

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **2Corinthians 13:5-14**.
- B. Second Corinthians is a letter in which Paul defends his apostleship and ministry.
- C. In chapter 13, Paul closes his letter with some admonitions that are valuable to every Xian.

II. EXHORT ONE ANOTHER.

- A. The text: 2Cor. 13:1-4.
This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. [2] I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest as well, that if I come again, I will not spare anyone, [3] since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. [4] For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we shall live with Him because of the power of God directed toward you.
- B. To exhort means to urge earnestly by advice or warning; to do what is proper and right by admonishing strongly.
- C. To exhort is just short of a rebuke of sin or sinful conduct.
- D. Paul quotes from Deut. 19, which Jesus used in Mt. 18:16. Sinful matters are to be dealt with in the body of X.
- E. Paul had to prove himself as a true apostle. But by the standards of the world, both Jesus and Paul were weak. By the standards of the Lord, both were strong. It is the wise and mature worker who knows when to be "weak" and when to be strong as they deal with problems.
- F. How do you measure ministry? Is it by the outward show or Biblical content? Is it by worldly achievement or Xian character?
- G. May we exhort one another, to do better in living the Xian life, but be sure and do it in a Xian way.

III. EXAMINE YOURSELVES.

- A. See 2Cor. 13:5-8.
Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test? [6] But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test. [7] Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we should appear unapproved. [8] For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.
- B. The Corinthians were seeking proof of Paul and his ministry. They had been busy examining him thoroughly. Now Paul says it's time to quit examining him, and start examining yourself!
- C. Jesus taught that it was wrong to judge another, unless you have first judged yourself (Mt. 7:1-4).
"Do not judge lest you be judged. [2] "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. [3] "And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? [4] "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?"
- D. To examine your heart, here are some questions to ask:
 - 1. Do you have the HS living within you? If you do, live like it (Rom. 8:9,16).
However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.... [16] The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
 - 2. Do you love the brethren? And can people tell that you do? (1Jn. 3:14).
We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

3. Do you practice righteousness? Where is the fruit? (1Jn. 3:9,10).
No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. [10] By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.
4. Are you trying to overcome the world every day? Are you hiding any sin in your life? (1Jn. 5:4).
For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.
- E. Put yourselves to the test! If you fail the test you are to be considered a reprobate (which means counterfeit, or discredited).
- F. It makes no difference whether others are approved or disapproved of God, you must do what is right, according to the truth.

IV. ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER.

- A. See 2Cor. 13:9-14.
For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete. [10] For this reason I am writing these things while absent, in order that when present I may not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me, for building up and not for tearing down. [11] Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. [12] Greet one another with a holy kiss. [13] All the saints greet you. [14] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
- B. Paul wanted the brethren in Corinth to be "perfect" that is to be complete or mature (2Tim. 3:16,17; Eph. 4:11-13).
(2Tim 3:16-17) All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; [17] that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
(Eph 4:11-16) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, [12] for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; [13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.
- C. Balanced Xian growth and ministry is impossible in isolation. Someone once said, "you can no more raise one Xian anymore than you can raise one bee." Xians belong to each other and need each other. The trend of "Jesus yes, and the church no" is wrong and very dangerous.
- D. Notice the admonitions in 13:11:
 1. Rejoice.
 2. Be mature.
 3. Be comforted (encouraged).
 4. Be like-minded (united).
 5. Live in peace (be contentment).
- E. The holy kiss was a greeting much like our hug or handshake. It was to be holy, a kiss of peace and love.
- F. The benediction emphasizes the Trinity. We are to know of the grace that comes by X, the love of God for our souls, and the fellowship (encouragement) of the HS.
- G. Be encouraged so that you can encourage someone else.

V. CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Three things to help us as a congregation this year.
 1. Exhort in a biblical way, not being unfairly judgmental.
 2. Examine your own life to grow and mature as a Xian.
 3. Encourage others by knowing the encouragement that comes from God.
- B. Do you need to become a Xian?
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.