**Metadata**

* + Paul established the church in Corinth (cf. Acts 18:1-17). His preaching there was most effective among the Gentiles. Was there at least 1.5 years (cf. Acts 18:11).
  + Paul wrote the second letter probably only a few months after the first (Maybe late 56 A.D.). He had left Ephesus to go to Macedonia (Acts 20). He spent time in Troas (cf. 2:12-13). It was in Macedonia that he met with Titus, and got word of their reception of the first letter (7:5-7). The second letter is in response to Titus’ report, and would have been written shortly after. Where in Macedonia the letter was written is not revealed.
  + Corinth was the commercial capital of Greece because of a location that was both defensible and strategic to trade. Commerce traveled the *Dioklos*, a special road built to move boats across an isthmus rather than traveling around the treacherous waters around Cape Malea.
  + In Paul’s day, more than 500,000 in population. A Jewish presence (synagogue, Acts 18:4). More success was found in preaching to the Gentiles.
  + The Epistle has been divided into 13 chapters and 267 verses.
  + The book is universally recognized as canonical, and as the product of the apostle Paul.

**Concise Outline of Book**

1. **Greetings (1:1-2)**
2. **Personal, Admonitions & Appeals (1:3-7:16)**
   1. Fellowship: Suffering & Comfort (1:3-11)
   2. Paul’s plans re: the Corinthians (1:12-2:17)
   3. Contrast to Judaizers (3:1-18)
   4. Paul’s successful ministry (4:1 – 7:1)
   5. Joy at the Corinthian’s repentance (7:2-16)
3. **Collection for the Judean Saints (8:1 – 9:15)**
   1. Instructions concerning giving (8:1-15)
   2. Commendation of messengers (8:16-24)
   3. Exhortations regarding giving (9:1-15)
4. **Paul’s Authority VS False Apostles (10:1 – 13:10)**
   1. Authority through the gospel (10:1-6)
   2. Nature & Limits of His authority (10:7-18)
   3. Paul’s Defense VS false apostles (11:1-15)
   4. Extended contrast w/ Judaizers (11:16-33)
   5. Paul’s vision & thorn in the flesh (12:1-13)
   6. Paul’s love for the church (12:14-21)
   7. Paul’s final warnings (13:1-10)
5. **Concluding Remarks (13:11-14)**

**Paul’s Purpose in Writing 2 Corinthians**

* Paul had received news from Titus that his previous letter had been well received. In this second epistle he explains his motives in his sharp rebuke (cf. 2:3,4,9; 7:8)
* His letter both commends them for their penitent attitude (cf. 7:2-12), and continues his inspired instructions to them.

**Chapter Synopses**

1. After his greeting, Paul launches a discussion of suffering, both its reality, and the relief to be found in Christ. He then explains his future plans.
2. Paul refers to the sexually immoral man mentioned in his previous letter. The man had repented, and Paul instructs them to receive him back. He also writes of the triumph to be found in Christ.
3. Paul alludes to the Judaizing teachers, noting that he had no need to commend himself. He contrasts the glory of the New Covenant with the vain teaching of the Judaizers.
4. Paul contends the preaching of Christ brings light into the world. Though his preaching led to persecution, hope in Christ trumps despair.
5. That hope in Christ is made sure in the resurrection. Therefore, Paul’s aim was to prepare for the resurrection and judgment. He appeals to the Corinthians to be likewise ready.
6. Paul describes himself as a minister (servant) of God. He calls upon the Corinthians to be holy, and to avoid unequal yoking with evil.
7. Paul rejoices in the zealous repentance of the Corinthians in response to his first letter. The report brought to him by Titus gave him much comfort.
8. Paul calls upon the Corinthians to excel in giving, noting the Macedonian churches as examples. He calls them to be willing and abundant in their gift to the Judean saints, as an offering of love.
9. Paul exhorts them to have their gift ready so that they would not be embarrassed by being unprepared (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-2). He calls upon them to be cheerful and purposeful in their giving.
10. He points out that the warfare we engage in is not physical, but spiritual. As a spiritual warrior and apostle, Paul discusses the nature and limits of his authority.
11. Paul expresses his concern that they might be led away from his teaching by false apostles. He notes their deceptive ways, stating “For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.” In defending his apostleship, he notes the travails he had suffered for Christ.
12. Paul describes his vision of Paradise, and the subsequent “thorn in the flesh” given him to keep him humble. He notes his “boasting” was necessary due to their questions regarding his authority. He reaffirms his love for them.
13. He warns them to self-examine to ensure they are right with God. He notes that when he visits them again, if they remain sinful, he will not “spare”, though his preference is that his visit be a pleasant and gentle one.

**Suggested Memory Work**

**(1:3-5)**, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”*

**(2:15)**, *“For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.”* (memorize 2:14-16)

**(4:8-10)**, *“We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.”*

**(4:16)**, *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.”* (memorize 4:16-18)

**(5:6-8)**, *“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”*

**(5:10)**, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* (memorize 5:9-11).

**(5:17),** *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*

**(7:1),** *“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*

**(7:10),** *“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”*

**(8:12),** *“For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.”*

**(9:7),** *“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”* (memorize 9:6-7)

**(10:4-6),** *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”*

**(10:12),** *“For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”*

**(11:14b-15),** *“For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”* (memorize 11:13-15)

**(13:5),** *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.”*

**Difficult Passages**

* How is Paul’s affliction or comfort *“for”* the consolation and salvation of the Corinthians? (1:5-6)
* What does Paul intend when in his discussion of his plans he uses the terms *“Yes”* and *“No”* frequently? (1:17-20)
* What does God giving *“us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee”* mean? (1:22)
* Explain the phrase, *“a door was opened to me by the Lord.”*  Does that happen today? (2:12)
* In (3:4-6), what is intended in the contrast, where we are told *“for the letter kills”*? Some say this means obedience is legalistic.
* Does (4:3-4) indicate that the Holy Spirit must work on the heart to make it accepting of truth? (That is what Calvinists believe).
* Discuss the meaning of the word “imputing” (5:19)
* What constitutes an unequal yoking? (6:14)
* Explain the *“third heaven”* and the vision of Paradise (12:1-6)
* Discuss *“disqualified”* in light of the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints (Calvinism) (13:5-6)
* What is the *“holy kiss?”* Is this required of us today as well? (13:12)

**Doctrinal Considerations**

* **Suffering and the Christian (1:3-11)**
* Treatment of the Penitent (2:3-11)
* Purpose & Effect of Preaching (2:12-17)
* Old Testament VS New (3:7-18)
* **Hope in the Resurrection (4:7 - 5:11)**
* **A Sanctified Life (5:12-21; 6:11 - 7:1)**
* **True Repentance** **(7:2-12)**
* **Acceptable Giving (8:1 – 9:15)**
* Scope of Benevolence (8:3-4)
* Nature of Christian Warfare (10:1-6)
* The Authority of an Apostle (10:7-18)
* The Sufficiency of Christ’s Grace (12:9)
* The Possibility of Apostasy (13:5-6)

**Practical Considerations**

* Should we be willing to suffer, or to use the comfort we receive to benefit our brethren? How can we do this? (1:5-6)
* Consider how we should treat one who is penitent. (2:6-11)
* Consider the attitude we should have toward opportunities to preach the gospel (2:12)
* **Warning:** Worldly influences can blind us to God’s word! (4:3-4)
* We would do well to consider the paradoxes of the Christian life (4:8-11, 16-18; 13:4)
* Consider the practical aspects of *a “walk by faith”* (5:7)
* How should the inevitability of judgment impact our lives? (5:9-11)
* Consider the imperative and immediate importance of our salvation. (6:2)
* How does (6:14-18) affect our relationships?
* List the practical applications of Paul’s instructions with regard to Giving (8:1 – 9:15)
* Consider the danger of comparing yourself to other Christians (10:12)
* Consider and emulate the degree and nature of Paul’s love for the Corinthians (12:15)
* Consider the destructive nature of the Corinthian’s sins (12:20-21)
* The importance of self-examination (13:5)
* Consider the final, practical admonitions (13:11-12)

**Questions to Consider**

* Paul referred to the church there as the church of God, what other descriptions are given for the church? (1:1).
* Should the gospel be an opportunity for monetary gain? (2:17). How might that happen?
* Does (6:14) condemn being married to a non-Christian?
* What are the responsibilities regarding public repentance? The penitent, (7:8-11). The congregation, (2:6-11).
* What *does “they first gave themselves to the Lord”* (8:5) mean, and how can we apply it?
* How can you equip yourself for the Christian’s warfare? (10:4-6)
* Who was it that received the vision of Paradise? (12:1-6)

**Student Questions**

*(Use the back of the page to prepare questions and comments for class discussion. Since this is not a “verse by verse” study, make sure that all your questions concerning the text are answered).*