

Paul's Second
Letter to the
Corinthians

FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Here for the third time, I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you.... I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.

2 Corinthians 12:14a, 15a

Class Time

- Prayer Requests
- Scripture Reading – 2 Corinthians 12:11-21
- Discussion Questions
- Outline & Lesson

2 Corinthians 12:11–21 (ESV) ¹¹ I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. ¹² The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. ¹³ For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

¹⁴ Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. ¹⁵ I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? ¹⁶ But granting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and got the better of you by deceit.

2 Corinthians

¹⁷ Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you?

¹⁸ I urged Titus to go and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

¹⁹ Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved. ²⁰ For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. ²¹ I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.

Discussion Questions

#1

In 12:11 Paul says “I was not inferior to these super-apostles.” What things demonstrate that this was true? See 1 Cor 15:10; 1 Cor 9:1-2

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

1 Corinthians 9:1–2

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? 2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Discussion Questions

#1 references

2 Corinthians

Discussion Questions #2

What were the signs of a true apostle in v12. In this same verse and in 2 Cor 6:4, how does Paul describe the manner in which he performed these signs? See also Rom 15:17-19.

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 12:12 (ESV)

¹² The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

2 Corinthians 6:4

but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,

Romans 15:17–19

17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ;

Discussion Questions

#2 references

Discussion Questions

#3

What were some of the non-miraculous indications that Paul was a true apostle, distinct from the false apostles? 2 Cor 3:2-3; 2 Cor 6:3-10; 7:2, 8:20-21; 6:11, 7:3; 11:23-33.

2 Corinthians 3:2–3

2 You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. 3 And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

2 Corinthians 7:2

Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one.

2 Corinthians 8:20–21

20 We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, 21 for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man.

2 Corinthians 6:3–10

3 We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; 7 by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

Discussion Questions

#4

In v 19, what is the reason Paul gives for his “foolish speech” and for his entire apostolic ministry? See also, 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10.

2 Corinthians 12:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved.

2 Corinthians 10:8

For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed.

2 Corinthians 13:10

For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

I The Nature of Paul's Ministry vv11-13

- A. Worthy of commendation v11a
- B. Equal to super-apostles' v11b
- C. Signs of true apostleship v12
- D. Free of charge v13

II The Responsibilities of Paul's Ministry vv14-18

- A. Acting as a parent v14
- B. Gaining of their souls v15
- C. Establishing integrity vv16-18

III The Purpose of Paul's Ministry vv19-21

- A. God's approval v19a
- B. Spiritual upbuilding v19b
- C. Church discipline vv20-21

Validation of Paul's Ministry

A Changed Apostle

2 Corinthians 12:14a, 15a – Here for the third time, I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you.... I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.

A Changed People

2 Corinthians 3:2–3 – You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. 3 And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.