



MONDAY 22 AUGUST 2016

SERIES: SECOND CORINTHAINS

Read: 2 Corinthians 13:1-2

Plug In...

Re-read 2 Corinthians 12:20-21. Paul fears that gross and flagrant sin will still be in play when he arrives this third time at Corinth. He will squash it through the God-given mechanism for a just trial (see: Deuteronomy 19:15-21). Paul has clearly heard reports of unrepentant sin going rife, so when he arrives he will seek proof and upon the testimony of multiple witnesses the stubborn-sinner/s will be judged.

Chew It Over...

The community of Israel received a law that was unequivocal. The flagrant sinner was to be purged from the community. In some cases, death was the punishment. This may seem so harsh to us. It is helpful to remember that God used Israel as an example to teach us something of how He will deal with the world in ultimate judgement (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 10:11). We see severe historical judgement happen within the history of Israel (the biggest being the exile) and it functions as a teaching aid to inform us about the ultimate judgement to occur at the end of history. Israel's examples of judgement provide us with a proto-type of what Jesus means when he says there is a future ultimate judgement (*cf.* Matthew 25:31-46).

Think over. How much better is it to have an internal judgement take place within the church before the day of final judgement. Paul will judge flagrant sinners within the church now as that is merciful:

1) mercy towards the rest of the congregation, which otherwise could be corrupted by the presence and influence of the flagrant sinners;

2) mercy to the flagrant sinner/s, for there is real opportunity in this life to still repent and trust in Jesus. [You may find it helpful to read further: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 & 2 Corinthians 7:8-10.]

Prayer Suggestion

Pray that we may be so eager to live new lives that we would be humble enough to receive correction and rebuke.



The Lakes

TUESDAY 23 AUGUST 2016

SERIES: SECOND CORINTHIANS

Read: 2 Corinthians 13:3-4

Plug In...

When Paul turns up, he will have proof that Christ is speaking through him as he disciplines. At this moment, he makes a point that Christ was crucified in weakness but raised by God's power.

Chew It Over...

Given the context of unrepentant sin (12:20-21), why is the point of Christ being crucified in weakness and raised by God's power made by Paul? To help clarify, consider Malachi 3:2-4 & 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Prayer Suggestion

Pray that God will be refining and purifying His people on the Central Coast.



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WEDNESDAY 24 AUGUST 2016

SERIES: SECOND CORINTHIANS

Read: 2 Corinthians 13:5 & Psalm 139:24

Plug In...

Paul's battle with the Corinthians has been about 'proof'. They say Paul needs to prove he's speaking as an Apostle of Christ. Paul responds by telling them to prove themselves to themselves. If they examine themselves, should Christ be in them, they will see the resurrected-power of Christ in their new lives (i.e., lives running away from sin, not continuing to embrace it and tolerate it).

Chew It Over...

This is a strong word from Paul, yet don't miss the positive tone he has. He is not trying to cast doubt, but rather is getting them to stop-down and focus again on what the true message of Christ is. For, the true message is where the power is! He's confident they'll be reminded by God's Spirit of this message and spurred on by God's Spirit to repent and live the new lives Jesus bought for them.

Prayer Suggestion

Ask God to search you and show you if there is any offensive way in you. And, if so ask for God's help (Psalm 139:24).



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THURSDAY 25 AUGUST 2016

SERIES: SECOND CORINTHIANS

Read: 2 Corinthians 13:6-9

Plug In...

In the twisted world of the super-apostles, anything which looked different from success was to be despised. Yet, Paul argues throughout 2 Corinthians the opposite. Paul acknowledges that he may look and act oddly: he acknowledges he is physically unimpressive (11:12-29 & 12:7); he recognises he's not a polished speaker (11:6); that he's not trending well because he doesn't charge the self-validating fee for speaking (12:13). Verse 9 Paul is glad that this is weak. For, given weakness is the cost incurred to speak the truth without distortion, then the pure truth thus spoken to them results in their strength.

Chew It Over...

Many Christians don't want to be marginalised, they don't want to appear stupid or weak. So in order to be accepted and look impressive, they soften up many truths of the gospel. Happy to talk lots about the 'love' of God, but the softening occurs when avoiding aspects of the 'judgement' of God.

Think over where you are pressured to soften up part of the gospel to maintain perceptions and relevancy. Remind yourself again of the beautiful news that emerges when both the judgement of God and the love of God are kept intact. Resolve to always

communicate that God's love was to provide Jesus crucified because of the reality of our impending judgement. Jesus raised again in power is God's love too so that we might be complete and restored (v.9).

Prayer Suggestion

Pray for restoration to God for the people around you. Pray for unwavering commitment to the truth of Christ, even in the face of marginalisation and being despised.



The Lakes

FRIDAY 26 AUGUST 2016

SERIES: SECOND CORINTHIANS

Read: 2 Corinthians 13:10

Plug In...

Paul takes a moment to make clear his motivation for writing. He has spoken heavy and direct words. Several times throughout this letter, and again one more time, Paul says this directness is not to harass, bash, or bully them but to build them up. He even has taken the opportunity to write to them this appeal *before* he turns up. His hope and prayer is that the truth of Christ's word through his letter prompts them to repentance beforehand, so that an intense face-to-face situation doesn't have to occur. Paul is hoping for restoration sooner rather than later.

Chew It Over...

It has been said, "the conversation is the relationship". There's truth in that. When the temperature in a conversation heats up, how important is it that we spend lots of time communicating that we love and respect the other person. There may be lots to hash through, but we can model Paul making sure our love and respect for the other person is front-and-centre and they can be in no doubt about that. Think about a conversation you may have coming up where you will have to be direct over some spiritual issues. Whether the issues are large or small, resolve to be just a direct in communicating your love for the person and your mutual reliance on Christ.

Prayer Suggestion

May the Lord protect us from our default setting which wrecks and destroys relationships. May we be more like Christ who always had love and compassion, even for his enemies, and his slow-to-learn disciples.



The Lakes

WEEKEND 27-28 AUGUST 2016

SERIES: SECOND CORINTHIANS

Read: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Plug In...

Paul is full of optimism and hope. This has been characteristic of this letter. In the context of hard things to say and strong rebukes, Paul has maintained confidence that the Corinthians will survive in Christ. Undergirding all Paul says, the backbone of His theology, is the New Covenant. [Remember, in the context of dealing with issues, Paul does a whole sidebar in chapter 3 on the giving of the Spirit and what that means for Christians.]

Chew It Over...

Wow, given the intensity of the letter, what a finish! Paul is amazingly confident of restoration, of repentance. What clue is given that connects to his new covenant theology driving Paul's confidence.

Prayer Suggestion

Thank God for the new covenant; the forgiveness through Christ and the entrance of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Pray that we would be a community who see and enjoy God at work among us, both individually and as the body of Christ. Pray that you embrace the new covenant confidence as we speak into one another's lives.