

2 Corinthians Notes

Challenge of our values: value of humility, weakness, and spiritual transformation

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- Many people in the church rebelled against Paul's teachings and authority in the 1st letter
- Paul followed up in person which he calls "the painful visit" (see [2 Corinthians 2:1](#))
- This second letter was written in anguish and tears (see [2 Cor 1:3-4, 7:8-12](#))
 - Most, but not all recognize the error of their ways and apologize to Paul wanting to reconcile
 - Paul writes this letter to assure them of his love and commitment

Chapters 1-7 Paul Reconciles with the Corinthians

Chapter 1-2a Opening Prayer

- Praise God who comforts us in our troubles! (see [1:3-4](#))
- Acknowledges that things had been tense since Paul's visit, but he makes it clear that he has forgiven them and wants an open and honest relationship
 - Why did they reject Paul in the first place?
 - Poor - earned a meager living doing manual labor
 - Under constant persecution and suffering
 - Often homeless
 - Unimpressive speaker
 - The Corinthians were exposed to other more impressive and successful leaders based upon wealth and eloquence, and started thinking less of Paul and were actually ashamed of him

Chapter 2b

Paul responds by saying that those following leaders because of wealth and eloquence was a betrayal of Jesus and shows a distorted value system

- True christian leadership is not about status or self promotion
- Paul depicts himself and the other apostles as captive slaves to King Jesus who is leading others on procession of triumph
- Paul's job is not to be impressive, but rather to point people to the One who is, Jesus

Chapter 3a

Recent demand of the Corinthians that he provide letters of recommendation to prove his authority and credentials

- This is ridiculous to Paul
 - Their church wouldn't exist if he hadn't started it
 - They are his proof of genuine leadership
 - They are his letter of recommendation (3:2-4) (also see [Jeremiah 31](#), [Ezekiel 36](#))
God's Spirit has written his letter on their hearts as his new covenant people
- On judgement day: Who is your proof? Not what is...who? (you and ___)**

Chapter 3b

Old Covenant -----> God-----Moses----- Israel

- Made at Mt. Sinai - Moses himself shine with God's glory, but the laws of the covenant were eventually ineffective and faded in transforming Israel

New Covenant ----> God-----Jesus and the Spirit-----Corinthians

- More glorious because the resurrected Jesus is the very glory of God and He lives on forever
- His Spirit now transforms people to become more faithful just like Jesus himself

Chapter 4-7 The Paradox of the Cross

Jesus Gloriously Exalted through his suffering and death

The Cross Reveals:

- God's Salvation
 - Jesus died for the sins of the world
- God's Character
 - Self-giving love that seeks the well-being of others
- A New Cruciform Way of Life Imitating
 - Paul's humility, suffering, poverty was meant to serve the Corinthians

- So if the Corinthians disapprove of Paul's poverty, this disapprove of Jesus' too
 - This is the proof that Paul authentically represents the crucified and risen Jesus

Chapters 8-9 Forgotten Generosity

The Jewish Christians back in Jerusalem fell into poverty due to a famine

Paul was raising money among the new churches that he started full of mostly non-Jews(Macedonia, Galatians) for a relief gift as a symbol of their unity in the messiah Jesus (see [Romans 15:23-33](#), [1 Corinthians 16:1-3](#))

- The Corinthians in the conflict with Paul had not saved up for the gift
 - For Paul this was not about money
 - It's another sign that they have not been transformed by the Gospel of Jesus:
 - The Gospel: a story of generosity

Read 8:9:

*For you know the **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was **rich**, yet for your sake He became **poor**, so that you through His **poverty** might become **rich**.*

- Gospel through financial metaphor
 - Jesus gave up honor and wealth
 - Lowered himself to death of a poor slave
 - For those who are impoverished through sin
 - So that they might become rich through God's grace

To be a Christian means that this story should make us more willing to share our lives and resources to help others

Chapters 10-13 Paul's Final Challenge

Chapters 10-12 A Main Source of the Conflict

Sarcastically called the eminent, The Super-Apostles (see [11:5](#), [12:11](#))

Do these guys really want to compare credentials?!

Super-Apostles:

- _ Jewish Bible Experts
- _ Knowledge about Jesus
- _ Asked for lots of money

Paul:

- A Pharisee (memorized the whole bible!)
- Spent time with the Risen Jesus and had visions of Jesus throneroom
- Never asked for money

Yet Paul never bragged about this...because these aren't the things that matter about being a Christian, but brag about his weakness (see [11:30](#)) ; the love and mercy of Jesus is discovered in our inadequacies. (see [12:9](#))

Chapter 13 Sober Warning

Corinthians need to Check themselves(see [13:5](#)):

- Contempt for Paul
- Love for super apostles

Fundamentally lack the following of Jesus and understanding of Him and how that should be shown in us.