

“Blessed Are The Peacemakers”
2 Corinthians 13:7-10

Introduction:

1. Let's Turn Back In Our Bibles This Morning:
 - To 2 Corinthians 13:
 - Where Paul Is Coming To A Close:
 - In His Letter To This Rather:
 - Dysfunctional Church!
 - Now, We Will Have One Final Message On This Letter - Next Sunday!
 - But This Morning:
 - As We Look At 13:7-10 - We Will Find:
 - That Paul Is Still Hoping For:
 - A Good Resolution To All Of The Different Problems That He Has Had To Address!
2. And So - We Read:
 - 13:7-10 - “Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. / For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. / For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection. / Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction!”
 - What We See From These Verses Is That - In Spite Of How The Corinthian Church:
 - Treated Paul - He Continues To Serve Them:
 - As A Peacemaker!
 - Even As Jesus Himself Taught In The Sermon On The Mount!
 - Back In Matthew 5:9 - “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God!”
 - In All Of His Dealings With The Corinthian Church:
 - Paul Maintained The Spirit:
 - Of A Peacemaker!
 - But It Wasn't Just Merely:
 - For The Church To Be At Peace With Him!
 - Instead - It Was Primarily:
 - For The Church To Be At Peace With The Lord!
 - 3. And Through These Four Verses This Morning:
 - I Want You To See:
 - How You Too Can Be A Peacemaker!
 - And How You Too Can Resolve:
 - Conflicts In Your Own Life:
 - As A Christian!
 - Because The Spirit Of A Peacemaker:
 - Is The Spirit Of Christ!
 - And The Focus Of A Peacemaker:
 - Is Always On What Is Good & Always On What Is Best!
 - Especially - The Best:
 - For The Person You May Have A Conflict With!
 - Let's Look At These Verses More Closely Together!

* First - To Be A Peacemaker - There Needs To Be:

1. *A Sincere Desire For What's Best!*

- And We See This Back In:
 - 13:7 - Because One Of The Best Ways To Show:
 - That You Want The Best For Someone:
 - Is To **Pray** For Them! Even If They Have Mistreated You - As The Corinthians Mistreated Paul - Over & Over Again!
 - So - Paul Writes:
 - “Now I Pray To God!”
 - Now - Paul Offers This Prayer For Them Just After He Called On Them - In 13:5 - To “Examine Themselves!”
- In Spite Of All That Had Been Said & Done:
 - Against Paul - He Still Wanted **God's Best** For Them!

- He Wanted Them To Experience:
 - A Renewed Confidence:
 - & Assurance That “Jesus Christ Was” – In Fact – “In Them!”
- He Wanted Them To Experience:
 - A Renewed Communion:
 - With The Lord & With Paul!
- And Now - He Wants Them To Experience:
 - A Renewed Commitment:
 - To Avoid The Wrong & To Pursue What’s Right!
- And So - He Offers This Prayer:
- For (Their) Goodness!
 - 13:7 - “Now I pray to God that ye do no evil – *wrong* – but that ye should do that which is honest – *right!*”
 - Paul’s Objective Was Not Only:
 - Their “Well-Being” - But Also Their:
 - “Well-Doing!” (Hughes)
 - Because God’s Best For Someone:
 - Is Always Pursuing After What Is Right!
 - Another One Of Jesus’ Beatitudes - Matthew 5:6 - “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled!
 - Is This What You “Hunger & Thirst After” In Your Life?
 - Is This What You “Hunger & Thirst For” In The Lives Of Others?
 - If So - Then You Need To Pray As Paul Prayed:
- To God!
 - Because God Is The Source:
 - Of All That Is Good & All That Is Right!
 - Paul Knew That There Was Nothing He Could Say Or Do - By Himself:
 - That Could Keep The Corinthians On The Right Path!
 - Only God Could Do This!
 - And So - *He Prayed!*
 - He Prayed - As It Says In Hebrews 4:16 - “To Find Grace To Help In Time Of Need!”
 - They Needed God’s Grace & Help! And So Do We! And So Does That Person Who You Might Have A Difficulty With!
 - Jesus Even Tells Us - In Matthew 5:44 - To “Pray For Them Which Despitefully Use You, And Persecute You!”
 - But You Also Must Pray:
- Without Guise!
 - That Is - With No Pretense - Or Ulterior Motive!
 - Even As Paul Told The Corinthians:
 - 13:7 - “Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates – not approved!”
 - **IE:** Did You Ever Bribe Your Child - Or Even Your Grand-Child - To Behave? Whether At Church Or At The Store? Maybe You Promised To Give Them Their Favorite Treat! Sometimes Parents Might Do This - Not Just For Some Peace & Quiet - But So That It Will Make Them Look Good! Maybe In Front Of The Pastor Or Maybe In Front Of A Friend!
 - This Is What Paul Is Describing In 13:7 - He Wasn’t Praying This Prayer For Them - To Make **Him** Look Good! No! It Wasn’t For His Benefit, But For Theirs!
 - In Fact - Even If The Rest Of The City Of Corinth – Or Even The Church Itself – Was Not Convinced Of His Calling As An Apostle - He Still Sincerely Wanted God’s Best For Them!
 - That They Would - “Do Justly & Love Mercy & Walk Humbly With Their God!” (Micah 6:8)
- This Is The Spirit Of A Peacemaker!
 - Do You Have A Sincere Desire:
 - For The Best - Especially For Those:
 - Who May Malign Or Mistreat You?

* Another Way To Be A Peacemaker Is To Have:

2. A Sincere Delight In What’s Best!

- Because In 13:8-9 - Paul Gives A Couple Of Reasons:
 - Why He Was Praying For Them In This Way!

- In 13:8 - He Explains That:
- He Delights In The Truth!
 - 13:8 - "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth!"
 - The Truth Here Refers Especially To
 - The Truth Of The Gospel & The Truth About Jesus Christ!
 - It Was Impossible For Paul To Want Anything That Might Be Contrary To That Truth!
 - After All - Why Did Paul Preach The Gospel:
 - In Corinth? And Around The World?
 - It Was Because - According To Titus 2:14 - Jesus "Gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works!"
 - The Truth Of The Gospel:
 - Is For Salvation:
 - **And** For Sanctification!
 - And This Is Why - No Matter How The Corinthians Treated / Mis-Treated Him
 - He Could Pray No Other Prayer Than For Their Growth In The Gospel & In Godliness!
 - Is This What You Delight In?
 - That Even Your Worst Enemy:
 - Might First **Know** & Then **Grow** In The Truth?
 - The **Truth** Is **Always** What's **Best** For Them!
 - Remember What John Wrote:
 - 3 John 1:4 - "For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. / I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth!"
 - Also:
- He Delights In Their Strength!
 - 13:9a - "For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong!"
 - A Christian Who Is "Hungering & Thirsting After Righteousness" Is A Christian That Is **Strong!**
 - And This Is What Paul Was Hoping & Praying For!
 - **IE:** All Too Often - This Is Not How We Feel! Have You Ever Wanted The **Worst** For Someone Instead Of The **Best?** Especially When There Are Differences / Disagreements / Even Division?
 - Paul Delighted In Their Growth:
 - And In Their Strength - Even If It Meant:
 - That He Was "Weakened" In His Service To Them!
 - Remember Back In Chapter 11?
 - Paul Described Many Of The Things That Happened To Him In His Service For Christ:
 - He Was Weakened By The Great Persecution He Faced!
 - 11:24-25 - "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. / Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned!"
 - He Was Weakened By The Great Perils He Faced!
 - 11:26 - "In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren!"
 - He Was Weakened By The Great Privation He Faced!
 - 11:27 - "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness!"
 - And He Was Perceived To Be Weak:
 - When He Sought To Live & Serve:
 - In "The Meekness & Gentleness Of Christ!" (10:1)
 - But As Long As They Were Growing In Godliness:
 - He Could **Rejoice & Be Glad!**
 - Is This What You Delight In?
 - That Others Might Become Stronger:
 - In The Lord - Even If It **Costs** You Something? Your Time, Maybe! Your Energy! Your Pride! Isn't This What It Means To Be A Christian Servant?
 - Jesus Said - In Mark 10:48 - "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. / For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many!"

- This Is What God's Best Is Like!
- Also:
- He Delights In Their Perfection!
 - Or - Their Restoration - 13:9b - "And this also we wish – *pray* – even your perfection!"
 - So - Paul Adds To His Prayer - A Prayer For Their:
 - Complete Restoration - As Christians & As A Church!
 - The Word Translated "Perfection" In The King James:
 - Is Also Used Back In The Gospels:
 - In Matthew 4:21 - When Jesus Called James & John To Be His Disciples - And What Were They Doing? They Were "**Mending**" Their Nets! They Were "Perfecting" & "Restoring" Those Old, Broken Nets - So They Could Use Them Again - Productively!
 - And There Still Seemed To Be So Much In That Church:
 - That Needed To Be "Mended" - So That They Could Be Used By The Lord Effectively Once Again!
 - And So - Once Again - Paul Prays To This End!
 - Is This What You Delight In?
 - Is This What You Are Praying For?
 - Is There Some "Mending" That Needs To Take Place In Your Heart? In Your Family? In Your Relationships? In Your Church?
- "Restoration Can Only Come By Forsaking Evil Practices, Striving To Do Good, Living Harmoniously With Other Believers, And Obeying God!" (Simon Kistemaker)
 - This Is The Spirit Of A Peacemaker!
 - Do You Have A Sincere Delight:
 - In God's Best - In Your Life & In The Lives Of Those You Know?

* But We Also See A Final Way To Be Peacemaker - In 13:10 - You Need To Have:

3. ***A Sincere Discernment Of What's Best!***

- 13:10 - "Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction!"
 - Here - Toward The End Of His Letter - Paul Explains Why He Took All The Time & Effort:
 - To Write Them!
 - It Was Because He Wanted To Serve Them In The Best Possible Way!
 - In A Way That Would Be To God's Glory & For Their Good!
 - By God's Grace - Paul Was Able To Discern:
 - How Best To Confront:
 - The Corinthians - And Their Divisions, Their Disharmony, And Their Disobedience!
 - At The Time - It Was Better For Him:
 - To **Write** Them:
 - While He Was Absent!
 - Than To "**Use Sharpness**":
 - When He Was Present!
 - This Does Not Mean That Paul:
 - Had An Anger Issue - And Was Afraid:
 - That He Might Be Rude & Abusive Toward Them!
 - No - It Just Meant That:
 - He Did Not Want To Have To Use:
 - All The "Power" And Authority "Which The Lord" Had Given Him:
 - To Confront Them Directly & For Discipline!
 - Even Though He Had The **Right**:
 - As An Apostle - To Confront Them In This Way:
 - He Also Had A **Responsibility** Toward Them!
 - And So - He Also Thought About & Prayed About:
 - How Best To Construct:
 - The Corinthians! This Is Why God Had Given Him His Power & Authority In The First Place!
 - 13:10 - "To Edification, And Not To Destruction!"
 - To Build Them Up, Not To Tear Them Down!
 - This Is An Echo Of 10:8 - Where Paul Said - "For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed!"
 - It Is Clear That Paul Took His Responsibility:

- As A Church Planter & A Church Builder:
 - Seriously - And He Wanted Their Best!
 - He Wanted There To Be Growth!
 - In Fact - As One Writer Put It - "Before His Conversion To Christianity, Paul Tore Down The Church. Yet He Spent The Rest Of His Life To Built It Up!" (Kistemaker)
- And So - He Wanted Them:
 - To Be "Built Up" More & More!
 - And So - He Repeats Again:
 - What He Said Back In 12:19 - "We do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying!"
 - And This Is Why Paul Also Thought:
- How Best To Communicate:
 - With The Corinthians!
 - Because This Is The Spirit Of A Peacemaker!
 - Do You Think About & Discern How Best To Communicate & Construct - Even If You Have To Confront - Others!
 - Do You Seek To Build Others Up Rather Than Tear Them Down?
 - In Ephesians 4:29 - Tells Us How:
 - "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers!"
 - You Need To Always Be Discerning About **What** You Say & Even **How** You Say It!
 - Because We Are To Always Be "Speaking The Truth In Love!" (Ephesians 4:15)
 - This Is The Spirit Of A Peacemaker!
 - Because This Is The Spirit Of Our Savior, Jesus Christ Himself!
 - Who Came - That We "Might Have Life" And That We "Might Have It More Abundantly!" (John 10:10)
 - Jesus Did Not Come On A "Search & Destroy" Mission - He Came On A Mission "To Seek & To Save That Which Was Lost!" (Luke 19:10)

Conclusion:

1. And This Is Your Mission As Well!
 - To Be A Peacemaker!
 - To Be A Christ-Like Peacemaker:
 - In All Of Your Relationships!
 - Is This Your Mission?
 - Is This The Kind Of Spirit & Attitude You Have:
 - Even Toward Those You Find Difficult To Get Along With?
2. Remember - A Christ-Like Peacemaker:
 - Always Wants What Is **The Best – God's Best** – For Others!
 - And So:
 - You Will Desire What's Best!
 - You Will Delight In What's Best!
 - And You Will Discern What's Best!
 - To Build Them Up!
 - Because This Will Always Lead To:
 - God's Glory – And To Our Good!
 - Be This Kind Of Peacemaker!
 - Because - "Blessed Are The Peacemakers: For They Shall Be Called The Children Of God!" (Matthew 5:9)

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