

II CORINTHIANS

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c Ministry of the Saviour

Volume 1 Issue 1

Paul's Affliction - - God's Comfort

Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of every mercy and the God who comforts, consoles and encourages me in all my distress, affliction, trouble,

Note: There are those who teach that after salvation, if one has faith, there will be no problems, sickness and sorrow. God, through Paul settled that error in theology 2000 years ago.

and sorrow, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble and distress by the consolation we ourselves receive from God. We share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so that through Christ we share comfort too, which Christ brings to us. Just as Christ's own sufferings fall to our lot as they overflow upon His



The second letter to the church at Corinth

disciples, and we share and experience them abundantly so through Christ comfort and consolation and encouragement are also shared and experienced abundantly by us! **If I am in trouble, it is to bring you comfort and salvation.** If I am encouraged, it is to help me bring encouragement to you. Then you will be able to endure the same things which we endure. Our hope for you is firmly grounded for we

Greetings again to the church at Corinth

This letter is from Paul, appointed to be an apostle of Jesus Christ by God, and Timothy our brother. We are writing to the congregation of God's people at Corinth and all Christians who are God's people all

o v e r
Greece.
Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the all merciful Father, the God whose consolation never fails us!

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is the source of every mercy.

**FROM
PAUL
TO THE
CHURCH
ASSEMBLED
AT
CORINTH**

inside...

**Ministers of a new covenant
Living by faith
Ambassadors for Christ
Treasure in perishable containers**

**Generous living
Planting seeds
False teachers
A thorn in the flesh**

Paul gives a Double Blessing

We boast in all good conscience that holiness and sincerity, and singleness of mind, not in carnal wisdom but in the strength of God's grace, that is how we have dealt with the world and above all with you.

We write nothing to you except what you read openly and you don't have to read between the lines and nothing you can't understand. I hope your reason for boasting is that you will be proud of us as we are proud of you on the day that the Lord returns.

I was so sure of your understanding and trust, I wanted to give you a double blessing. I wanted to stop to see you on my way to Macedonia and on my return trip. You may ask why I changed my mind and think that I am like **the people of**

the world who say yes and really mean no. I am not that sort of person, my yes means yes because Jesus Christ the Son of God never wavers between yes and no. He is

I write nothing to you except what you read openly and you don't have to read between the lines.

the one I preached to you. He is divine for all of God's promises have been fulfilled in him. That is why we say **"Amen"** when we give glory to God through Christ. It is God who gives us and you the ability to stand firm for Christ. **He has commissioned us and identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in**

our hearts as the first installment of everything he will give us. With God as my witness, I am telling the truth. I did not come to Corinth for one reason, to spare you from a severe rebuke. We do not want to tell you exactly how to put your faith into practice, we want to work together with you so you will be full of joy as you stand firm in your faith.

Trouble in Asia

We would not have you ignorant or uninformed of the affliction which came upon us in Asia. We were weighed down and burdened beyond our strength. I was utterly and unendurably crushed and exceedingly depressed and we were overwhelmed: the burden was more than we could bear. It was so much so that we renounced all hope of life and in fact told ourselves that this was the end. It seemed to us as though we had been sentenced to death and we could find no outcome but death. The purpose of this was to make me lose confidence in ourselves and place it in God who is able even to raise the dead. He rescued me from so imminent a death and I am confident he will continue to deliver me. You help by your prayers!



Forgive the Sinner

If a certain individual has been causing pain or distress, it does not mean so much that he has injured me, but to some extent he has injured all of you. I do not want to overstate my case on this. The punishment already inflicted on him by so many of you is enough. So now you must take the opposite course and forgive and encourage him so that he is not driven to

despair by his excess of grief. I urge you to assure him of your love.

The reason that I wrote you was to ascertain whether you might be relied upon to be absolutely obedient in everything. When you forgive a man, I forgive him too. What I had to forgive, I did it for Christ. We don't want Satan to win a victory here because we know of his schemes. When I came to Troas to preach, the Lord opened the door but I had no peace in my spirit so I left.

**YOU HAVE
PUNISHED THE
ONE WHO DID
WRONG,
NOW IT IS TIME
TO GO
TO HIM AND
FORGIVE AND
ENCOURAGE
HIM THAT HE
NOT BE
OVERCOME.**

Paul says No TO COMING BACK NOW

I have made up my mind that I would not come again to you again in grief. If I make you sorry, who is there to make me happy. I write this letter so that when I come, we can have joy together. The first letter I wrote to you was in sore distress and with many tears as I wrote it.



MINISTERS OF THE NEW COVENANT



are on the way to salvation and for those who are on the way to perishing. To the one, we are the odor of death that leads to death, to the other, we are the odor of life that leads to life. Who could think of himself as adequate for a responsibility like this? Unlike most teachers, we do not adulterate God's word and I am no peddler of God's message like most men and I seek no profit by trying to peddle an impure word of God to make a profit. But in Christ, we talk sincerely from a single

Thanks be unto God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, who leads me on from place to place in the train of his triumph, who makes my life a constant pageant of triumph in Christ, and He uses us to display

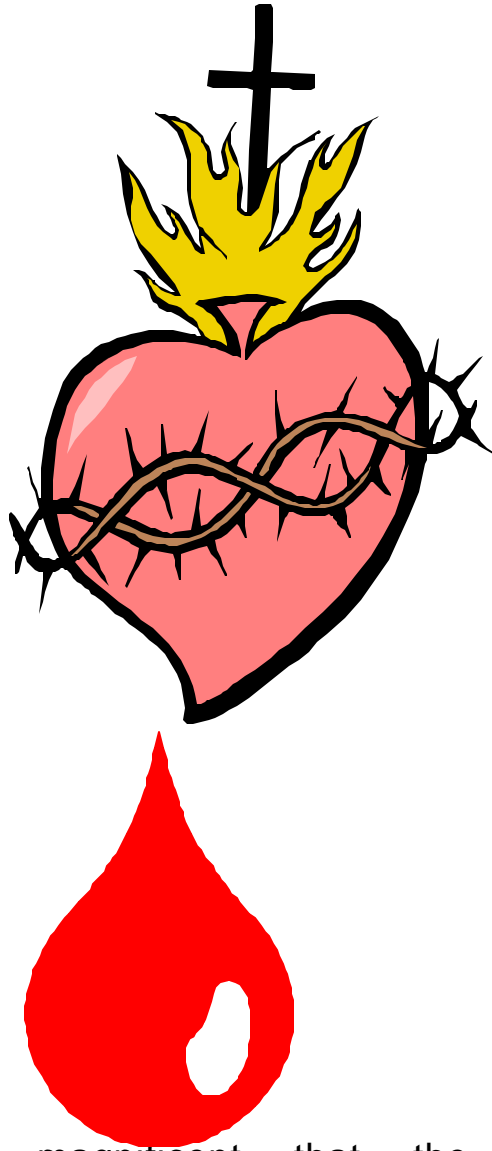
everywhere, reveal, and spread abroad the sweetness of the knowledge of Him. For we are the fragrance of Christ ascending to God, we are indeed the incense offer by Christ to God both for those who

heart from the command of God as men who came from God and stand before God.

I SEEK NO PROFIT BY TRYING TO PEDDLE AN IMPURE WORD OF GOD .

MINISTER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Are we beginning all over again to produce our credentials? Do we need as some do to be commended by written certificates to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, certificate, and testimonial written in our hearts and yet open for anyone to inspect and read. All can see that you are a letter from Christ written and ministered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone but in tables that are hearts of flesh. It is in full reliance upon God, through Christ, that we make such claims. Not that I am sufficient in myself to reach any conclusion in my own wisdom, **all our ability comes from God.** He has made us competent servants of the new covenant, a covenant expressed not in written document but of the Spirit for the written law condemns to death but **the Spirit of God alone can give life.** The law which was engraved in stones came with glory in a dazzling cloud so



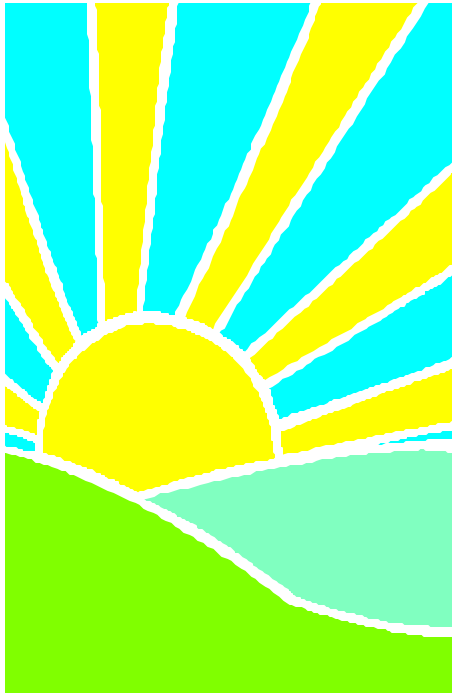
magnificent that the Israelites were unable to look at Moses' face because it was so bright but the brightness soon passed away. The administration of the Spirit must be a far more glorious event. If there was glory in the law, how much greater and more glorious is the service of

the Spirit causing justification. The first which had glory has lost its glory because of the overwhelming glory that exceeds and excels it which is the glory of the gospel in Jesus Christ. The law which passed away came with glory but greater is the splendor of that which is permanent. This is the foundation of our confidence so we use great boldness of speech. Moses had to put a veil over his face so the Israelites could not see the end of the fading splendor. But our minds have

**I AM NOT SUFFICIENT IN MYSELF...
THE SPIRIT OF GOD ALONE CAN GIVE LIFE!
WE REFLECT THE GLORY OF THE LORD.**

been made insensitive so to this day, when the old Covenant is being read, the same veil is still there unlifted for only through union with Christ is it removed. Now the Lord, of whom this passage speaks of, is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is is freedom and liberty. We all, like mirrors, reflect the glory of the Lord in ever increasing splendor.

TREASURE WITHIN US



Being entrusted with this ministry by the mercy of God, I never give up or get discouraged or faint hearted. I have renounced the secret

THE SAME GOD HAS FLOODED OUR HEARTS WITH HIS LIGHT TO BRING YOU THE LIGHT OF REVELATION.

dealings of shame refusing to adopt crafty ways or to tamper with God's message, but openly setting forth the truth before God and all who are honest know

that. If the meaning of my preaching of the good news is veiled at all, it is so only in the case of those who are on the way to destruction whose unbelieving minds the god of this world has blinded so that the light of gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them. It is Christ

flooded our hearts with his light to bring you the light of revelation, the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But I possess this treasure in a frail vessel of a common earthenware jar that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves. I



Jesus as Lord that I proclaim; I am simply a servant of yours for Jesus' sake. The same

am hard pressed but not crushed, troubles are on every side but I am not shut in. We are hampered everywhere but still have room to breathe, we are perplexed but never give up. We are persecuted but we never have to stand it alone. We are hunted down but God never abandons us. We get knocked down but we get up again and keep going.

I POSSESS THIS TREASURE IN A FRAIL VESSEL... THAT THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF THE POWER MAY BE OF GOD NOT MYSELF

God who ordered light to shine out of darkness has

LIVING BY FAITH

Through suffering, these bodies of ours constantly share in the death of Jesus so the life of Jesus may be seen in our bodies. We live under the constant threat of death so that the living power of Jesus may be manifested in this mortal nature of ours. **So death working in me works life in you.**

We continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the psalmist had when he said, "I believed in God and so I speak." We know that the same God who raised Jesus from the dead will raise us also and present us to Jesus along with you. All my sufferings are on your behalf and in your interests in order that grace may increase with the increased number who receive it, and cause more and more hearts to overflow with thanksgiving to the glory of God.

We do not lose heart, even though outwardly **we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by**



day. The outward man does suffer wear and tear, but every day the inward man receives fresh strength. Our present trouble which is only for a short time is piling up for me an eternal blessedness beyond all comparison. Don't look at the things you can see but look at the things that you can't see. The things

you can see are passing away but the things which you cannot see are eternal. What you see

The inward man is being renewed day by day.

lasts but for a moment but the things that are unseen endure for ever.

A new body is coming!

We know that when this earthly building that

an eternal body made for us by God himself and

and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy

Spirit. We know that as long as we are in these bodies, we are not at home with the Lord.

That is why we live by believing and not seeing. **For we walk by faith not by sight.**

To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord!

we live in is taken down, that is when we die and

We know that as long as we are in these bodies, we are not at home with the Lord.

leave these bodies, we are not going to be spirits without bodies but we will have a home in heaven,

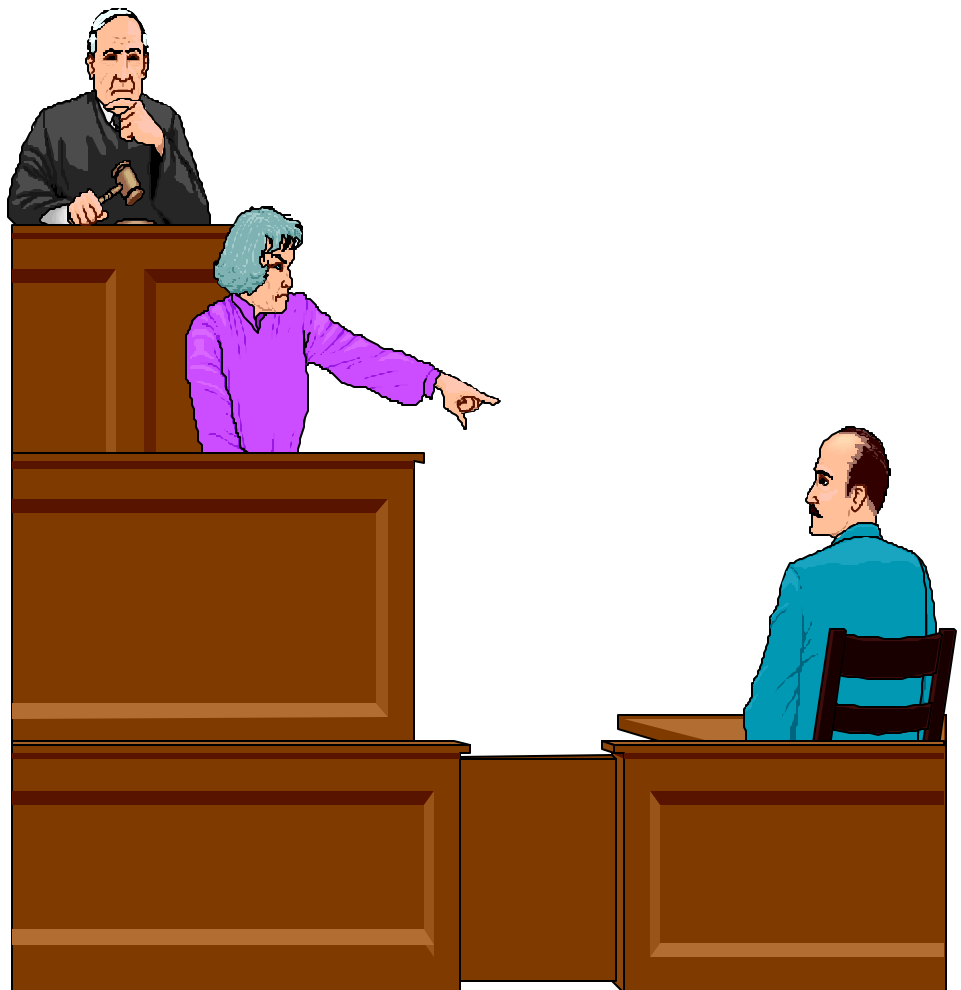
not made with human hands. We grow weary of our present bodies and long for the day that we will put on our heavenly body. It is not like we want to die! We want to slip into our new body so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by everlasting life. God has prepared for us for this,

it is our aim and desire to please Him whether in the body or out of the body. We must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in our bodies.



JUDGMENT Of The BELIEVERS WORK

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he has done whether it is good or bad. It is because of the solemn terror of the Lord, we work so hard to persuade others. God recognizes us for what we are and I hope that you do too. We are not trying to pat ourselves on the back, we are trying to give you reason to be proud with us so that you can answer **those who pride themselves in surface appearances and virtues which they only appear to have although their heart is devoid of them, those who have pride in a spectacular ministry of outward show without sincerity of heart, inward reality and inward worth.** If we are out of our minds, it is to bring glory to God, or if we are in our senses, it is for your good. It is Christ's love that controls us because this is the conviction that we have reached, **if one man died**



on behalf of all, then all thereby became dead.

His purpose in dying for all was that men, while still in life should cease to live for themselves and should live for him who for their sake died and was raised to life. Being alive should no longer mean living with our own life, but with his life who died for us and has risen again.

So we have stopped

evaluating others by what the world thinks of them. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though he was merely a human being. Wow did that change! Those who become **Christians become a new person, a new being, a new creation.** *They are not the same anymore, the old has gone the new has come.*

HOW GOD WIPES OUT SIN

God sent Christ to offer his own blood as a sacrifice for our sins that we might be made holy and justified to God and be reconciled to Him through the work of Christ on the cross and his being raised again.

As God's partners, we beg you not to reject this marvelous message of God's great kindness for God says," At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation I helped you." indeed, God us ready to help you right now. Today is the day of salvation!

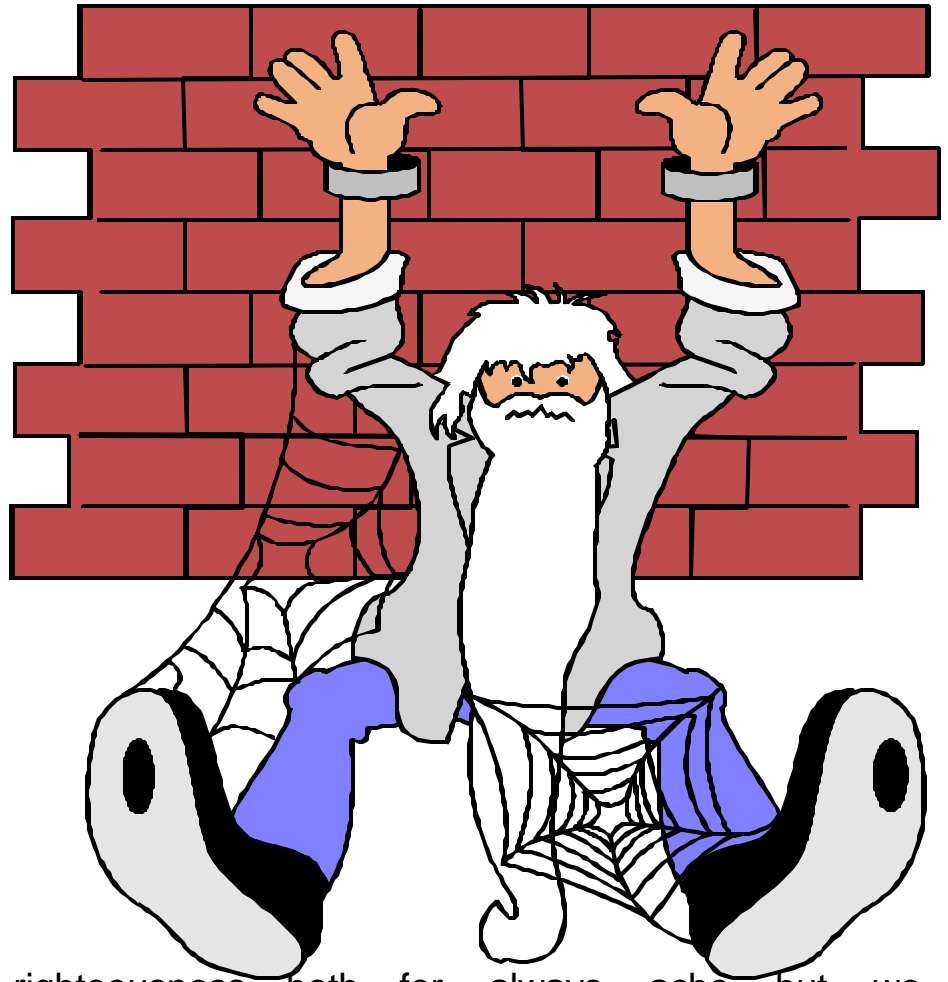
Remember that when a person becomes a believer, he dies to the old self, the old person, the old way of life and he becomes a new person and a new life has begun! All this newness of life is from God who brought us back to himself through what Christ did in offering his blood as a blood sacrifice for our sins for there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. In making us holy, sinless, and completely forgiven, Christ reconciled people to the father. First to last, this has been the work of God. He reconciled us to himself through Christ and he enlisted us in the service of reconciliation. That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself instead of counting their sins against them and he has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. **Therefore, I am an ambassador for Christ**, as though God were appealing to you through me. *We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. He made Christ who knew no sin to be made to be sin on our behalf.* Christ was innocent of sin and yet for our sake God made him one with the sinfulness of man so that in Christ we might be made good, holy and justified of God. This is our appeal to you, Don't let God's word be wasted on you, you have received the grace of God: do not let it go for nothing. At the time for

acceptance I listened to thee, and on the day of deliverance I helped thee. **Now** is the time for acceptance! **Now** is the day of deliverance. **Now** is the day of salvation!

First to last, this has been the work of God. He reconciled us to himself through Christ and he enlisted us in the service of reconciliation.

Paul faces hardships in Ministry

Don't turn down the wonderful message of God's great love. The time of pardon of the day of salvation is already dawned. We never do that which would be a stumbling block because it would be a bad reflection on our ministry and our Lord. **In everything we do, we seek to prove ourselves as genuine ministers of God.** In steadfast endurance in times of troubles, hardships, and difficulties, in floggings, in imprisonment, in prison, in facing angry mobs, in labors, in sleepless nights, and in starving, with innocence, insight,



**STEADFAST
ENDURANCE IN TIMES
OF TROUBLES...
THROUGH KINDNESS
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

patience, knowledge, and endurance of wrongs through kindness by the Holy Spirit in sincere love. Speaking the word of truth, living by and working with the power of God fighting with the weapons of

righteousness both for attack and for defense. We serve God whether people honor us or despise us whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest but they call us impostors. The world ignores us, but we are known to God. As unknown to men yet acknowledged by God. As dying yet behold I live; as chastened by suffering, yet not destroyed. Our hearts

always ache but we always have we always have joy to rejoice

**WE HAVE EVERYTHING
WORTH HAVING!**

THE WORLD IS OURS

continually; paupers that bring riches to many, penniless and yet in reality we have everything worth having, disinherited and the world is ours.

The Temple of the Living God

Dear friends in Corinth, we are hiding nothing from you and our hearts are absolutely open to you. It is not our feeling toward you that is narrow but your feelings toward us. In fair return, I speak to you as my children, open wide your hearts to us. Do not be unequally yoked together with



them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. (Lev 26:12; Ezek 37:27) Therefore, come out from them and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. (Isa 52:11; Ezek 20:34) And I will be your Father and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Sam 7:14)

HOW CAN LIGHT LIVE WITH DARKNESS?

unbelievers. That is, stop forming intimate and inconsistent relations with unbelievers, do not be mismatched with an unbeliever! How can goodness and wickedness be partners? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the

Devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? What union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said, "I will live in them and walk in and among

Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves and purify ourselves from everything that pollutes either body or spirit and in deepest reverence for God, aim at perfect holiness

Joy in Repentance

Please open your hearts to us. We have not done wrong or harmed or taken advantage of anyone. I am not saying this to condemn you because you are in our hearts always, as we live or we die it is together with you. I have the utmost confidence in you and I am always boasting about you. In all our many troubles my cup is full of consolation and overflows with joy. I am full of encouragement, I cannot contain myself for happiness in the midst of all these troubles and trials. When we came to Macedonia, we could get no relief for body or mind, there was trouble at every turn, quarrels all around us and anxieties and fear within my own mind. **Nevertheless God**, who encourages the downhearted comforted me by the coming of Titus. Yes, and by more than his arrival, by the comfort which you had been to him. When he told me how you longed to see me, your morning at my reproof, and your zeal on my behalf, I rejoiced even more. I am no longer sorry that I sent the letter to you, though I was sorry for a time, for I know that it was painful to you for a little while. Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you,, but because the pain caused you to have remorse and change your ways. **It is the kind of sorrow that God wants his people to have.** For God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek salvation.

I REJOICE THEREFORE THAT I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOU IN ALL THINGS.



The work of Godly sorrow is repentance which leads to salvation and leaves no regrets but the work of worldly sorrow leads to death. Notice

how serious this God related sorrow has made you, how disgusted with wrong you are how determined to punish the offender and vindicate me you were. In every point you have cleared yourself.

CALL TO BE AN ABUNDANT GIVER

When I wrote to you, it was not on account of the man who was doing wrong nor was it for the one who was wronged but in order to let you realize before God how deeply you are devoted to us. Although I have been boasting a little to him about you, you did not put me to shame. The boast that I made to Titus proved true. His affection for you is all the more increased by his memory of you all in the submissiveness you all shewed and the respect and reverence with which you treated him. I am profoundly glad to have my confidence in you so fully proved.

JESUS WAS RICH YET FOR YOUR SAKES HE BECAME POOR THAT YOU THROUGH HIS POVERTY MIGHT BE RICH.

I must tell you brothers and sisters, how the favor of God has been shown in the churches of Macedonia. The troubles they have been through have tried them hard, yet in all this they have been so exuberantly happy that **from the depths of their poverty they have shown themselves lavishly generous.** They have given not only according to their means but beyond their means and that of their own free will. They begged us to allow them the privilege of

*helping to support and supply the needs of the brothers in Christ. **First of all, they dedicated themselves to the Lord and then to us, as God's appointed ministers, for whatever directions God might give them.*** This led me to ask Titus to complete the arrangements for the same gracious contribution among yourselves as it was he who started it. I am not saying you must do it even though other churches are eager to do it, but it is one way to prove your love is real. You know of the love and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that you through his poverty might be rich.

It is best for you now to complete what a year ago you began to do and to desire. Finish your work according to your means. **If there is a willing mind, a man's gift is measured in comparison with what he has** and not

what he has not. Of course, I don't mean that others should be relieved to an extent that you are yourselves in distress,



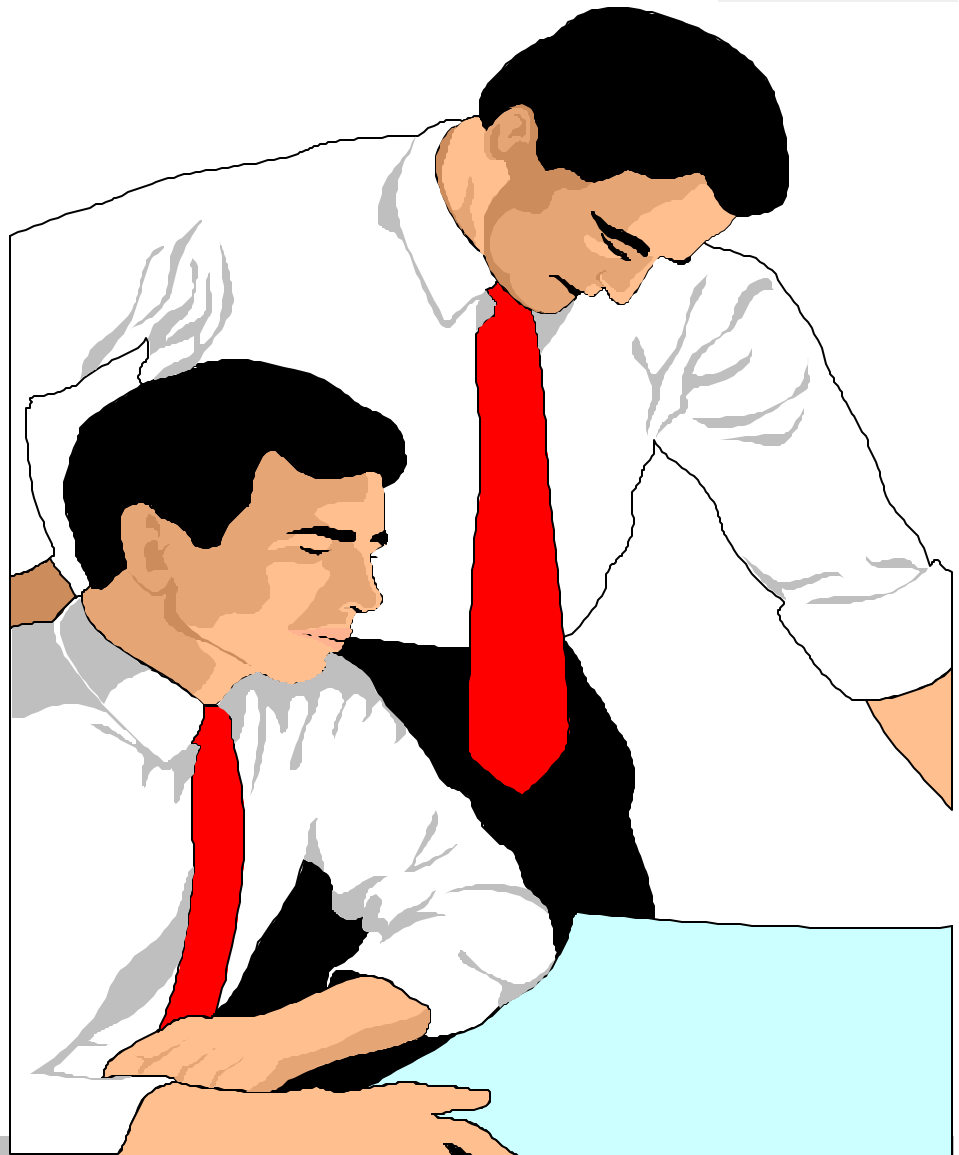
but by the way of reciprocity, your surplus should at the present contribute to their deficiency and theirs to yours. As it is written, "Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over and those who gathered little had enough." (Exod 16:18)



THE TEAM OF PAUL AND TITUS

I am thankful to God that He has given Titus the same enthusiasm for you that I have. I thank God for inspiring Titus with the same interest concern and devotion to you as we do. He not only listened to our requests, but was enthusiastic about it of his own heart! We are sending another brother with him who has gained a reputation for his love of Christ and has been appointed of the church to be our companion in this gracious ministry of ours. (see I Cor 16:3-4)

We travel together because we are anxious that no suspicion should be aroused against us with these great sums to handle. We are trying to be absolutely above reproach not only in the sight of God but also in the eyes of man. I send with them a brother that has been tested and proven many times. **As for Titus**, he is my associate and partner and



I thank God for inspiring Titus with the same interest concern and devotion to you as we do. He not only listened to our requests, but was enthusiastic about it of his own heart!

your fellow worker. **As for the brethren**, they are messengers and representatives of the churches. They are splendid examples of those who bring glory to Christ. So, give proof to them of your love and justify my pride in you.

POOR CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM

I do not really need to write to you about this gift for the Christians in Jerusalem. I know how eager you are to help and I have been boasting to our friends in Macedonia that you Christians in Greece were ready to send an offering a year ago. In fact, it was your enthusiasm that stirred up many of them to begin helping. I am sending these brothers just to be sure that you are really ready just as I told them that you would be with your money already collected. I don't want it to turn out that I was wrong and be humiliated and so would you. But I want it to be a willing gift not one given under

THE PRINCIPLE OF SEED TIME AND HARVEST IS USED AGAIN. GOD'S PLAN FOR BLESSING YOU WITH INCREASE!

pressure.

Remember this, **a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop.** He who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously and that blessings may come to someone will also reap generously and with blessings. **But the one who**

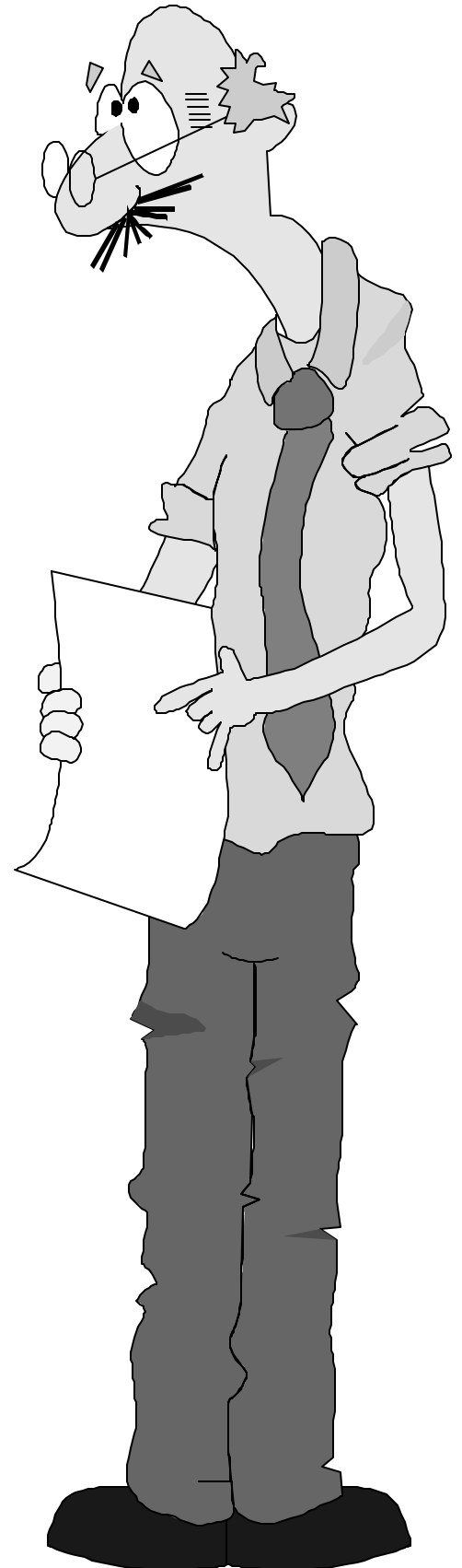
plants generously will get a generous crop.

You must each make up your mind how much you should give. For **God loves the person who gives cheerfully.** *And God will generously provide all you need.* Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the scriptures say in Ps 112:9, **"Godly people give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will never be forgotten."** As God, who supplies seed for the sower and turns that seed into bread to eat will give you the seed of generosity to sow and for harvest, the satisfying bread of good deeds done. God supplies you with seed and multiplies it and increases the benefits through your giving. **You enlarge your harvest when you give!** And you will be enriched so that you can give even more generously and when your gifts are taken to those in need, they will break out in thanksgiving to God. Two good results:

1. Their thanksgiving to God.
2. Your will be glorifying God through your generous gifts.

And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the wonderful grace of God shown through you.

Thank God for his Son, a gift too wonderful for words!

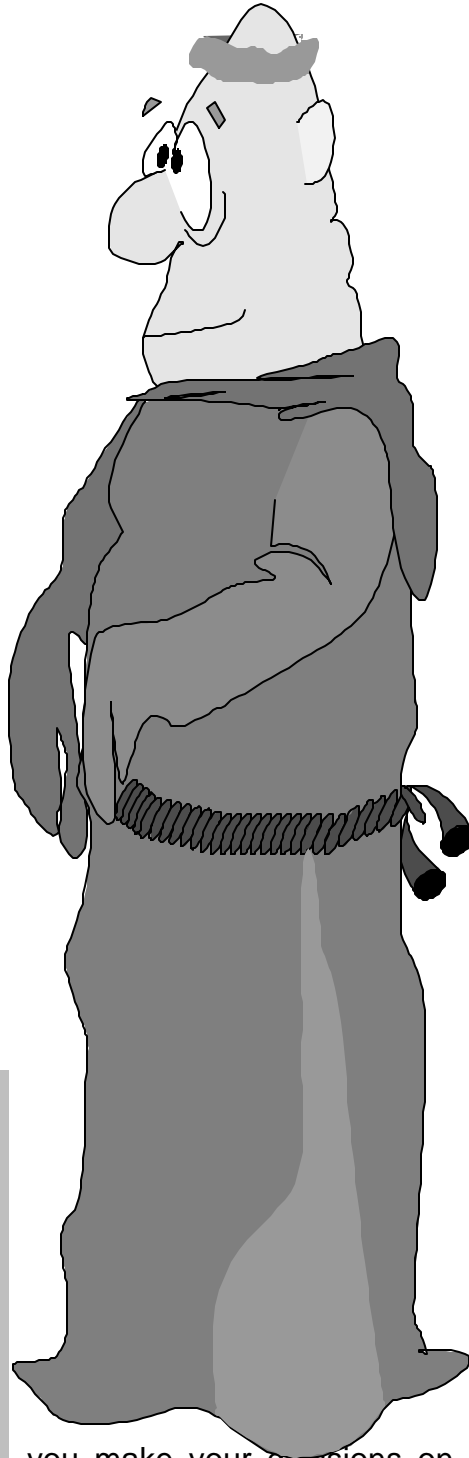


PAUL Tells of Spiritual Authority

I Paul appeal to you personally by the gentleness and kindness of Christ, the Paul who is so humble to you face when he is with you, but so bold in dealing with you when he is far away. I beg you to not make me take as bold an attitude when I come. I may have to be bold with those who still think that I act from motives of the flesh. We live in the world but it is no worldly warfare that we are waging. **For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds:** our weapons are not merely human but divinely potent to demolish strongholds. Our battle is to bring down every deceptive fantasy and every imposing defense that men erect against the true knowledge of God and causing every thought to come under the

OUR BATTLE IS TO BRING DOWN EVERY DECEPTIVE FANTASY AND EVERY IMPOSING DEFENSE THAT MEN ERECT AGAINST THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND...

authority of Christ. We are prepared to punish all rebellion when once you have put yourselves in our hands. The trouble with you is that



you make your decisions on the basis of appearance. You must recognize that we belong to Christ

just as much as those who proudly declare that they belong to Christ. The authority that God gave us is to build you up, not tear you down so you must not think of me as one who writes threats in letters. *Some say that Paul is forceful in letters but his personality and personal*

THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE MIGHTY THROUGH GOD TO THE PULLING DOWN OF STRONG HOLDS

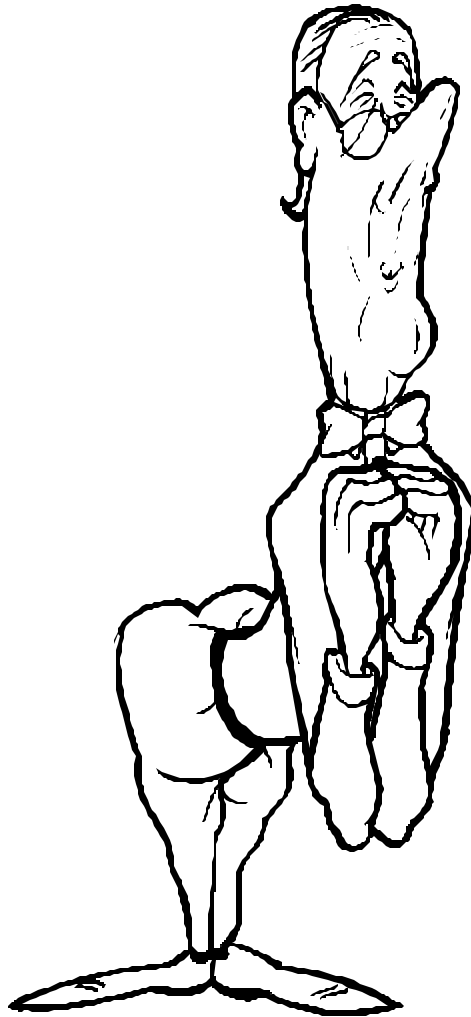
appearance is weak and his preaching is really bad! We will not attempt to boast beyond our proper limits but will keep within the limit of the field which God has assigned to us as a limit which includes yourselves. We do not try to take credit for someone else's work. We hope that the growth of your faith will allow me to enlarge the range of my appointed sphere. Then we will be able to preach the gospel in places where no one else has been. The scriptures say. "The person who wishes to boast should boast only of what the Lord has done." If you boast, boast about the Lord. For the Lord's approval of a man is not dependent on his opinion of himself but on the Lord's opinion of him.

Paul Warns of False Teachers

Bear with me as I continue to talk on. I feel a divine jealousy on your behalf because I betrothed you to one only husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. I fear that just as the serpent by his cunning deceived Eve, your thoughts will be led astray from their single hearted devotion to Christ. If some newcomer preaches a new Jesus or you received a spirit different from the Holy Spirit you

I FEAR THAT YOUR THOUGHTS WILL BE LEAD ASTRAY FROM YOUR SINGLE HEARTED DEVOTION TO CHRIST

received and a different gospel than the gospel I preached. I am not inferior to the very greatest of apostles though I am no trained orator I certainly do not lack in knowledge. At all times, I have made myself known to you. Was it my offense that I made no charge for preaching the gospel of God lowering myself to help in raising you. I robbed other churches



letting them pay me so that I could work for you. When I was with you and in want, I was a burden on no man; for the brethren from Macedonia supplied my wants when they came. In this way I kept myself from being a burden unto you in any way. I do this to cut the ground from under those who claim that they are no different from me. For these people are

false apostles. They have fooled you! I am not surprised. Even Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light, his servants can also by pretending to be ministers of light. In the end they will get every bit of the punishment they deserve.

I have trials!

They brag of being a Hebrew, Israelite, a seed of Abraham, a minister, So Am I and much more. I have had more toil and imprisonment and beatings, five times I had 39 stripes, three times beaten with rods by the Romans, perils of robbers, water and false brethren. I have endured hardship, hunger, and thirst and have known cold and nakedness, exhaustion, pain, and lack of clothing. Besides that I feel the daily burdens of the churches. I managed to escaped from Demascus by being lowered in a basket from a hole in the wall. Not for my glory but for God's.

Paul's vision from the Lord

Let me tell about the visions and revelations I received from the Lord. I was caught up into the third Heaven fifteen years ago. Whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, only God knows. I simply know that in the body or out of the body, I was caught up to the third heaven and heard sacred secrets which no human lips can repeat. This is an experience that is worth boasting about but I am not going to do that. I am going to boast only about my weaknesses. If I were to boast I would not be just a braggart because I would be speaking the truth. I abstain from boasting of it that no one form a higher opinion of me than is justified by what he sees in me and



hears from me. **To keep me from being puffed up and too much elated by the greatness of these revelations there was given me a thorn in the flesh.** An instrument of Satan to discipline me so that I as should not think too highly of myself. Three times I sought the Lord and begged him to remove this from me. His answer to me was, "My grace, favor, mercy is enough for you and sufficient against any danger and to enable you to bear the trouble. For my strength and power are made perfect and completed in your



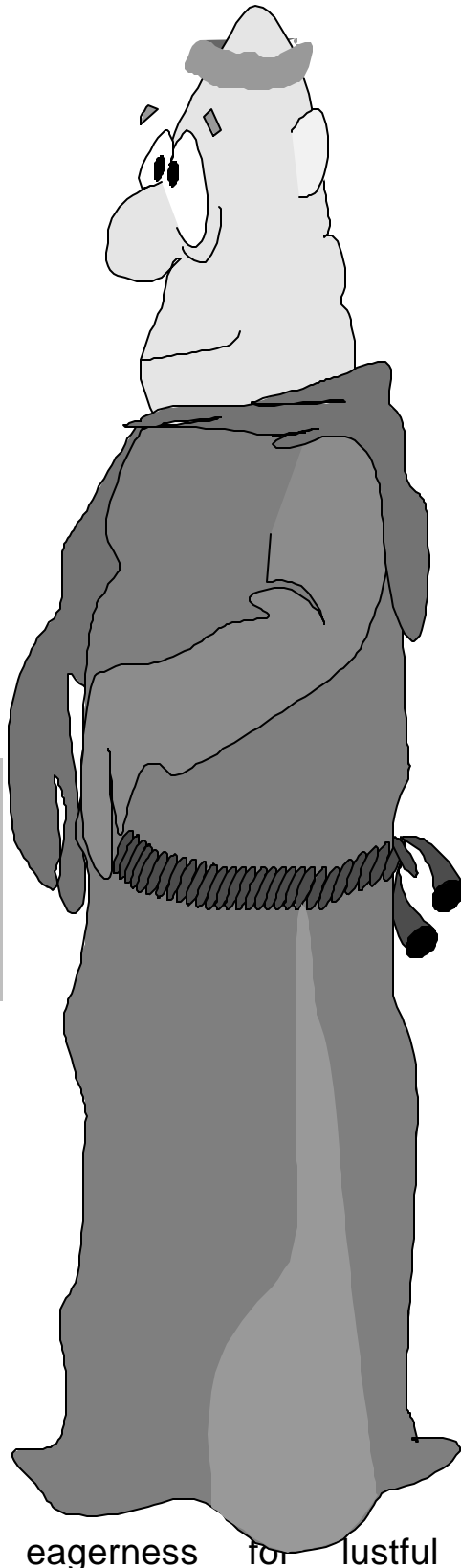
weakness. Therefore, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities that the strength and power of Christ may rest as to pitch a tent and dwell upon me. So for the sake of Christ I take pleasure in the infirmities, insults, hardships, and distresses for when I am weak in the flesh then I am truly strong and powerful in divine strength.

I SHALL RETURN TO CORINTH!

You have made me feel like a fool boasting like this. I am not at all inferior to those super apostles even though I am nothing at all. *I gave you proof by God himself by many signs and wonders and miracles among you.* The only thing that I did not do that I do in other churches is to become a burden on you. Please forgive me for that. I am coming a third time to you and I do not want what you have but *I want you!*

I gave you proof by God himself by many signs and wonders and miracles among you.

I will gladly spend myself for your spiritual good even though it seems that the more I love you, the less you love me. We tell you this as Christ's servants and we know that God is listening. I am afraid that when I come, I will have to grieve because many of you who sinned earlier have not repented of the impurity, sexual vice and



eagerness for lustful

pleasure. As the scriptures say, "The facts of every case must be established by the testimony of of two or three witnesses." (Deut 19:15) I warned those in sin on my second visit. Next time I will not spare them. I will give you all the proof you want that Christ speaks through me. Christ is not weak in his dealings with you, he is a mighty power among you. Although he died on the cross in weakness, He lives through the mighty power of God. *We are also weak as he was weak, but we live in him and have God's power, a mighty force!* **Examine yourself, to see if your faith is real. If you cannot tell that Jesus Christ is among you and in you, it means you have failed the test.** We pray for your restoration to maturity.

I close my letter with the words: Rejoice, change your ways. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.