

“Judgment At The House Of God!”
2 Corinthians 13:1-4

Introduction:

1. This Morning - We Will Begin Looking:
 - At A New Chapter - Which Is The Final Chapter:
 - In Paul’s Letter Of 2 Corinthians!
 - Which Means That We Have Just A Few More Weeks Left In Our Series!
 - So - Please Turn Back With Me In Your Bibles To 2 Corinthians 13!
2. Where - Paul Is Starting To Wrap Things Up!
 - Especially As He Deals With:
 - Some Of The Ongoing Problems:
 - In That Early & Often Dysfunctional Church!
 - Now - As We’ve Gone Through This Letter, We Have Seen Paul:
 - **Commend** This Church At Times!
 - But We’ve Also Seen Paul:
 - **Challenge** This Church At Times!
 - And You May Wonder:
 - Which Is It, Paul?
 - Are You **Pleased** With This Church?
 - Or Are You **Perturbed** With Them?
 - And The Answer To Both Questions:
 - Is **Yes!** Just Like In Any Church:
 - There Are Those Who Are Seeking To Live Their Lives To **Glorify** The Lord:
 - And There Are Those Who Are Living Lives That **Grieve** The Lord!
 - But Paul Writes To The **Whole** Church:
 - Because The Church **As A Whole:**
 - Is Responsible For Each Other!
 - 3. And We See This At The Beginning Of Chapter 13 As Well!
 - Even Though It Is The Sinful Members Of The Corinthian Church:
 - That Are In Focus - Yet - The Church **As A Whole:**
 - Has A Responsibility To Resolve These Issues Biblically!
 - And This Is Paul’s Great Hope In These Rather Stern Verses!
 - So Let’s Keep This In Mind As We Read:
 - 13:1-4 - “This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. / I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare: / Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. / For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you!”
 - It Is Clear From These Verses:
 - That Paul Is Making Plans For A Third Trip:
 - To The Corinthian Church:
 - And At This Point - He Is Painfully Expecting To Have To Confront Those Sinful & Rebellious Members Once Again, And Go Through The Process Of Church Discipline!
 - 4. Now - Even Today - Church Discipline:
 - Is Not A **Popular** Topic Within Churches!
 - But It Is A **Necessary** Topic!
 - Because Purity & Holiness:
 - Which We Looked At Last Week:
 - Is To Be One Of The Hallmarks Of The Church Of Christ!
 - In Ephesians 5 - Paul Even Reminds Us That:
 - This Is Why Jesus Came Into This World & Died On The Cross:
 - 5:26-27 - “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, / That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish!”
 - 5. And So - There Are Times:
 - When It Is Necessary For The Church:

- To Judge Sin Within The Church:
 - In Order To Pursue After The Purity Of Jesus Christ!
 - And Sometimes This Can Be A Very Difficult & Painful Thing To Do!
- But As Peter Puts It In:
 - 1 Peter 4:17 - "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God!"
 - And That "Time" Had Come For The Corinthian Church:
 - When Paul Wrote These Words!
 - And There Are Many Lessons That We Can Learn From This As Well!

* The First Thing We Learn From These Verses Is That There Is:

I. A Responsibility For Judgment Within The Church!

- And We See This Truth Back:
 - In 13:1 - "This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established!"
 - As Paul Wrote The Phrase "The Third Time" - I'm Sure He Was Thinking About His Previous Two Visits With Them In Corinth!
 - And - Likely - He Wants Them & Us To Think About Those Visits As Well!
 - The First Visit:
 - Which Was His Inaugural Visit:
 - Which You Can Read About In Acts 18:
 - Turned Out To Be A *Pleasant* Visit - Even Though It Started Out A Bit Rough!
 - But The Lord Comforted Paul & Told Him:
 - Acts 18:9-10 - "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city!"
 - And So - For 18 Months:
 - Paul Continued Preaching The Gospel & A New Church Was Born!
 - But, Unfortunately, After Paul Left, Sins Like Pride & Contention & Immorality & False Teaching Quickly Infiltrated The Church!
 - And This Led To:
 - A Second Visit:
 - Which Turned Out To Be:
 - A *Painful* Visit:
 - As He Came To Confront & Correct Some Of The Major Sins In The Church:
 - And Was Turned Away!
 - And Now - Getting Ready For:
 - His Third Visit:
 - Some Within The Church:
 - Had A "Godly Sorrow" That Led Them To "Repentance" Of Their Sins! Which Paul Commends!
 - While Others In The Church:
 - Continued To Sin & Even Rejected Paul's Authority Over Them!
 - And So - He Writes Once Again:
 - To Inform Them & To Warn Them:
 - Of His Impending Arrival!
 - And How Would He Be Received This Time? This Third Time?
 - Would This Visit Be *Painful* Like The 2nd? Or:
 - Would This Visit Be *Pleasing* Like The 1st?
 - And He Writes To The Church As A Whole:
 - Because Of Their Own & Our Own Responsibility:
 - To Confront Sins!
 - This Was One Reason Why Paul Was Planning To Go To Them!
 - But - If The Church Itself:
 - Fulfilled Their Responsibility Of Judging The Sin In Their Midst:
 - This 3rd Visit Could Take On An Entirely Different Tone & Purpose For Paul!
 - The Coming Of Paul To Them:
 - Ought To Have Motivated Them:
 - To Confront Sin & Pursue After Purity!

- But For Us - We Have An Even Greater Event To Look Forward To!
- The Coming Of Jesus Christ Himself to Us:
 - Ought To Motivate Us:
 - To Confront Sin In Our Own Lives & In Our Own Church:
 - And Pursue After Purity!
 - As John Wrote In 1 John 3:2-3 - "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. / And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure!"
 - We Still Have A Responsibility As A Church:
 - To Confront & To Judge Sin!
 - But We Also Have A Responsibility:
- To Confirm Truth!
 - At The End OF 13:1 - Paul Quotes An Important Legal Principle - That Was Known Even From Old Testament Times:
 - "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established!"
 - You Can Find This Principle Back In Deuteronomy 17:6!
 - But It Is Also The Principle Jesus Uses When He Describes How His Church Ought To Deal With Sin!
 - In Matthew 18:15-16 - "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. / But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established!"
 - So - It Seems Clear - That Paul - Even Though He Was An Apostle Of Jesus Christ:
 - Was Planning To Call Together The Church For The Purpose Of A "Church Court!"
 - And It Wouldn't Be Just His Word Against Theirs! Witnesses Would Be Called & Heard & Then The Church As A Whole Would Resolve The Matter!
 - And Paul Was Confident In The Process:
 - Because Of Jesus' Own Promise Later In:
 - Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them!"
 - As A Church - We Must Not Shrink Away From:
 - The Responsibility Jesus Himself Has Given To Us:
 - To "Judge Righteous Judgment" By Confronting Sin & Confirming Truth!
 - Because - As We Do So - Jesus Himself Is With Us!
 - It Is Not We Who Are Rendering Judgment - It Is Christ!
 - But When Must This Kind Of Judgment Be Done?

* The Second Thing We Learn Is That There Also Is:

2 ***A Reason For Judgment Within The Church!***

- In 13:2 - Paul Writes - "I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write!"
 - If We Stop There For A Second:
 - We See That Paul Is Reminding Them:
 - That The Warning He Is Giving Them In This Letter Is Nothing New!
 - He **Warned** Them During His 2nd Visit:
 - To Repent Of Their Sin:
 - And Return To The Lord!
 - And Now - In Preparation For His 3rd Visit:
 - He **Fore-Warns** Them:
 - To Repent Of Their Sin:
 - And Return To The Lord!
 - Now - Some Translations:
 - Omit The Phrase - "I Write!"
 - But That Is What He Is Doing:
 - And The Meaning Is The Same!
 - And The Primary Reason For Judgment Within The Church Is:
- Persistent Sin!
 - Persistent & Unrepentant Sin!

- Church Discipline Was The Culmination Of Paul's Ongoing, Patient Appeals To Them:
 - Even In "The Meekness And Gentleness Of Christ!" (10:1)
- But After Making A Painful Visit:
 - And After Writing A Sorrowful Letter:
 - The Time Had Come!
 - "The time [had] come [for] judgment [to] begin at the house of God!"
- But Then - Paul Continues In:
 - 13:2 - "And being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare!"
 - His Primary Audience In This Verse Is:
 - "To Them Which Heretofore Have Sinned!"
 - These Are The Same People Mentioned Back In 12:21 - Where Paul Wrote - "That I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed!"
 - And So - We See That Another Reason For Judgment Within The Church Is:
- Public Sin!
 - Their Sins Were Well Known!
 - "Uncleanness & Fornication & Lasciviousness!"
 - And Those Involved In Those Public Sins Were To Be Judged By Christ Through His Church!
 - But The Church Itself Was Not Without Its Faults! Which Is Why Paul Also Writes - 13:2:
 - "And To All Other!"
 - This Could Apply To Other Sins Being Committed In The Church:
 - But It Could Also Apply to The Church As A Whole!
 - They Were Guilty Themselves - Of Tolerating & Harboring Sin In Their Midst! There May Have Been Some Sorrow, But Now It Needed To Lead To Action!
 - Because - 1 Corinthians 5:6-7 - "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? / Purge out therefore the old leaven!"
 - But These Sins Were Not Just Well Known Within The Church!
 - Sadly - They Were Known In Their Community As Well!
 - Their Light Was Hidden Under A Bushel Of Sin!
 - And This Is Why Paul Had To Come That 3rd Time! Because Their Sins Were Also:
 - Presumptuous Sin!
 - In 13:3 - Paul Adds - "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me!"
 - One Of The Sins Of The Corinthian Church:
 - Was Rejecting The Apostolic Authority Of The Paul!
 - And The Reason They Did So Is Surprising!
 - They Considered The "Meekness & Gentleness" Of Paul:
 - In His 1st & 2nd Visits - To Be A Weakness!
 - This Was Not Something They Were Used To!
 - **IE:** In Fact - At That Time - The Mighty Half-Man / Half-God "Hercules" Was Celebrated In Their City! They Were Easily Impressed With Strength & Might! And Paul Did Not Measure Up To Their Idea Of Power!
 - And So They Weren't Moved Or Convinced:
 - By Paul's Own Christ-Like Demeanor!
 - And So Even Though They Had Received The Life-Changing Gospel Through Paul:
 - They Now Questioned If Paul Was Really Speaking:
 - As The True Messenger Of Jesus & With The True Message Of Jesus & After The Same Manner Of Jesus!
 - But This Challenge To Paul:
 - Was In Effect - A Challenge To Christ Himself!
 - And So - They Were To Be Judged!
 - These Are The Kinds Of Sins:
 - That We Too Need To Beware Of!
 - Persistent, Public, And Presumptuous Sins!
 - And We Need To Learn To Deal With Them As Christ Taught!

- But Then We Also See:

3. ***A Remedy For Judgment Within The Church!***

- Which Is What Paul Was After All Along!
 - In The Rest Of 13:3 - We See That the Remedy For Sin & Judgment For The Church - Is Still The Gospel!
 - Paul Seems To Swerve A Bit In His Thinking:
 - And Now Focuses His Attention - And Ours - Not On Himself - But On Christ!
 - 13:3 - "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which [Who - Christ] to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you!" - Also 13:4 - "For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God!"
 - With These Verses - Paul Wants Them & Us:
 - To Remember Some Things About The Lord!
- Remember The Work Of The Lord!
 - His Work ***In You*** - Through The Gospel!
 - 13:3b - "Who To You-ward Is Not Weak, But Is Mighty In You!"
 - It Didn't Matter How Paul Came To Them With The Gospel - The Gospel Itself:
 - Was All The "Proof" And "Evidence" That They Needed That Christ Was, In Fact, Speaking In & Through Him!
 - Because - When They Received The Gospel Of Christ:
 - In Faith - Christ Did Not Come To Them:
 - In Weakness, But In Might & In Power!
 - Through The Gospel:
 - They Experienced Christ's Own Power:
 - To Save Them!
 - To Sanctify Them!
 - To Support Them!
 - As His Own!
 - And Christ Used Paul:
 - As His Tool:
 - To Demonstrate His Power!
 - **IE:** And Just Like A Tool Has Now Power In Itself - It Transmits Power - From The User! Hammer!
 - When You Struggle With Persistent / Presumptuous Sin:
 - In Your Life - Remember:
 - The Powerful Work Of God In Your Life!
 - He Is Still "Able To Deliver" Thee! Also:
- Remember The Weakness Of The Lord!
 - His Weakness ***For You*** - Through The Gospel!
 - 13:4 - "For though he was crucified through weakness!"
 - Yes - Christ Was Weak!
 - His Weakness Was A Physical Weakness!
 - He Was Weak In His Flesh!
 - But - It Was Through His Weakness That He Was Able To Accomplish His Crowning Achievement Of Death On The Cross!
 - "He Was Crucified Through Weakness!" (13:4) But:
 - His Weakness Was Also A Perceived Weakness!
 - He Was Weak In The Eyes Of Men!
 - To The World:
 - Jesus Was Weak In His Life!
 - Even Today People Perceive The "Compassion & Patience & Longsuffering" Of Christ To Be Weakness! But Even More:
 - To The World:
 - Jesus Was Weak In His Death!
 - Isaiah 53:7 - "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth!"
 - To The World - This Is Weakness!

- No Fight In Him!
 - No Defense! No Retaliation!
- Only Forgiveness!
 - “Father, Forgive Them; For They Know Not What They Do!” (Luke 23:34)
- “He Was Crucified Through Weakness!”
 - James Denney - “[Even] Sin Was So Much Stronger Than He, In the Days Of His Flesh, That It Did What It Liked With Him! Sin Mocked Him, Buffed Him, Scourged Him, Spit Upon Him, Nailed Him To The Tree – So Utter Was His Weakness, So Complete The Triumph Of Sin Over Him. But That Is Not The Whole Story!”
 - Though We Need Remember His Weakness, As We Consider Our Own:
 - We Also Need To:
- Remember The Win Of The Lord!
 - Through The Resurrection:
 - 13:4 - “Yet he liveth by the power of God!”
 - James Denney - “He Has Been Raised From The Dead By The Glory Of The Father; Sin Cannot Touch Him Anymore: He Has All Power In Heaven And On Earth, And All things Are Under His Feet!”
 - “He Liveth By The Power Of God!”
 - How Does Christ Now Live?
 - As The “King Of Kings & Lord Of Lords!”
 - Where Does Christ Now Live?
 - In Heaven Above!
 - And Why Does Christ Now Live?
 - To Rule & To Reign, Even As Judge!
- This Is What Our Church Needs To Remember:
 - When We Are Called To Deal With Sins:
 - In Our Midst!
 - This Is What You Need To Remember:
 - When You Struggle With & Sorrow Over Your Own Sin!
 - Recall To Mind & Remember The Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
 - His Work!
 - His Weakness!
 - His Win!
 - And Now - 2 Corinthians 12:9 - “[His] Strength Is Made Perfect In [Your] Weakness!”
 - And That Is What Paul Then Identifies With In 13:4 - Which Reveals To Us:

4. *A Result From Judgment Within The Church!*

- 13:4b - “For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you!”
 - The Apostle Paul Now Identified Himself:
 - With Both The:
 - Weakness & The Power Of Christ!
 - As A Christian - There Was:
 - A Recognition:
 - Of His Own Weakness!
 - “For We Also Are Weak In Him!”
 - Any Real Or Perceived Weakness In Him Was Just A Reflection:
 - Of The Weakness Of Christ!
 - For Paul - Weakness Was:
 - Not A Sign Of God’s Disfavor:
 - But Was A Badge Of Honor:
 - And An Opportunity For God’s Own Strength To Be Made Perfect In Him!
 - This Too Should Happen To You!
 - But Then - There Was Also In Paul’s Life:
 - A Resolution:
 - 13:4b - “But We Shall Live With Him By The Power Of God Toward You!”
 - Here - Paul Describes How He Present Himself:
 - When He Makes His 3rd Visit With Them!
 - He Will Manifest Christ’s Own Power & Authority:

- When He Confronts The Sin:
 - That Is In Their Midst!
 - He Will Not Shrink Back From The Responsibility Given To Him & To The Church To Pursue After Purity!
- But Even In This:
 - Paul Is Still Living For Them:
 - In A Christ-Like Way!
 - Back In 12:14 - He Said - "I Seek Not Yours, But You!"
 - And Even Through The Prospect Of Church Discipline:
 - He Still Sought Them!
 - Their Hearts & Souls & Lives:
 - For Christ!

Conclusion:

1. And May This Be The Result:
 - Of Judgment In Our Own Lives:
 - And Within Our Own Church!
 - It Must Always Be Done:
 - To Display In A Greater Way:
 - The Power & Glory Of Christ In Our Midst!
2. And That Is Why - In The Very Next Verse:
 - 13:5 - Paul Calls On Them & Us:
 - To "Examine Yourselves!"
 - Is There A Need For This Kind Of Judgment:
 - In Your Heart & In Your Life?
 - We Still Have:
 - The Same Responsibility:
 - To Judge Sin!
 - And We Still, Unfortunately, Have Many:
 - Of The Same Reasons!
 - Perpetual, Public, & Even Presumptuous Sins!
 - But We Also Still Have:
 - The Same Remedy:
 - For Our Sins & Our Judgment!
 - His Gospel!
 - Let The Life, The Death, & The Resurrection:
 - Of Jesus Christ:
 - Penetrate Your Mind & Heart:
 - As The Holy Spirit Confronts You With Your Own Sin!
 - And Then - You Can - Like Paul In 13:4:
 - Identify Yourself More & More:
 - With Your Savior!
 - With His Weakness!
 - And With The Power Of His Own Life!
3. So Now - Examine Yourself!
 - As David Did In Psalm 139:23-24:
 - Pray - "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: / And see if there be any wicked way in me!"
 - And Then - Turn Back To Christ!

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