

---

**If you recall last time, in 12:20-21, Paul expressed his fears that the church at Corinth was full of envying, quarreling, strife, and factions.**

He feared that there MANY who were committing fornication, and that lasciviousness, (sins of excess and intemperance), immorality, and uncleanness was commonplace among them. ANY SIN not repented of/mortified will become a besetting sin. A besetting sin is a sin that YOU are easily prone to, it is a sin tailored to your corrupt affections. The wicked one knows this, he will always nearby ready to influence you to it. These were some of Paul's fears for the Corinthians.

We ought to desire to see the power of Christ present in our midst saving sinners and building up the saints, but not like this. (13:1-10).

**Paul told them in (12:14), "I am ready to come to you"; but here in (13:1), he wrote, "I am coming to you".**

It seems to me that Paul was putting the church on notice with a verbal warning (that he was coming), this, I think, hoping to provoke the MANY who were living in sin to repent, to cast off and lay aside the sins which had so easily beset them.

"Prepare yourself", saith Paul, because when I get there, (in person) I am going to deal with you. This was not the first time that Paul warned the Corinthians about their sin. 1 Corinthians 4:18-21

You get the sense (C13) that the Apostle Paul's patience was wearing thin with those who were continuing in their sins and impenitence.

Further notice that he would deal with practicing sinners in the church was his intent to call witnesses. Matthew 18:16-17, Deuteronomy 19:15

**(V2-3): It was as if Paul pleaded with them, please don't test me. Please don't force me to assert my apostolic power and authority.**

"You seek proof of Christ speaking in me"; if I come and find all my fears to be true, "I will not spare", I will not be lenient with those of you who have sinned and have not repented of your sins.

If you insist on trying me and putting me to the test as to whether Christ is speaking in me, or whether he is present in my ministry, you better be ready to be examined and tested...

TO PROVE that Christ is in you!

I have no doubt that the false teachers were the ones behind all the challenges and accusations against Paul and his ministry.

But don't miss this: Their SEEKING PROOF from Paul was a direct challenge to Christ... because Christ was the One speaking through the Apostle Paul!

To challenge or attack the authority of the Apostle Paul was to challenge and attack the authority of Christ!

This was true of the all the prophets and apostles of the Lord Jesus; God spoke infallibly through them: These were men who were chosen by God to communicate God's revealed will to the people of God. Acts 1:8

2 Samuel 23:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Peter 1:20-21

Power and authority were given by Christ to Paul and all the apostles to establish and build the church of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Acts 2:41-42, Ephesians 2:19-20, 2 Peter 3:1-2, Jude 17

It is no wonder that Paul was relentlessly attacked by Satan's minions and false apostles. LISTEN: If Satan can ruin the foundation of a church, he can most certainly ruin a church! Destroy it from within!

And so, they attacked Paul personally, he was weak and contemptible in appearance, and he wasn't a polished speaker, (he didn't look the part, and he couldn't speak well.

BUT they couldn't argue that his ministry weak, for his preaching and teaching was accompanied by the power of Christ!

So many today are seeking for churches that LOOK POWERFUL on the outside, with powerful performances, theatrics, and dynamic speakers!

Brethren, the power of Christ does not come from our own strengths, talents, and resources... If the power of Christ would be present here, it will come because Christ willed it to be among us. And... His power will always be associated with our weaknesses and reverence for Him and His Word!

Remember 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, God afflicted and weakened Paul to keep him from exalting himself. This because of all what God had showed him by direct revelation. (Esp.12:9)

**YOU SEEK PROOF of Christ in me? (V3B): Christ was not weak among you. He worked powerfully and mightily among you. 2 Corinthians 12:12**

You look at me and servants of Christ as weak and contemptible, but you would do well to remember that Christ was crucified through human weakness. But it was THROUGH His human weakness, sufferings, and death that His power was manifested! Crucified in weakness, raised in power!

(V4A): "For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God".

One of the greatest departures from true faith in Christ is when we, as Christians associate the power and the presence of Christ with human power, wisdom, and strength.

Beloved, we are most conformed to Christ in our human weaknesses, BUT ALSO, when our weaknesses, sufferings, and afflictions are coupled with trusting and depending on the strength that comes from God alone.

(V4B): For WE ALSO are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you." 2  
Corinthians 4:7-12

**You're examining me and compelling me to prove that Christ is speaking in me, which I have more than proved. BUT... you would do well to examine yourselves.**

Do you know that Jesus Christ is in you? Test and scrutinize yourselves, you had better make sure that Christ is in you!

(V5) is one of those passages that may be used, and yea, ought to be used by us personally for self-examination. Psalm 26:1-2, 119:59, Lamentations 3:40

Paul continued his admonishment of them: I trust that you know that we are not reprobates, but that Christ IS IN US, and HE has indeed spoken to you through our ministry.

Paul did not want to come to them and be forced to be severe with them, but if they insisted on challenging him to prove his apostolic authority, and that Christ was speaking in him, he would do so in the way of discipline; he would come, and not spare them. He would come with the rod of correction.

But Paul's heart was that it would not be so.

My prayer is for you... not so much that we should be "proved" right and you wrong, but that you would do right, turn from your sins, and that you would hear the words and commands of Christ from us. If you do what is honest and right in the sight of God, we don't care if others view us as reprobates, for our hearts are toward you!

**2 Corinthians 13:9-10: Paul's once again showed his love for this church!**

Absent sharpness by letter was better, to prevent present sharpness in person. My heart, saith Paul, is for your edification, not your destruction.

Discipline is never a pleasant thing in a church.....let us all take notice of the sins that Paul listed in 12:20-21. And let us lay aside every weight, and the sins that would so easily beset us. But if the need arises for discipline: Two or Three witnesses.

One thing strongly emphasized in this passage by Paul is that the power of Christ is manifested NOT in you being strong in yourself as a Christian, but in you realizing that you have nothing, and are weak in yourself apart from Christ.

And finally, before you challenge or examine someone else's Christianity, examine yourself, whether you be in the faith. Prove your own selves, to know that Jesus Christ is in you!