same as saying “become mature.” Therefore, once again we find this as an imperative mood (a command) but in the passive voice. Therefore, the command suggests that the one “becoming complete” is “being acted upon for the purpose of their completeness.” This harmonizes with the fact that we are being matured/completed by the Lord—and that the Lord will complete the work He is doing. This is God’s work in us—not our work in Him!

Be of Good Comfort

Paul’s command, *“be of good comfort,”* should be translated “come alongside.” The Greek is “*παρακαλέω*”/“*parakaleo*.” “Para” is “alongside” and “kaleo” is “to call.” This word is also in the passive voice and imperative mood. Therefore, you are “being called” and are “acted upon” in order to participate. This should comfort every believer!

The word “comfort” is a definition given “*parakaleo*” for the one being called is acted upon by the Lord (and His servants)—therefore they are to be “comforted.” Another way of saying this is to say, “those being called are supported by the one(s) who make the call and thus comforted by knowing they are called and therefore belong.” We belong to the Lord and to His Church. I hope you understand this, especially when feeling alone and disconnected. Satan works to separate the members of the Body of Christ from one another and has successfully made many feel unattached. However, God is building His Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Even if we “feel” disconnected—we aren’t. Even if we *are*

“disconnected,” God will unite us all in the *“dispensation of the fullness of the times”* (see Ephesians 1:10).

Be of One Mind

The command communicated here is to think together and maintain a common mindset. The injunction is singular in focus, and therefore the application is specific to each believer. Everyone is to have the same value system and therefore live in peace. This phrase is in the imperative mood but is not in the passive voice. Therefore, it’s a command, but it is something you must do. It’s in the present tense; hence, the action is being taken in the present but does not suggest completeness. It is therefore best to see this as connected to the following single Greek word “εἰρηνεύω”/“eireneuo” translated *“live in peace.”* We are growing in unity of mind but have yet to come to completeness. I suggest that the fullness of our unity will not be accomplished until we see the Lord face to face (see 1 Corinthians 13:12 and Ephesians 4:11–16).

Live in Peace

As mentioned above, *“live in peace”* is the translation of one Greek word. It is associated with the preceding phrase translated *“be of one mind.”* Therefore, if I may take the liberty, I would suggest that Paul was saying that those who belong to the Lord and are growing in unity (*“one mind”*) in the truth will live in spiritual peace. We all know that rebellion and unresolved conflict create disharmony. We know that earthly circumstances can prove difficult. However, we are promised *“perfect peace”* as we keep our *“mind”* fixed upon Jesus (see Isaiah 26:3).

God with Us

Paul’s final word here is a reminder that *“the God of love and peace will be with you.”* He was not saying that God *“will”* be with

you if you are of one mind. He is not saying that God *“will be with you”* if you have been perfected in love. He is not saying that God *“will be with you”* if you are experiencing perfect peace. He is saying that God *“will be with you.”* As a believer, God *“is”* with you: Immanuel, God with us!

God will complete in you what He has begun. He will never leave you nor forsake you. God is with you. Rest in His love. Rest in His peace. Enjoy the fact that He is acting upon you—for His purposes, His good pleasure, even amidst the journey. You belong! You are connected—to Him and to His people.

No Choice for The Believer

God has commanded blessing upon all who trust Him for salvation. Whatever your circumstance, whatever the trial, God causes us to belong. God brings us comfort. God causes us growth. He will complete the work He has begun in you—in me.

I love you all,
Pastor Paul