

2 Corinthians 11:1-21

- Opening Comments and Opening prayer.....
- When Paul wrote this letter to Timothy and the Church at Corinth,
- The New Testament at this point did not exist.
- Paul was speaking about the Old Testament.
- He was speaking about the Prophets,
- The books of Wisdom, and the 5 books of Moses.
- When we gather at church on Sunday with family and friends,
- We want to hear the invitation to repentance and salvation.
- And we also want to be encouraged in our walk with the Lord.
- I have long stated that when someone walks into a house of worship,
- That that is the very moment when the church becomes imperfect.
- And there is not one person, not one of present this morning,
- Or anyone at home now watching this streamed,
- Who has NOT been guilty of sin in their lifetime,
- And because of that we will live in an eternity separated from God.
- Jesus describes this in images of darkness, and even the pain of
- The gnashing of teeth, something that would last forever.
- A condition that time could not heal.
- And it makes us come to a realization that we are in an impossible situation
- And as a result, not one of us would go to heaven upon our passing.
- And it was only because of what Christ did for us,
- Becoming a ransom for our sin, dying on the cross for each of us,
- And victoriously rising from the dead on the third day,
- And our receiving Him as Lord and Savior,
- That has allowed us to walk through the door of grace.
- And when we walk through that door of grace,
- We are a new creation. (1 Cor. 5:17)
- And we have a new responsibility to live a new life as a child of God,
- As members of His royal family.
- A life where there is evidence of the fruits of the Spirit in our life,

- Both individually, and as a congregation.
- Paul was in Corinth, and he noticed that the early church was off track.
- He needed to teach them how to behave, because they were misbehaving.
- They were off the rails, and Paul felt he needed to help them.
- He had to give them some godly council.
- Some was about the procedure of communion,
- Who they should be listening to,
- And who they shouldn't be listening to.
- To help them get their train back on the rails.
- He was basically telling the people,
- Okay, so have you have come to the faith, and that's great.
- But now, you need to know how to act in the faith.
- The people were also arguing about the leadership in the church.
- They even wanted to undermine the Apostle Paul, questioning his
- Authority and his position in Christ.

11 I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness. Yes, please put up with me! ² I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴ For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

⁵ I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." ⁶ I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. ⁷ Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? ⁸ I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. ⁹ And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. ¹⁰ As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. ¹¹ Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

¹² And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. ¹³ For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. ¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

¹⁶ I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then tolerate me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. ¹⁷ In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. ¹⁸ Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. ¹⁹ You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! ²⁰ In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face. ²¹ To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

- There were disputes rising amongst the brethren,
- And it spilled over into the leadership.
- It is discomfoting to anyone who preaches, who yearn to encourage
- From the pulpit, but instead to remonstrate the congregation..
- Paul could not have felt good about doing this,
- But he felt that he had to.
- Please notice that Paul is referring of himself personally in this scripture.
- He was making his own defense.
- He was telling the people of the Corinthian church,
- That he had a reason to give them the counsel that he had given.
- He had experience of working in different areas,
- From Jerusalem to Achaia,
- And he wanted to teach, to warn, and to encourage the church.
- And it is not unlike the experience that Jesus had faced as well..
- Jesus came and preached to the people, from the Sermon on the Mount,
- And many other places as well,
- Simple things, such as the Great Commandment. (Mark 12:30)
- But the people at that time, felt, that they were talking about other Jews.

- They were not applying the scripture to their lives, as it was meant.
- Parable of the Good Samaritan. (Who is my neighbor).
- And that was a great moment of illumination.
- Because every one of us can look in the mirror at ourselves.
- Are we like the Jews of that time?
- Do we know who are neighbors are?
- In some churches, many people feel left out.
- In some you will find people forming cliques,
- Where some feel like they are in the in-crowd.
- And that causes others to feel isolated.
- There often exists pockets of social hierarchy, influence, power,
- Or popularity.... And that does not belong in the church.
- And if you are not in it, you want to be in it. (Darlene)
- And those who feel neglected will eventually leave.
- Nobody wants to feel forgotten and neglected.
- And if we have ever felt that way,
- Then we can surely empathize with the Samaritans,
- Living back in that period of time had to be tougher than today.
- It was probably a more common experience to be robbed.
- So when they told this parable about a man who wasn't in a safe place,
- Being that he probably wasn't in the structure of safety,
- They could easily relate to it to that parable.
- And we can relate to it in so many ways today.
- We can relate to it when we feel we are vulnerable,
- And sometimes when we feel we are mistreated or unappreciated,
- And when someone helps us get back on our feet again,
- Whether spiritually or emotionally, our gratitude emanates from our hearts
- Just like that man who was robbed and beaten, and left to die,
- Must have felt when he woke up the next day in the inn,
- Being nursed back to health,
- And knowing that his expenses were paid.

- All the wonderful parables that Jesus have taught us during his ministry,
- Bring us to that feeling of great Illumination,
- When we able to stop, reflect, and examine our hearts,
- And allow the Holy Spirit to help us to make the needed adjustments.
- So we can enter again through that narrow gate,
- And stay on the narrow path.
- Paul had this experience himself.
- He listened to the beautiful sermon that Stephen had uttered.
- And he knew it extremely well, He knew of Saul,
- And all that Stephen had spoken about.
- And instead of having his conscience pricked,
- Instead of listening to what was said, and taking it into his own heart,
- He became the leader of the senseless mob that stoned Stephen to death.
- And Paul didn't take heed to that sermon, and to Stephens's counsel.
- For Stephen was brought by God at that time, to deliver that message,
- To guide the people on how to act, and they rejected it.
- And here Paul is in front of the church, on the other side of the matter
- This time he is on the side of truth, hoping others will take heed.
- And he experiencing the same reaction.
- He loved these people. He gave them all his time and effort,
- Helping them to find the Lord and to live an abundant life.
- And now he back in front of them telling them that their thinking is off.
- That their modern Greek City, with its idea of morality and sexuality,
- That it's off track, it was wrong, and that they should not embrace it.
- It's tempting..... But don't embrace it.
- That it was not in God's plan for them to act in this manner.
- That they were going in the wrong direction
- And that they need to re-evaluate, To get back on track.
- We all understand the enjoyment of banqueting, or a big party.
- It's not so unlike that today.
- And a lot of times, and I have seen it, it is brought into the church.

- It seems that Churches attempt to adopt to our wants and desires,
- And not follow God's Will, and his perfect plan for each one of us.
- And Paul said, stop that.
- That is not what communion is about.
- There are many things that Paul had to speak to them about.
- Some of the people took it in the right way,
- And other's refused to listen. - They resented him.
- Who are you?, they said to him.
- You are not even a good speaker.
- Plus Paul had the inflammation of the eyes.
- He prayed hard 3 times in his life for God to remove his thorns.
- But God said no. For God's grace was sufficient for him.
- He had God and His word on his side, and he clung to it.
- How does all this relate to us?
- I don't think any of us lead perfect lives.
- We might believe that we are fine. And we accept spiritual mediocrity.
- But the fact of the matter is that we are probably in need of correction,
- In need of some self direction.
- We live in a glittering world of self-gratifying opportunity.
- How do we react?
- Paul, with all his issues, was always kicking against the pricks.
- He was always struggling to move forward, to do the right thing.
- Is it really any different from us?
- It certainly is not easy for us to do what is right in our lives.
- How much easier would it be to just play the game,
- To acquiesce – to give up – to not do what we know is right
- To not act in the manner that God has planned for us.
- Because it is easier.
- We hear stories of those who have been successful in life.
- We can see the struggles they went through to gain success.
- And although they could have given up... they didn't

- We need to do the same.
- Preachers preach to themselves, just as much
- As they preach to the congregation.
- Are we kicking against the counsel of God?
- This scripture is as relevant today as it was when it was written.
- Will us, who are converted, do we live the way God planned for us?
- And if you have not repented... will you do so today?
- Will you pick up the cross and follow Jesus.
- It's not an easy path to truly follow the Lord.
- But in the end it will have proved to be the most satisfying and gratifying.
- Close in prayer