

# ROUTE 66

Session Number Twenty-Two

Wednesday, July 16, 2014

## I I CORINTHIANS

1 The church in Corinth was now about five years old. Its founder, the Apostle Paul, was  
2 laboring in Macedonia, far to the north. There he met Titus who brought him news of  
3 the work in Corinth. Paul felt it necessary to write the church a letter and send it back  
4 with Titus.

### Chapter One

8 2 Cor. 1:3-10 (New Living Testament)

9 **All praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of**  
10 **every mercy and the God who comforts us. [4] He comforts us in all our troubles so**  
11 **that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them**  
12 **the same comfort God has given us. [5] You can be sure that the more we suffer for**  
13 **Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. [6] So when**  
14 **we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your benefit and salvation! For when**  
15 **God comforts us, it is so that we, in turn, can be an encouragement to you. Then you**  
16 **can patiently endure the same things we suffer. [7] We are confident that as you**  
17 **share in suffering, you will also share God's comfort. [8] I think you ought to**  
18 **know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province**  
19 **of Asia. We were crushed and completely overwhelmed, and we thought we would**  
20 **never live through it. [9] In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we learned not**  
21 **to rely on ourselves, but on God who can raise the dead. [10] And he did deliver us**  
22 **from mortal danger. And we are confident that he will continue to deliver us.**

23  
24 With the exception of his letter to the Galatians, Paul opened his letters with  
25 thanksgiving. In verses 3-7, he expressed gratitude to God for His divine comfort. In  
26 verses 8-10 he thanked God for divine deliverance. Paul knew suffering; he had been  
27 beaten, imprisoned and deprived. Yet through it all, there was a wonderful presence of  
28 God.

29  
30 In verses 12-24, Paul defended his own character and ministry. Some in Corinth had  
31 grown suspicious of Paul's motives. Why?

- 32 1) Paul had promised the people he would return, but so far he had not done so.
- 33 2) He told them he would use a different route than he actually used.

1 3) In I Cor., he had told the church to deal with the man involved in incest in a strict  
2 way; later he seemed to call for a milder reaction.

3  
4 Not all of our plans can be accomplished like clockwork. We are in a battle between  
5 God and Satan. Sometimes there has to be a change in strategy.

## 6 7 Chapter Two

8  
9 In I Corinthians 5 we learned of the fellow involved in incest. He had been dealt with  
10 via church discipline. But apparently the Corinthians would not now forgive him. Paul  
11 instructed them to forgive; so some of the believers accused Paul of being fickle. How  
12 easy it is to judge other people. Sometimes we not only fail to forgive but to forget them  
13 and move on.

14  
15 As a pastor, I can understand Paul's joy at the progress made in the Corinthian church.  
16 **2 Cor. 2:14 But thanks be to God, who made us his captives and leads us along in  
17 Christ's triumphal procession. Now wherever we go he uses us to tell others about  
18 the Lord and to spread the Good News like a sweet perfume.**

19  
20 We should rejoice when we receive good news of a believer's blessing, or that a church  
21 that preaches Christ and the cross is growing. The Gospel is "good news," which should  
22 call for positive response.

## 23 24 Chapter Three

25  
26 Some "teachers" from Jerusalem had arrived, complete with letter of commendation,  
27 which caused the Corinthians to believe in their ministry. Unfortunately, their doctrine  
28 was weird and false. They insisted that the Corinthians believers, for the most part  
29 Greeks, of course, needed not only to believe in Jesus, but also keep the Jewish  
30 ceremonial law. Paul responded:

31  
32 2 Cor. 3:7-18

33 **That old system of law etched in stone led to death, yet it began with such glory  
34 that the people of Israel could not bear to look at Moses' face. For his face shone  
35 with the glory of God, even though the brightness was already fading away. [8]  
36 Shouldn't we expect far greater glory when the Holy Spirit is giving life? [9] If the  
37 old covenant, which brings condemnation, was glorious, how much more glorious is  
38 the new covenant, which makes us right with God! [10] In fact, that first glory was  
39 not glorious at all compared with the overwhelming glory of the new covenant. [11]  
40 So if the old covenant, which has been set aside, was full of glory, then the new**

1 covenant, which remains forever, has far greater glory. [12] Since this new covenant  
2 gives us such confidence, we can be very bold. [13] We are not like Moses, who put a  
3 veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory fading away. [14]  
4 But the people's minds were hardened, and even to this day whenever the old  
5 covenant is being read, a veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the  
6 truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. [15] Yes, even today  
7 when they read Moses' writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do  
8 not understand. [16] But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, then the veil is taken  
9 away. [17] Now, the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, he  
10 gives freedom. [18] And all of us have had that veil removed so that we can be  
11 mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord  
12 works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even  
13 more.

14  
15 Paul recounted the marvelous story of Moses who had met the Lord on Mt. Sinai. When  
16 he came down from the mountain his face shone with the glory of the Lord - so much so  
17 that Moses put a veil over his face. It was not the Ten Commandments he had received  
18 atop the mountain that put that shine of glory there - no, it was the presence of the Lord  
19 Himself. Paul here is teaching that it is not keeping the law (which is not possible) that  
20 saves us, but rather Christ Himself.

## 21 22 Chapter Four

23  
24 The "light of Christ's gospel" needs no man-made addition to make it effective:

25  
26 2 Cor. 4:1-6 And so, since God in his mercy has given us this wonderful ministry,  
27 we never give up. [2] We reject all shameful and underhanded methods. We do not  
28 try to trick anyone, and we do not distort the word of God. We tell the truth before  
29 God, and all who are honest know that. [3] If the Good News we preach is veiled  
30 from anyone, it is a sign that they are perishing. [4] Satan, the god of this evil world,  
31 has blinded the minds of those who don't believe, so they are unable to see the  
32 glorious light of the Good News that is shining upon them. They don't understand  
33 the message we preach about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.  
34 [5] We don't go around preaching about ourselves; we preach Christ Jesus, the  
35 Lord. All we say about ourselves is that we are your servants because of what Jesus  
36 has done for us. [6] For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has  
37 made us understand that this light is the brightness of the glory of God that is seen  
38 in the face of Jesus Christ.

39  
40 Did Paul suffer? Did he have "down days?" Oh yes! Read his testimony:

1 2 Cor. 4:7-15

2 **But this precious treasure—this light and power that now shine within us—is held**  
3 **in perishable containers, that is, in our weak bodies. So everyone can see that our**  
4 **glorious power is from God and is not our own.**

5 **[8] We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed and broken.**  
6 **We are perplexed, but we don't give up and quit. [9] We are hunted down, but God**  
7 **never abandons us. We get knocked down, but we get up again and keep going. [10]**  
8 **Through suffering, these bodies of ours constantly share in the death of Jesus so that**  
9 **the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.**

10 **[11] Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that**  
11 **the life of Jesus will be obvious in our dying bodies. [12] So we live in the face of**  
12 **death, but it has resulted in eternal life for you.**

13 **[13] But we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the**  
14 **psalmist had when he said, "I believed in God, and so I speak." [14] We know that**  
15 **the same God who raised our Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and present us**  
16 **to himself along with you. [15] All of these things are for your benefit. And as God's**  
17 **grace brings more and more people to Christ, there will be great thanksgiving, and**  
18 **God will receive more and more glory.**

19  
20 Meditate now on Paul's conclusion:

21  
22 **2 Cor. 4:16-18 That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our**  
23 **spirits are being renewed every day. [17] For our present troubles are quite small**  
24 **and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that**  
25 **will last forever! [18] So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather,**  
26 **we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be**  
27 **over, but the joys to come will last forever.**

28  
29 **Troubles? Sure. Challenges? Constantly. Surrender? Never! Our problems here**  
30 **compared with what awaits us are nothing!**

## 31 32 Chapter Five

33  
34 **Again Paul reminded the Corinthians - and us - that the eternal audit is coming. He**  
35 **never had it easy in ths life. Yet he brimmed over with hope. He was truly the great**  
36 **optimist. His body was never very strong. But what difference did any of that make to**  
37 **Paul?**

38  
39 **2 Cor. 5:1-10 For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken**  
40 **down—when we die and leave these bodies—we will have a home in heaven, an**

1 eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. [2] We grow  
2 weary in our present bodies, and we long for the day when we will put on our  
3 heavenly bodies like new clothing. [3] For we will not be spirits without bodies, but  
4 we will put on new heavenly bodies. [4] Our dying bodies make us groan and sigh,  
5 but it's not that we want to die and have no bodies at all. We want to slip into our  
6 new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by everlasting life. [5]  
7 God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy  
8 Spirit. [6] So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live  
9 in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. [7] That is why we live by  
10 believing and not by seeing. [8] Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be  
11 away from these bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. [9] So our aim is  
12 to please him always, whether we are here in this body or away from this body. [10]  
13 For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we  
14 deserve for the good or evil we have done in our bodies.

15  
16 In eternity, we will not be “disembodied spirits” - spooks! No our souls and spirits will  
17 again be merged with our bodies, only time they are resurrected bodies such as Christ had  
18 (he who was the first-fruit - prototype).

19  
20 There was another motivation Paul had that superseded all his personal hurts and  
21 discouragements: 2 Cor. 5:11-21 It is because we know this solemn fear of the  
22 Lord that we work so hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I  
23 hope you know this, too. [12] Are we trying to pat ourselves on the back again? No,  
24 we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag  
25 about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart before God.  
26 [13] If it seems that we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our  
27 right minds, it is for your benefit. [14] Whatever we do, it is because Christ's love  
28 controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for everyone, we also believe that we  
29 have all died to the old life we used to live. [15] He died for everyone so that those  
30 who receive his new life will no longer live to please themselves. Instead, they will  
31 live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them.

32 [16] So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them.  
33 Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though he were merely a human  
34 being. How differently I think about him now! [17] What this means is that those  
35 who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for  
36 the old life is gone. A new life has begun!

37 [18] All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to himself through  
38 what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to him. [19]  
39 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's  
40 sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others. [20]

1 **We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as**  
2 **though Christ himself were here pleading with you, "Be reconciled to God!" [21]**  
3 **For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we**  
4 **could be made right with God through Christ.**

5  
6 Reconciled to God! There are two parts to this reconciliation: the actual bringing us  
7 together at salvation and the continuing reconciliation that goes on in us in which we  
8 become like Christ and, through Him accomplish the will of the Father. It becomes our  
9 desire to do the will of the Father and it is from this that we experience the joy of our  
10 salvation.

## 11 12 Chapter Six

13  
14 In these verses, Paul teaches the Christian how to react when he or she is slandered or  
15 verbally abused. 2 Cor. 6:4-10 **In everything we do we try to show that we are true**  
16 **ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of**  
17 **every kind. [5] We have been beaten, been put in jail, faced angry mobs, worked to**  
18 **exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food. [6] We have proved**  
19 **ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, our sincere**  
20 **love, and the power of the Holy Spirit. [7] We have faithfully preached the truth.**  
21 **God's power has been working in us. We have righteousness as our weapon, both to**  
22 **attack and to defend ourselves. [8] We serve God whether people honor us or**  
23 **despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us**  
24 **impostors. [9] We are well known, but we are treated as unknown. We live close to**  
25 **death, but here we are, still alive. We have been beaten within an inch of our lives.**  
26 **[10] Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual**  
27 **riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.**

28  
29 What is the secret here? How can a person be subjected to that kind of persecution,  
30 abuse and suffering and still stay spiritual, sane and productive? In the preceding  
31 chapter Paul taught us that followers of Christ are RECONCILED to the will of God, not  
32 our own comfort and pleasure.

33  

I doubt seriously that anyone can work in God's kingdom without coming under difficult times, even attack. Satan uses whatever he can to abuse our lives. But as we grow closer to God, drawing on His very own nature within us. We become like Him and so our reactions are changed.
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34 Now Paul encourages the Corinthian believers not to fall prey to the world system: 2 Cor.  
35 6:14-18 **[14] Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can goodness be a**

1 partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? [15] What harmony  
2 can there be between Christ and the Devil? How can a believer be a partner with an  
3 unbeliever? [16] And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For  
4 we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk  
5 among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. [17] Therefore,  
6 come out from them and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't  
7 touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. [18] And I will be your Father,  
8 and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

9  
10 Is holiness negative? No. Holiness equates "wholeness."

## 11 12 Chapter 7

13  
14 2 Cor. 7:2-12 Please open your hearts to us. We have not done wrong to anyone.  
15 We have not led anyone astray. We have not taken advantage of anyone. [3] I'm not  
16 saying this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts forever. We  
17 live or die together with you. [4] I have the highest confidence in you, and my pride  
18 in you is great. You have greatly encouraged me; you have made me happy despite  
19 all our troubles. [5] When we arrived in Macedonia there was no rest for us.  
20 Outside there was conflict from every direction, and inside there was fear. [6] But  
21 God, who encourages those who are discouraged, encouraged us by the arrival of  
22 Titus. [7] His presence was a joy, but so was the news he brought of the  
23 encouragement he received from you. When he told me how much you were looking  
24 forward to my visit, and how sorry you were about what had happened, and how  
25 loyal your love is for me, I was filled with joy! [8] I am no longer sorry that I sent  
26 that letter to you, though I was sorry for a time, for I know that it was painful to you  
27 for a little while. [9] Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the  
28 pain caused you to have remorse and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow  
29 God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. [10] For  
30 God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek salvation.  
31 We will never regret that kind of sorrow. But sorrow without repentance is the kind  
32 that results in death. [11] Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such  
33 earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such  
34 longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish the wrongdoer. You  
35 showed that you have done everything you could to make things right. [12] My  
36 purpose was not to write about who did the wrong or who was wronged. I wrote to  
37 you so that in the sight of God you could show how much you really do care for us.

38  
39 I suspect that Paul spent many lonely days. Even today there are those who will attack  
40 his memory and teaching, putting wrong accents on his words, creating a stern, hard,

1 difficult man out of this tender and most affectionate apostle. What a man! What a  
2 preacher and teacher! In these verses Paul recounted his concern over them while  
3 waiting for Titus at Troas. He always carried a burden for the churches he founded.  
4

5 But what joy when Titus finally arrived to bring him good news of the Corinthians'  
6 progress in Christ: 2 Cor. 7:13-16 **We have been encouraged by this. In addition to  
7 our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was at  
8 the way you welcomed him and set his mind at ease. [14] I had told him how proud I  
9 was of you—and you didn't disappoint me. I have always told you the truth, and  
10 now my boasting to Titus has also proved true! [15] Now he cares for you more than  
11 ever when he remembers the way you listened to him and welcomed him with such  
12 respect and deep concern. [16] I am very happy now because I have complete  
13 confidence in you.**

## 14 Chapter Eight

15 Chapter 8 (and 9) give us strong teaching on Christian benevolence. A true Spirit-filled  
16 believer is a giver. It goes beyond tithing which, of course, should be considered the  
17 absolute minimum. Paul teaches us vital principles here concerning giving:  
18  
19  
20

21 2 Cor. 8:1-6 **Now I want to tell you, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his  
22 kindness has done for the churches in Macedonia. [2] Though they have been going  
23 through much trouble and hard times, their wonderful joy and deep poverty have  
24 overflowed in rich generosity. [3] For I can testify that they gave not only what they  
25 could afford but far more. And they did it of their own free will. [4] They begged us  
26 again and again for the gracious privilege of sharing in the gift for the Christians in  
27 Jerusalem. [5] Best of all, they went beyond our highest hopes, for their first action  
28 was to dedicate themselves to the Lord and to us for whatever directions God might  
29 give them. [6] So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first  
30 place, to return to you and encourage you to complete your share in this ministry of  
31 giving.**

32  
33 A famine or some kind of economic collapse had devastated Judea and caused a great  
34 amount of grief to the saints in Jerusalem. The believers there were of minimal means  
35 and were also victims of great persecution and social ostracism. As Paul traveled across  
36 Europe, he took collections to give to them.  
37

38 2 Cor. 8:7-13 **Since you excel in so many ways—you have so much faith, such gifted  
39 speakers, such knowledge, such enthusiasm, and such love for us—now I want you  
40 to excel also in this gracious ministry of giving. [8] I am not saying you must do it,**



1 even though the other churches are eager to do it. This is one way to prove your love  
2 is real. [9] You know how full of love and kindness our Lord Jesus Christ was.  
3 Though he was very rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty  
4 he could make you rich. [10] I suggest that you finish what you started a year  
5 ago, for you were the first to propose this idea, and you were the first to begin doing  
6 something about it. [11] Now you should carry this project through to completion  
7 just as enthusiastically as you began it. Give whatever you can according to what  
8 you have. [12] If you are really eager to give, it isn't important how much you are  
9 able to give. God wants you to give what you have, not what you don't have.

10  
11 As we respond in love by giving to others, we need to realize that our gifts may not  
12 always be received with the gratitude we would like. But that should not matter because  
13 we give as unto Christ.

## 14 15 Chapter Nine

16  
17 What motivates the follower of Christ to be a giver? Some give, I suppose, because they  
18 feel obligated. They look at an usher the same way some folks look at an IRS man.  
19 That is not a healthy reason for giving. The motive behind true Christian giving is love  
20 to the Lord. Some television preachers have taken this "plant you seed idea" to the point  
21 of absurdity. While it is true that God blesses us, that's not why we give. God loves a  
22 cheerful giver. Giving is contagious. First Assembly here excels in giving! Others  
23 respond when they see us give - it's a chain reaction.

24  
25 2 Cor. 9:6-15 Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a  
26 small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. [7] You must  
27 each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don't give  
28 reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives  
29 cheerfully. [8] And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always  
30 have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. [9] As the  
31 Scriptures say, "Godly people give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will  
32 never be forgotten." [10] For God is the one who gives seed to the farmer and then  
33 bread to eat. In the same way, he will give you many opportunities to do good, and  
34 he will produce a great harvest of generosity in you.

35 [11] Yes, you will be enriched so that you can give even more generously. And when  
36 we take your gifts to those who need them, they will break out in thanksgiving to  
37 God. [12] So two good things will happen—the needs of the Christians in Jerusalem  
38 will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanksgiving to God. [13] You will  
39 be glorifying God through your generous gifts. For your generosity to them will  
40 prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. [14] And they will pray for

1 you with deep affection because of the wonderful grace of God shown through you.  
2 [15] Thank God for his Son—a gift too wonderful for words!

### 3 4 Chapter Ten

5  
6 Paul teaches here about spiritual warfare. 2 Cor. 10:3-5 We are human, but we  
7 don't wage war with human plans and methods. [4] We use God's mighty weapons,  
8 not mere worldly weapons, to knock down the Devil's strongholds. [5] With these  
9 weapons we break down every proud argument that keeps people from knowing  
10 God. With these weapons we conquer their rebellious ideas, and we teach them to  
11 obey Christ.

12  
13 This is a battle of the spirit world. The weapons God gives us are love, patience, the  
14 gifts of the Spirit, which are mighty to the “pulling down of strongholds.”

15  
16 That fifth verse in the King James is vital to our understanding: 2 Cor. 10:5 Casting  
17 down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge  
18 of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;  
19

20  
The only way God, Satan or anyone else can get to you is through your BRAIN! Your mind! You cannot help a thought that rampages through your head BUT YOU CAN MOST CERTAINLY WITHHOLD IT FROM GOING THROUGH AGAIN AND AGAIN. Thoughts that are from God will build you up, encourage you, strengthen you. Thoughts from Satan will bring fear, uncertainty, anger, etc. You can easily identify the thoughts in your mind right now. By an act of your will bring those unhealthy thoughts into captivity - put them in a cage. How? Sing a song of praise, begin to thank the Lord, read a scripture, etc. You are responsible for your thought life. This is an incredibly helpful passage of scripture. Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:

21  
22 In the rest of this chapter, Paul makes reference to his outward appearance, which many  
23 thought wasn't all that great. 2 Cor. 10:10 For some say, "Don't worry about Paul.  
24 His letters are demanding and forceful, but in person he is weak, and his speeches  
25 are really bad!" Paul's answer in verse 11: The ones who say this must realize that  
26 we will be just as demanding and forceful in person as we are in our letters. Paul  
27 responded, in effect, “Listen....I will be everything God needs me to be so stop looking at  
28 the outward appearance!”

### 29 30 Chapter Eleven

1 Here Paul teaches on faithfulness. 2 Cor. 11:2 **I am jealous for you with the**  
2 **jealousy of God himself. For I promised you as a pure bride to one husband, Christ.**

We are the “betrothed” or “engaged” bride of Christ Himself. We will be eternally given to Him at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. When the virgin Mary learned she was pregnant with Jesus, she was engaged (betrothed) to Joseph. They had not been married. She was a virgin, pregnant by the Holy Ghost. Joseph was faced with a severe problem: His alternatives were these...he could divorce Mary or he could accuse her of fornication before the town judges and she might have been stoned to death. The scriptures use the phrase, “Put her away privily.” That means divorce. But they were not yet married! True...but the only way you could break an engagement in those days was a divorce. Engagement was just as binding as marriage. Once engaged, a couple was expected to remain pure. In our salvation (engagement), Christ has every right to expect us to remain faithful to Him.

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### Chapter Twelve

Here Paul relates a very sacred and personal moment in his life. 2 Cor. 12:2-4 **I was caught up into the third heaven fourteen years ago. [3] Whether my body was there or just my spirit, I don't know; only God knows. [4] But I do know that I was caught up into paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be told.** Most scholars believe this happened when Paul was still in Antioch prior to entering the mission field. The event cemented in Paul's mind the reality of ETERNITY. Once given that vision, Paul had little interest in anything else but eternity. Romans 8:18 **Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later.** How did Paul know about that “glory” that awaited him? He had seen it in that vision! It is small wonder Paul had such a ministry. He stood with one foot planted in eternity and the other upon the grace of God. He gave of himself tirelessly.

### Chapter Thirteen

This is the last chapter and Paul ends with a flourish. He tells the Corinthians he will return to them. They needed to be prepared for his return: Verse 5: **“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith!”**

Spiritual self-examination is always helpful. Verse 11: **“Become complete.”** Strong believers are not one-dimensional, but well-rounded in God, lacking in none of God's graces.

**NEXT WEEK: GALATIANS AND EPHESIANS**