



“The Bible, Part 241”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



Our text for today is **2Corinthians 12:7**:

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

Thank you for listening and thinking with me as we study God's Word to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

As we begin, let me communicate to you that my preaching is based upon the fact that every episode recorded in the Bible is literally true.

We live in a culture in which fantasy and fiction dominate, but we need to resist the allure of made-up stories and intellectually concocted arguments as we develop faith in the meticulously recorded factual history of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ by the eyewitnesses who were present on the scene.

We must do whatever we need to do to develop the personal faith needed to believe that the Bible is the absolute truth, and recognize that every fiction put forth by man or by the devil to contradict or minimize the impact of Biblical accounts is a lie.

One of the most important things that the church can do is follow the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. The problem, however, is that to do so requires a certain amount of discipline. And most people lack that discipline, as Paul tells us, in **Romans 3:23**:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

We are all sinners, saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And although we are saved by the goodness and mercy of the Lord, we all still have the sin nature, that carnal man that we inherited from Adam. But it is ours to recognize our shortcomings, and to do all that we can to avoid sin and improve our situation.

The Apostle Paul was a man with a nature such as ours, however, the Lord Jesus Christ chose to prepare to use Paul by giving Paul revelatory experiences, which Paul describes in **2Corinthians 12:1-4**:

1 It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:

2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—



4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

The “man in Christ” of whom Paul was speaking was he himself. But he speaks of “a man in Christ” because he does not want to put himself in a category above those to whom he is speaking. Paul finds his boasting about his visions extremely distasteful, because they could not be verified by the church, could not be repeated by others, and might well lead to pride, which, as we all know because the Scripture tells us, goes before a fall.

That which is profitable for the church is not personal revelation, but rather Scripture, as Paul says in **2Timothy 3:16–17**:

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The true measure of the man of God is not the subjective, personal experiences that he has had, but how much he has suffered in the war against the devil for the Cross, how concerned he is for the people of the Lord Jesus Christ, and how well he handles the revelation found in God’s Word. Such men handle the affliction of the world with grace, as Paul informs us, in **2Corinthians 4:17–18**:

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Continuing, Paul tells the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 12:5–6**:

5 Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities.

6 For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.

The one thing that the Apostle Paul does not want, despite his superior spiritual experiences, is to be worshipped. And having been to the third heaven and heard inexpressible words for the Lord, it would be easy for Paul to allow himself to be put on a pedestal. But Paul recognizes the foolishness of getting up on that pedestal, because once one puts themselves up there, the only way to go is down.

But Paul gives this information to the Corinthians as a preamble to giving them some serious church discipline. For the church at Corinth, much like the churches of our day, was getting seriously off track. Paul intended to authoritatively teach the church that which it needed to get back on track, but



Paul did not want his authority to be confused with the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter had a similar experience with Cornelius of the Italian band, when Peter went to preach the gospel to the Gentiles under Cornelius leadership. **Acts 10:24–26** informs us:

24 And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends.

25 As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him.

26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.”

Peter was a man that knew the gospel, had spoken to the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, and had been put into the leadership of the church. But Peter, like Paul, having been with the Lord Jesus Christ, knew too much about his personal shortcomings to get the big head. Peter, like Paul, could convey to others that which the Lord Jesus Christ had done for mankind, but Peter, like Paul, was clear that the work had been done by the Lord Jesus Christ, and he was only the messenger describing the episodes. Peter was not the protagonist of the episodes, except in the negative sense, when he denied the Lord Jesus Christ.

Anyone put in a human position in leadership in the church ought to share this perspective. The Lord Jesus Christ clarifies how we stand, in **Luke 17:7–10: 7 And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’?**

8 But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink’?

9 Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’ ”

When we maintain our perspective as unprofitable servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit can use our servitude to bring discipline to others in the church. But if we get besides ourselves, as Dad used to say, our work becomes self-focused and useless.

Saints, it does not matter what position in the church we occupy. We are never in charge and we are certainly never worthy of worship. We are simply unprofitable servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit to do His work. As powerfully as the Holy Spirit might work through us, it is the Holy Spirit working, and we can no more do the work without Him than the man in the moon.



The Holy Spirit gave Paul the ability to transmit the Word of God to the people, which is why Paul wrote over half of the New Testament. And the Lord Jesus Christ found a way to keep Paul in check. Paul informs us, in **2Corinthians 12:7–10**:

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

9 And [the Lord Jesus Christ] said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul drew nearer to the Lord Jesus Christ through the intensity of his pain. And just this very week, I have had unsuccessful chemotherapy treatment for my cancer twice. Not only was I extremely sickened by unsuccessful attempts to take the chemotherapy, I was extremely apprehensive, because I knew that my health, life and ability to function were at stake unless I could take the chemotherapy to arrest the cancer.

And if Marie and I have ever prayed, it was this week. I found my calling on the Lord Jesus Christ almost every waking minute, asking for deliverance from this situation. And when the doctors, nurses and I figured out the problem and I was able to take the chemotherapy, I found myself thanking the Lord Jesus Christ for His grace just as heartily as I had prayed to Him.

The key to the solution of problems in this life is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. John tells us, in **John 1:14, 16–17**:

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Writing of the early Christian church, Luke says, in **Acts 4:33**:

33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

James specifies a particular characteristic of those that receive grace, in **James 4:6**:

6 But [the Lord Jesus Christ] gives more grace. Therefore, He says: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Peter instructs those that have receive grace to be graceful to others, in **1 Peter 4:10**:



10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Paul continues the theme of grace, in **Romans 5:1–2**:

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Paul also tells us that the good works that we do are strictly a function of the grace of God in **2Corinthians 9:8**:

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

The remedies of this world are as nothing without a liberal application of God's grace. There is no psychological therapy or medical procedure that can take the place of the grace of God. As much as unbeliever may rely on therapies developed by human beings, those that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will be able to recognize that it is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that rescues us from the trials of this life and limits that which Satan can do to affect the progress of the people of God.

However counterintuitive the fact may seem to be, it certainly appears that our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ is strongest when we are suffering. Oh, when things are going well, we have the tendency to forget about the Lord and ascribe our success to ourselves. But it is when we are weak that we are most diligent to endeavor to access our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, as Paul tells us, in **2Corinthians 12:10**:

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

So, Paul makes it clear that, although he is going to provide discipline to the church, he is neither the author nor the finisher of the discipline he provides. In fact, Paul is under discipline himself, and can only do anything at all by the power of the Holy Spirit that rests upon him. But Paul wants the Corinthians to remember that the power of Holy Spirit does rest on him, so they should listen to him. Paul informs the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 12:11–13**:

11 I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

13 For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!



Paul hopes that his sarcasm will touch the Corinthians. Paul's actions in Corinth were by no means inferior to the greatest deeds of the other Apostles, as Paul worked in the power of Christ. The only difference between Paul and the other Apostles is that Paul did not request or receive remuneration for his ministry among the Corinthians.

Interestingly, Paul could take care of himself financially. Paul writes, in

1Corinthians 7:2–5:

2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

The other apostles have wives and families to support, and need remuneration from the churches. Paul is not opposed to the other apostles, or in fact anyone working in church business, having a family to support. But Paul writes, in **1Corinthians 7:6–9:**

6 But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.

7 For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

8 But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am;

9 but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Paul recognizes that he has the gift of celibacy, but does not require that others in his position also have the gift of celibacy. But Paul does spotlight the one of the benefits of the gift of celibacy, that being that the apostle with the gift of celibacy can avoid being a drain on the church, as he has no wife and family to support. Paul plans to return to Corinth to set things in order, once he gets out of the Roman jail, without being a financial drain on the Corinthian church, so that his message will not be co-opted by a need for money. Paul informs the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 12:14–15:**

14 Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.



That sentiment is often true. The disciplinary parent shows his love for his child by being swift to discipline him, but is often less loved by the child than the nurturing parent, although the disciplinary parent generally contributes more to the development of the child than the nurturing parent. The writer of the book of Hebrews informs us, in **Hebrews 12:5–11**:

5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”

7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

One way a person can tell that he is not the son of the Father is that the Father has reached the point that He does not discipline the person for that which he does. As the disciples were in the Upper Room with Jesus, **John 13:21** informs us:

21 When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.”

The Lord Jesus Christ continued, in **Matthew 26:24**:

24 The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”

The episode continues, in **John 13:22–26**:

22 Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

25 Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, “Lord, who is it?”



26 Jesus answered, **“It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.”** And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

Having identified the betrayer as Judas Iscariot, Jesus did not try to dissuade of discipline Judas. **John 13:27, 30** informs us:

27 Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, **“What you do, do quickly.”**

30 Having received the piece of bread, [Judas] then went out immediately. And it was night.

Judas' fate as sealed when Satan entered him. No correction would help Judas, so the Lord Jesus Christ sent Judas on his way. However, just as Jesus warned Judas, Jesus warned Peter about the denial of Jesus that Peter was going to perform. And when Peter denied Jesus as Jesus told Peter that Peter was going to do, the Lord turned and looked at Peter, bringing His words to Peter's panicked remembrance and causing Peter to repent with bitter tears.

It is a blessing when the Lord brings our sins to our remembrance. It is a blessing when the Lord punishes our sins in such a way that we repent with bitter tears. It is even a blessing if the Lord sends us a messenger of Satan to buffet us so that we will pray and seek his face, for, as Paul informs us, in **2Corinthians 12:9-10**:

9 And [the Lord Jesus Christ] said to me, **“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”** Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

And Paul informs the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 12:19–21**:

19 Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.

20 For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

21 lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

Why, oh why, would the Lord God humble Paul for the sins of the Corinthians? Because Paul has been the messenger that the Lord God sent to Corinth to preach the word. And if the Corinthians are in the sinful shape that Paul describes, Paul has a lot of preaching to do.

But if Paul can make it, this will be Paul's third trip to Corinth, in addition to the two letters he has written to Corinth. And with all the previous interaction,



Paul is praying that Corinthians will remember his visits, read his letters and grow up on their own. Paul wants the Corinthians to, please ma'am and please sir, reject the sin that exists all around them, for Corinth is not a holy city, but a place where pagan gods are worshipped in houses of prostitution.

Those in the Corinthian church have a responsibility to give up the guilty pleasures that they formally enjoyed. Their responsibility to give up sin is as clear and straightforward as their ability to sin. But the problem was that many in the church decided that they can live in the church world and in the carnal world at the same time.

Paul warns the Corinthian church, in **2Corinthians 13:1–3**:

1 This will be the third time I am coming to you. “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.”

2 I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare—

3 since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

Paul intends to clean house and fix the situation. Oh, Corinthians, please be prepared, because although Paul is not much of a physical presence, he is coming to you with the full indwelling of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of the Word of God. And the Corinthian church, which seems to have a propensity to gain adherents by relaxing the Word of God and not requiring holiness of the members, and about to meet a Paul who will demand that the church not change to meet the desires of the members, but that the church change to meet the desires of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, a preacher can grow his church by simply ignoring the things in the Word of God and allowing sin to proliferate. Folk flock to hear how they can become rich or powerful through church membership, and how the Lord actually wants them to be rich in this life and wants them to “have whatever they say” for their own creature comfort. The church may find the path of comfort the easiest way to go when the choice is between holiness and comfort. And the church can justify modifying the gospel to capitulate to the world if it makes it easier for the church to collect offerings.

The theories of many church growth experts are co-opting the church. Like secular growth experts, they have the idea that the church, like any other business, should find out that which its customers, read members, want, and give it to them. This is an excellent marketing strategy, but salvation is not a simply a commodity that the church is selling. The church's priorities are developed by the Word of God, and although, as **2Peter 3:9** tells us:

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.



The Lord God knows that all are not coming to repentance. He tells us, in **2Peter 3:10–14**:

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

The Lord tells us through the Psalmist, in **Psalm 4:3**:

3 But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

Of His people, the Lord God said, in **Leviticus 20:26**:

26 And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

Of the Lord Jesus Christ, the writer of the Hebrews said, in **Hebrews 7:26**:

26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

Paul wants the Corinthians to heed the warning of the Scripture. Paul loves Corinth, and does not want to come as a disciplinarian, although he certainly will if necessary. And every church, from Corinth on down to this present day, should take Paul's words to heart. Oh, please, church, be moral and be holy when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back for His church. For we have this life to grow closer to the Lord in thought, word and deed.

And the love of many will grow cold when they are held accountable by the discipline of the church for that which they are doing. They will withhold their tithes and offerings; they will stop attending services in which their sin is spotlighted and called out.

The biggest problem facing the church is its insensitivity to sin. The disinterest in calling out sinning people in the church for the purpose of repentance and restoration or exclusion should they fail to repent, is the most visible symptom of the church's moral and spiritual decline. The Lord Jesus Christ instructs the church, in **Matthew 18:15–17**:

15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’



17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

And the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, in **2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15:**

6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

15 Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Paul told Titus, his son in the ministry, in **Titus 3:10-11:**

10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

There is grace in the Church. There is mercy in the Church. But the point of the church is to bring us in line with the Word of God. Grace and mercy apply as a response to repentance, but the church that allows sin is practicing neither grace nor mercy, but rather licentiousness.

The Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary's Cross that sin might be forgiven. Oh, but did you hear the Lord Jesus Christ's first sermon? **Matthew 4:12-17** informs us:

12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.

13 And leaving Nazareth, [Jesus] came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,

14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

15 "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:

16 The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

In the New Testament church, repentance is the prime directive. After healing the lame man, Peter preaches to the crowd, in **Acts 3:18-21:**

18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,



21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

So, in the tradition of the Scripture, Paul tells the Corinthians, in **2Corinthians 13:5–10**:

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.

6 But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

7 Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete.

10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

Paul admonishes the Corinthians to clean up their act on their own, that he might come to Corinth and rejoice with them rather than discipline them. His former visits and his letters give the Corinthians plenty of instruction on how they should behave, and Paul instructs them to reject their indulgent life, repent of their sins, put away those “teachers” that promulgate false doctrines, and return to the Scripture to ascertain the moral Law of God and follow it.

And that is a word for us. The Lord Jesus Christ went to Calvary’s Cross, suffered, bled and died so that our sins, though they be many, might be forgiven. But once forgiven, the Lord Jesus Christ did not intend for our sins to proliferate. Although we may sin, the Lord Jesus Christ intends that we repent, and develop the mindset that we ought to be so sorry for our sins that we flee the temptation that brought us to our sin.

The church ought to be the place where we can go to confess our sin, be forgiven, and then be equipped with strategies that allow us to flee from our sins. Oh, we may have to give up some old associations. There may be some incorrigible family members that we have to leave by the wayside and some old friends that we have to put down. There may be some long and lonely nights that we have to call on the Lord Jesus Christ rather than calling on an old lover to make us feel better. But in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who loves us. For, as Paul tells us, in **Romans 8:38–39**:

38 I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,



39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

With personal resolve and the help of the Lord and His Holy Spirit, we can do it. The Lord gave His life, death on Calvary's Cross, burial and resurrection from Joseph's new tomb, and then sent us His Holy Spirit to strengthen us. Oh, let us not quench or grieve the Holy Spirit, but let us yield to the Holy Spirit. Once we use the Word of God and the preaching of the church to ascertain right from wrong, let us yield to the Holy Spirit for the power to do that which is right in the sight of God.

Paul ends his letter, in **2Corinthians 13:11–14**:

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

13 All the saints greet you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Let us be prepared, even as Paul prayed that the Corinthians might be prepared, for the coming of the Lord, who gave His life on Calvary's Cross and is coming back for a church without spot, without wrinkle and without any such thing. Let us live lives of repentance and development in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit.

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