

Bible Study: 2 Corinthians

(Part 1-Chapters 1-5)

by Gary T. Panell

Who was the letter of Second Corinthians written to? The answer to this question is relatively simple, because it is given to us in the very first verse, where it says, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia."

Its strategic location made it the hub of trade between the East and West at that time. If a church could be planted here where East and West meet, its influence could be expected to be far-reaching.

Who was the letter from? Again this is fairly easy, it says it was from Paul, in verse one, and evidently from Timothy, who no doubt, encouraged Paul to write this letter, or who was a coauthor, and perhaps Paul's secretary as well. And as you know, in those days if you wanted to send a letter somewhere, someone had to take it for you by hand to that person or place.

So Titus, and possibly Luke (2 Corinthians 8:16-24), took this letter to the church at Corinth. "But thanks *be* to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. And we have sent with him the brother whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches, and not only *that*, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us." This is probably a reference to Dr. Luke.

What is the background for the letter? On Paul's second missionary journey he stopped at Corinth and spent 18 months there where he started this church. This is recorded for us in (Acts 18:1-17). "After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.

"And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *is* the Christ. But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, 'Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.

"And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus, *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

"Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city. And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." (Acts 18:1-11)

Then on Paul's third missionary journey while in Ephesus, Acts 19:1-41, news came to him that things were not well in Corinth. In addition, the Corinthian church contained a number of problems to which they wished answers from the Apostle. As a result, he wrote his first letter to them to answer their questions, this letter we call 1 Corinthians.

After having sent the first letter to the Corinthian church, Paul waited at Ephesus for their response, but hearing nothing, he had then gone north to Troas to meet Titus. When Titus did not appear, Paul continued into Macedonia. "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia." (2 Corinthians 2:12, 13)

When Titus and Paul did meet, Paul wrote that he was comforted by the report of 'your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me.' "Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more." (2 Corinthians 7:6-7)

The news, however, was not all favorable. An outspoken group of Jewish opponents apparently had some very strong, harsh things to say against Paul. They discounted the reality of Paul's faith in Christ, and the genuineness of his ministry (2 Corinthians 2:1-4).

The unrepentant group continued to press hard upon Paul. Thus he bares his inmost feelings here in a way not seen in any other existing letter, which he wrote. Could you imagine what it would do to you if someone told others, "The person who led you to the Lord is a phony, he really is not saved himself, do not listen to him?" They were also saying, "Look at the way he talks, he says first one thing and then another. How do you know that he is really a man of God, when he acts like that?"

You can see how this could shake up the Corinthian believer's faith, especially if they began wondering if the person who led them to the Lord was really saved or not. These were the things that the Corinthian Christians were hearing about Paul. So Paul writes this letter to them, we call it 2 Corinthians.

First Paul has to defend his ministry in chapters one through seven. In chapters eight and nine, he has to remind them why they should still give this gift he asked them to collect in his first letter. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also." (1 Corinthians 16:1)

Then he has to show that he really is one of the apostles in chapters ten through fourteen.

The key verse for the book is 2 Corinthians 2:4 "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you."

Some say the string on the book is Paul's 'authority.' It is like on some feedbags. If you know the right string to pull, you can unravel the whole top, and the bag will open. So it is with different books of the Bible. If we can find that one line of thought that the author had in mind when he wrote the book, then we can understand the whole letter without much trouble.

This is commonly called the theme of the book. For example, the letter of 1 Corinthians is all around the theme of 'Divisions' in the church. Romans is about the Gospel (Good News of Salvation). I am convinced that this book is not only about Paul's apostleship , but also **his love** for the people he ministered to. I will try and show this as we go along.

The letter was probably written a year after 1 Corinthians, so it was written about 56 A. D. Paul may have written the letter shortly after leaving Ephesus, maybe at Philippi on his way to Corinth.

The chief purpose in Paul's writing is so the Corinthians will be prepared for his coming.

A suggested outline might be:

- I. Christian Ministry Chapters 1-7
- II. Christian Giving Chapters 8, 9
- III. Christian Minister Chapters 10-13

(You will want to look at a map in the back of your Bible to see where Corinth is located. Also, I need to mention here that even though I am quoting most of the time from the New King James Version of the Bible there will be times I will quote other versions for emphasis.)

Chapter 1

In chapters one and two, Paul is answering the accusations that some 'troublemakers' in the church of Corinth had made against him. They charged that his ministry was not what it should be.

In verses (1:1-11) Paul writes his introduction. We are never to think of his introductions as formalities or just mundane, even though they are often very similar in nature. There is much meaning in every word. We will by no means exhaust all that is found in every word, since we are doing only a survey. It is like the illustration of an iceberg, according to the *New Book of Knowledge* , it says, "most of the iceberg is down below the surface." So too, the Holy Spirit will have to minister to your heart as we look at the surface ice, as it were, but He will deal with the things hidden in your heart, those things below the surfaced.

Note: As you go through this study, all the italicized words are not part of the Greek text, but have been added to aid us in our understanding in the English translation. I would encourage you to see what it sounds like without these words. Do this for two reasons, one you will see more accurately what the text looks like in Greek, also you will see that without verbs, nouns, etc. it is at times harder to understand what is being said, unless of course, you are versed in language translation.

1 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:"

Remember Paul wrote this letter with the help of Timothy, to the church, which was in Corinth the region of Achaia. All the 'inspired letters' (for a study on this go to our article [*Is there even one mistake in the Bible?*](#)) from Paul the Apostle were to be circulated to the other churches after they went to the first church addressed.

"Paul's commission as **an apostle** is a key issue of this epistle. **Timothy** was involved in founding the church in Corinth (Acts 18:5). **Achaia**: A region of Greece including Corinth and Cenchrea 'I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea.' (Romans 16:1" (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"Paul's previous epistle to the Corinthians had been written from Ephesus; this was written only a year or so later, probably from Philippi (Acts 20:3-6)." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

"Salutation. 1:1,2. **1**. The epithet **apostle**, used extensively in Paul's letters (cf. Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1). epitomizes Paul's commission and mission (cf. Gal. 1:1). **Saints** is a parallel description of the Christian brotherhood "Salutation. 1:1,2. **1**. The epithet **apostle**, used extensively in Paul's letters (cf. Eph. 1:1; (cf. Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1). The term is always reminiscent of the radical change that has taken place (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Cor. 6:11). The territory included in **all Achaia** embraced Athens (cf. Acts 17:34) and Cenchrea (cf. Rom. 16:1)." (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

2 "Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

"In the protocol of salvation, recognized even in a salutation, **grace** always precedes **peace**. The former is the basis and foundation of the latter; therefore, the order cannot be changed. No man can have **peace** who has not previously experienced divine **grace** (cf. 8:9). The deity of Christ is emphatically affirmed in the salutation and doxology (13:14) of this epistle. The single preposition **from** (*apo*) links together (see ASV) **God our Father** and **the Lord Jesus Christ** in an indissoluble union. The full title of Christ should be duly weighed." (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

In Paul's salutation he almost always mentions grace and peace. Which does he mention first and why? The answer is he mentions 'grace' first, because it is necessary to produce 'peace.' If you are unsaved you will never experience peace until you are saved. If you are saved you will never experience real peace until you live by grace in the Spirit rather than by trying to keep laws after the flesh.

3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

God comforted Paul in his afflictions (troubles) so he could comfort others. As you may know in Greek the word 'comfort' means 'a calling alongside of.' The purpose of God's comfort is that we in turn may go to the side of a needy one and help him or her in their time of distress.

5 "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ." 6 "Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation." 7 "And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation."

8 "For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life."

Paul and those with him were troubled in Asia Minor beyond their strength, so that he says 'we even despaired of life.' We are not sure what this is about, some say that he could have been referring to Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41). The riot that they had there is fearful even to read about, can you imagine a whole city trying to kill you!?

Some say Paul is not talking about this at all but about some sickness he had, or some attack on his life and this is possible. It is impossible to know for sure. At any rate, the result of this trouble is found in verse (9).

9 "Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,"

As a result of this trouble, Paul said they learned not to trust in themselves but in God who raises the dead.

10-11 "who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us , you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift *granted* to us through many."

This is a good lesson for us to learn as well. When trouble and death come our way it should remind us we are but dust and God is the only one who can help us! It is good for us to pray for one another and then we can also thank God for the answers together.

12 "For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. 13 For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end 14 (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also *are* ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Paul now answers this accusation against his ministry. He told them that his conscience was clear on account of his actions. They could look at the way he conducted himself while he was with them. Also, he wants them to remember that one day we will all be 'judged' by Christ. Paul can 'boast' (not really boasting in the true sense of boasting, but be proud of the fact that he had led them to the Lord, and they could be proud of the fact that they received the message of salvation.)

15 "And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit- 16 to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. 17 Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? 18 But *as God is faithful*, our word to you was not Yes and No. 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us-by me, Silvanus, and Timothy-was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes."

I would like to quote this section to you from the *New Living Translation* : (15) "Since I was so sure of your understanding and trust, I wanted to give you a double blessing. (16) I wanted to stop and see you on my way to Macedonia and again on my return trip. Then you could send me on my way to Judea. (17) You may be asking why I changed my plan. Hadn't I made up my mind yet? Or am I like people of the world who say yes when they really mean no? (18) As surely as God is true, I am not that sort of person.

My yes means yes (19) because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, never wavers between yes and no. He is the one whom Timothy, Silas, and I preached to you, and he is the divine Yes-God's affirmation."

On Paul's third missionary journey he settled in Ephesus for a while. He was there for about three years, according to Jewish reckoning of time (where any part of a year could be considered the next year). During Paul's time there he wrote 1 Corinthians, and may have paid them a brief visit before writing 2 Corinthians, since he mentions the 'third time' he is coming to them in 2 Corinthians 13:1. He may have made a fast trip to Corinth from Ephesus, but was given such a poor reception that he did not stay long enough to accomplish anything.

Now having almost completed his ministry at Ephesus, he may have planned to revisit Corinth, go into Macedonia (look at the map of this area), then return through Corinth (16). It may be that he is referring to the third time he has written to them. There is a letter he wrote that was not inspired as Scripture.

So apparently he sent Titus to prepare the way for him, but had heard nothing from him or Timothy. So Paul decided he would not visit Corinth until he heard from Titus or the Corinthians notified him of their changed attitude toward him.

He did not want to be embarrassed by a second fruitless and contentious visit. He was then driven from Ephesus by a riot or the open door of ministry he had told them about earlier in 1 Corinthians 16:9. This sent him to Troas until he heard from them.

This was a golden opportunity for the legalists in Corinth to accuse Paul of fickleness. You can hear the gossip now, "Paul says he will come to see us, and then he does not come, or does not stay here long enough to say he was really was here. He cannot make up his mind."

20 "For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us."

In verse twenty we have a Greek 'yes,' and a Hebrew 'yes' to show how important God's Word is, and to show them that Paul does not lie to them either.

21 "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,"

Anointed refers to the ancient custom of anointing men with oil when they were set apart for some special service. Here Paul is referring to the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

22 "who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."

The word 'seal' is drawn from the legal usage of the day. The seal of the maker validated a document. A blob of hot wax on the parchment, or a lump of wet clay sealing the strings that tied the document, would be impressed by the signet ring of the owner, thus making the declaration official. The Holy Spirit is God's seal that once you are saved you are always saved, look at our [Ephesians](#) study in chapter one verse thirteen. Three times in the New Testament we are told as Christians that we are sealed when we are saved. As long as we are 'in Christ.' Ephesians says we are going to heaven. Also, in 1 John 5:13, we are told we can 'know' we are saved.

So the second you believed, you were sealed by God, the Holy Spirit. You or anyone else cannot take this seal off, and God will not because He sealed you as forever His. In Hebrews 13:5 Jesus says, 'I will **never** leave you nor forsake you.'

23 "Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth."

When you are falsely slandered, the best thing you can do is to call upon God as your witness. It may take time, but He will straighten things out. The reason Paul had not returned yet to Corinth was to give them an opportunity to confess their sin, to avoid being punished.

24 "Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand."

Even though Paul was an apostle, he did not lord his authority over them. He acted out of love for them so their joy and faith might grow. Are you glad God loves us like that?!

Chapter 2

1 "But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. 2 For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me? 3 And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is *the joy* of you all. 4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you."

I want to show these verses in the *New Living Translation*: "So I said to myself, 'No, I won't do it. I won't make them unhappy with another painful visit.' (2) For if I cause you pain and make you sad, who is going to make me glad? (3) That is why I wrote as I did in my last letter, so that when I do come, I will not be made sad by the very ones who ought to give me the greatest joy. Surely you know that my happiness depends on your happiness. (4) How painful it was to write that letter! Heartbroken, I cried over it. I didn't want to hurt you, but I wanted you to know how very much I loved you."

Paul says the reason he did not make this extra trip he spoke of in chapter one and will speak about in 1 Corinthians 16, was because he did not want to make them sad by his presence among them. They could not have fellowship like they should, and it would not be a happy time for Paul either.

It is like when you know you have sinned in some way, but you are not sure you want to confess it (which merely means-telling on yourself to God.) You say to yourself, but I had every right to be angry (or whatever), but you still do not feel right about it because deep down inside you know you need to confess this thing.

Maybe you do not even feel like going to church or reading your Bible. Someone has said, "The Bible will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the Bible." The reason for that is because anything spiritual convicts you of your sin, until you confess it.

When you do confess it, as 1 John 1:9 says, we should do, you are happy again, and you know God is happy with you again. We see in verse four our proper motive for discipline. Anyone who needs

discipline, our children, church members, or whoever, should be disciplined in 'love.' The Lord says in Hebrews: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." (*New International Version*)

"But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent-not to be too severe. This punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow."

"Therefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love to him. For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. Now whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."

Most Bible scholars agree that these verses are referring to (1 Corinthians 5:1-8). We ask ourselves how is a Christian to react inside when another believer sins? The answer is here and it is very clear, we are to be sorrowful.

Well, when should we forgive someone who has sinned? The answer is in verse (7), and it is when they repent. How then should a Christian act toward a person who has repented and been forgiven? They should forgive and comfort them, lest they give up trying. It would be good for us to remember this when dealing with our children or Christians in the church.

12 "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed from Macedonia."

Not hearing from Titus made Paul think something had gone wrong. You know how it is when your spouse or friend does not show up on time, you begin to think about all sorts of things that might have happened. Paul was no different, he was human, he had feelings too (2 Cor. 7:5-7). Titus did finally show up and we think Paul was probably at Philippi by that time. Titus reached him with the good and bad news.

It sort of sounds like one of those good and bad news jokes, if I may add a little levity here. Have you ever heard one of those kinds of jokes about the good news and the bad news? Well, there was a poor fellow who had cancer in his legs, so he needed them amputated. When the operation was over the doctor came in to speak to the man.

The doctor said, "I have some good news and I have some bad news." Oh, the patient replied, what's the good news first? Well, said the doctor, "The cancer was only in your one leg." "Oh, that's great remarked the patient, but then what's the bad news?" Hesitating, the doctor answered, "We amputated the 'wrong leg.'" This is the type of thing we will see in these next verses. Some people at Corinth responded well to Paul's last letter, but others were outraged. (This letter we are referring to was probably written between 1 & 2 Corinthians, and was not inspired.)

14 "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ."

2:14 "At this point Paul breaks off the narrative of his itinerary and in a characteristic manner allows his spontaneous spirit to carry him into a lengthy digression (the narrative is not resumed until 7:5). The digression, however, is quite relevant to the main tenor of this letter, for it is an immensely rich outpouring of triumphant faith in praise of the unfailing adequacy of the grace of God for every conceivable situation, no matter how threatening and destructive it may seem to be.

"leads us in triumphal procession. The imagery is that of a Roman triumph in which the victorious general would lead his soldiers and the captives they had taken in festive procession, while the people watched and applauded and the air was filled with the sweet smell released by the burning of spices in the streets. So the Christian, called to spiritual warfare, is triumphantly led by God in Christ, and it is through him that God spreads everywhere the 'fragrance' of the knowledge of Christ.

2:16 *"the smell of death. the fragrance of life.* As the gospel aroma is released in the world through Christian testimony, it is always sweet-smelling, even though it may be differently received. The two ultimate categories of mankind are 'those who are being saved and those who are perishing' (v.15). To the latter, testifying Christians are the smell of death, not because the gospel message has become evil-smelling or death-dealing, but because in rejecting the life-giving grace of God, unbelievers choose death for themselves. To those who welcome the gospel of God's grace, Christians with their testimony are the fragrance of life. *Who is equal to such a task?* For the answer see 3:5.

2:17 *"we do not peddle the word of God for profit.* Paul is referring to false teachers who had infiltrated the Corinthian church. Such persons-themselves insincere, self-sufficient and boastful-artfully presented themselves in a persuasive manner, and their chief interest was to take money from gullible church members. Paul, by contrast, had preached the gospel sincerely and free of charge, taking care not to be a financial burden to the Corinthian believers." (see 11:7-12; 1 Corinthians 9:7-15) (*NIV Study Bible*)

We still have these people with us today. The names will change through the years, but they are out for a fast buck, even if it hurts the name of Christ. I would not want to be standing in their shoes when they are before the Judgment Seat of Christ. All will not be coming up roses then.

So God had accomplished His purpose through Paul's ministry. In one way it led those to accept the Lord Jesus Christ who were going to accept Him. In another way, as a result of Paul's ministry or speaking, those who were going to reject Christ rejected Paul also. God's Word made people show their true colors, as it always does!

You know this is true even today, of course. When we witness, not everyone is going to trust in the Lord as his or her own personal Savior. Praise God some will, but it is our responsibility to show them the way to heaven (Romans 10:14-17). The rest of the burden of decision rests upon them, and the Holy Spirit as He does His convicting work in their lives.

Mark Cahill has a wonderful little book that every Christian should read on witnessing. The title of the book is *One Thing You can't Do in Heaven*. I would like to quote a short section of this book to you so you will get interested in reading it. Also, Mark has been used mightily of the Lord all across America in winning souls to Jesus. He tells in this section of his book how he got started witnessing for the Lord.

"One of the great camps in America is Kanakuk Kamps in Branson, Missouri. I worked there as a counselor a few years ago. The group I was in had ten campers and three counselors. Each night we would have devotionals in our cabin. One afternoon, as I was praying about a topic for that night's devotional, the Lord laid on my heart to talk about witnessing and evangelism.

"I thought that was a little strange since I wasn't one to share my faith a lot; but when God begins to lead, I have learned that it is a good idea to follow! So that night as we talked about witnessing, I asked the guys, 'What are the only three possible things that can happen when we share our faith?' The correct answer they gave was: 1) the person can accept Jesus Christ; 2) the person can reject Jesus Christ; or 3) we can plant a seed. After we talked about each of the possibilities, we came up with a chart that looked like the following.

| | | |
|---------|------------|--------|
| ACCEPT | PLANT SEED | REJECT |
| GOOD | GOOD | BAD |
| WINNING | WINNING | LOSING |

"We determined that accepting Jesus was a good situation, planting a seed was a good situation, and rejecting Jesus was a bad situation. We concluded that 66 percent of the time that we share our faith it is a winning situation. Aren't those pretty good odds? Two-thirds of the time that we share our faith, we literally can't lose!

"Little did I know that the very next day the God of the universe was going to change my life forever. I was sitting on a dock in the middle of a lake when God spoke to my heart like never before. I was reading 1 Peter 4:14, which says, 'If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.' (NKJV)

"Just think about that for a moment. If we ever get rejected in the name of Jesus, we will be blessed and the glory of God will rest upon us. If you could have the glory of God shine in your life and be reflected onto others, would you want that? We all would want that as much as possible! One way that will happen is if we are rejected in the name of Jesus.

"God wasn't done with me yet. Luke 6:22-23 says, 'Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile *you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.'

"Do you realize that when you get rejected in the name of Jesus, God has rewards waiting for you in Heaven that will make any earthly reward seem like chump change? That is truly amazing.

"When I was speaking at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes leadership conference in Lexington, Kentucky, the teens and college students went witnessing door-to door one afternoon. One group went to the first house on the street and were rejected. They rang up their reward in Heaven, gave each other a 'high five,' and moved on. At the next house no one was home. At the next house they were rejected. Next house no one was home.

"After eight houses, they became discouraged. They considered quitting and trying again another day, but they remembered their reward in Heaven and kept pressing on. At the ninth house was man sitting on his porch in a rocking chair, drinking a beer. As they began talking with him, he quickly told them they were wasting their time. When they asked why, he replied, 'Because there is no way God can forgive me of all my sins.'

"We know that is not a true statement. But Satan will lie to people to make them think their sins are so bad that they cannot be forgiven. The students asked the man what he had done that was so bad that God would not forgive him.

"While he was in Vietnam, he explained, he was dropped into towns and villages where he would indiscriminately kill women and children. Sometimes he would put his gun behind him and shoot people behind his back like it was a game.

"The students began to minister to him and show him the love of God. They talked about sin and the cleansing blood of Jesus. Forty-five minutes later the man said, 'I really need this Jesus you are talking about.'

"They prayed with him as he accepted Jesus. The teens reported later that when he lifted his head, he had a glow on his face that they had never seen before. He said, 'I just feel like reading my Bible! I just feel like going to church! That's all I feel like doing.

"What an amazing story! But this would not have happened if those kids had given up and not pressed on in the Lord, if they had been more concerned about rejection than about their reward in Heaven.

"But after God showed me those two verses, I had begun that night's devotions by saying that I had misled them the previous night. I'd said we had a 66-percent chance of a winning situation when we share our faith. Then I shared those two verses with them, and their eyes opened wide as they too realized the mistake we had made. Now that we know those two verses, let's see how the chart changes.

| | | |
|---------|------------|---------|
| ACCEPT | PLANT SEED | REJECT |
| GOOD | GOOD | GOOD |
| WINNING | WINNING | WINNING |

"Just by knowing the Word of God, we learned that every time we share our faith it is a winning situation. I don't ever have to worry again about Satan trying to talk me out of witnessing, because the Word of God says that I can't lose doing it. It is a winning situation every single time!" (*One Thing You can't Do In Heaven* by Mark Cahill)

Back to the text and verse 17 where Paul says, "For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ."

When Peter and John were used of God to heal the lame man that begged at the temple, did they then ask him for some money, or take up an offering? Here is an excerpt from the Acts study on this subject of peddling the word of God.

"Another thing, did Peter and John ask for money or make money on this miracle? No! A thousand times NO! The preaching of the gospel is not about getting money, as some are teaching, preaching, and practicing today. It is just the opposite; it is about giving freely what God has so freely given to us! If there is a ministry that you are supporting that is emphasizing money, stop supporting it! Also, I would find another more biblical fellowship to attend. God does not need your money to do miracles for you, or anyone else! God will judge those who are making a profit out of the gospel.

"Some unread letters were found washed up from the ocean. It turns out that there were about 300 in all, sent to a New Jersey minister, but they ended up dumped in the ocean, most of them unopened. Some were heartbreaking, a girl asking forgiveness for an abortion (she prayed 'Lord, I know that I have had an abortion, and I killed one of your angels'), an unwed mother pleading with God to make the baby's father marry her, etc.

"Evidently the letters addressed to Rev.-----, were intended to be placed on the church's altar and prayed over by the minister and or congregation. Other documents in the bag, including bank statements and canceled checks, also listed Rev. ----- who had died in 2000. So often the gospel is used for a "scam" to make money." ([Acts part 2](#)) I say again, God will judge all such who use the gospel this way. The early apostles were not interested in money; they were interested in saving souls and healing bodies and lives for free!

We were asked this question on our website's Interactive Bible Study: Also the name it, [and] claim it. I am having a hard time finding scriptures to show if there is truth in this teaching. Here is how the Lord had me answer this question:

Of all the false doctrines perpetrated on man, this one seems to be so obviously wrong that it is hard to understand how people could believe it. I say that, but then in the next breath I think, but it does cater to man's selfish nature. Also, if a Christian is not into the Word [Bible] and just listening to [T.V. evangelists](#), they could be easily deceived.

I cannot go into great detail here about this teaching, but let me tell you about two books that you want to get your hands on concerning this subject that do go into detail about this teaching. These books are both by Hank Hanegraaff. The books are [Christianity in Crises](#), and [Counterfeit Revival](#). However, here I will try to summarize the beliefs of the name it and claim it group, and then give you some Scripture to refute it.

To start with let me quote for you a little from *Christianity in Crisis* by Hank Hanegraaff, "Tragically, Price is not content to wreak havoc upon the centrality of Christ's work upon the cross. [Referring to the subject, the false teaching about Jesus suffering in hell.] He also portrays a completely different Christ during His earthly ministry. Consider, for example, Price's argument that Jesus 'must have had a whole lot' of money. Here's how he puts it:

"The Bible says that He [Jesus] had a treasurer, named Judas Iscariot; and the rascal was stealing out of the bag for three-and-a-half years and nobody knew that he was stealing.

"You know why?"

"Because there was so much in it. If He had three oranges in the bottom of the bag and he stole two of them, don't tell me He [Jesus] wouldn't know that some was missing. "Besides that, if Jesus didn't have anything, what do you need a treasury for?" ("Ever Increasing Faith" program on TBN [23 November 1990]).

According to Hanegraaff in *Christianity in Crisis*, "Upon such a flawed foundation rests a fundamental Faith fantasy-namely, that Jesus was wealthy, that He wore expensive clothing, and that His disciples lived in luxury.

John Avanzini

"Dr. John Avanzini bills himself as a noted Bible teacher and recognized authority on biblical economics. 'Brother John,' as he likes to call himself, claims to have studied the life of Christ to the extent that he is now prepared to dispel the popular misconception that our Lord was poor. Contrary to 'tradition' Avanzini asserts Jesus was so wealthy that He wore custom-made designer clothes. ["Believer's Voice of Victory" program on TBN (20 January 1991)].

"Avanzini uses John 19:23 in an attempt to make his point. What Avanzini doesn't seem to realize is that what he describes as a seamless custom-made designer coat is considered by competent Bible scholars to refer to an undergarment. Thus, if we are to take Avanzini seriously, he has built the case that Jesus wore custom-made designer underwear!"

"Avanzini continues his attempt to demonstrate that Christ was wealthy by pointing out that, contrary to what people have been taught, 'Jesus had a nice house, a big house.' Anticipating a rebuttal, Avanzini offered this response to Matthew 8:20:

"Foxes have holes and the birds in the air have nests, but the Son of man hath nowhere to lay His head" is not a declaration that Jesus didn't have a house. It meant that [the] Samaritans canceled the meeting that He was going to, if you remember the account. And in those days, there wasn't a Holiday Inn on every corner. If your advance men got canceled, then you walked to the next meeting and take up there. It's very clear that He had a house. The Bible states he had a house. [John Avanzini, "Praise the Lord" program on TBN (1 August 1989)]

"This is no mere academic point, for, according to Avanzini, until you know that Jesus was prosperous, you won't be either. Elsewhere he says, 'If Jesus was poor, I want to be poor, if Jesus slept under a bridge, I want to sleep under the bridge, but if Jesus was rich, I too want to be rich.'" [John Avanzini, "Praise-a-Thon" program on TBN (15 September 1988)]

"Armed with a bundle of biblical texts which he takes out of context, Avanzini teaches people that they should give to get. Avanzini has even suggested that 'a greater than a lottery has come. His name is Jesus!' [John Avanzini, "Praise-a-Thon" program on TBN (April 1991)]

"Perhaps the saddest fact of all is that Avanzini takes the Word of God-which was designed to bring men light-and reduces it to a means to bring in funds. In the words of Benny Hinn, "The wicked are piling up the funds and I love the way John teaches on this. "He's the best there is when it comes to teaching you on how to get the wealth of the wicked. Man, I like it!" [Benny Hinn, "Praise-a-Thon" program on TBN (6 November 1990)]

We could go on to the teachings of Robert Tilton, Marilyn Hickey, Paul Yonggi Cho (David Yonggi Cho), Charles Capps, Jerry Savelle, Morris' Cerullo, Paul Crouch, Kenneth Copeland, T.L. Osborn, and Kenneth Hagin, but I think you get the picture.

These same 'teachers' have taught thousands of other teachers, and millions of viewers a lie from the pit of hell, and they will have to answer for it one day. I believe when this kingdom of theirs comes crashing down, it will be obvious to all, that God has judged this teaching!

The Word of God teaches just the opposite of them on the area of giving. We do not give to get. In fact, Jesus said it is better to give than to receive. "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Saint Paul Acts 20:35)

Jesus was poor in this world's goods, but rich spiritually! Nowhere in the New Testament are we told to try and get riches, just the opposite! St. James says: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow.

"For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that. But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

"Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days." (James 4:13-5:3)

I hope you get a chance to read [Christianity in Crisis](#), and [Counterfeit Revival](#) by Hank Hanegraaff. These are too large of subjects to do them justice in the space we have here. These are serious problems in the Church today, and God will judge all such teachings, but He will do it in His timing and in His way.

This is why people who do not have a sound Bible knowledge should not teach what they cannot prove from the Word of God. They are twisting the Bible to make it say what they want it to say. We need to use the context of Scripture, the verses before and after the one we are looking at, to find the text's true meaning. Someone has said, "A text without a context is a pretext." Brother James says, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." (James 3:1)

Paul must have realized that some of these false teachers in Corinth were just in it for the money. They were not really sincere in their motives for preaching their gospel of salvation by works or whatever it was. This is not to say every person in a 'false teaching' is doing it for money, but some of them are.

This does not just apply to people in "false cults" either. Some people who are Christians may even preach the Gospel for the wrong motive, as we saw in the case of those teaching the 'name it and claim it' or what is also known as the prosperity gospel.

Other Christians may be looking for prestige, or one thing or another, as their motive for preaching the gospel. Even some Christians today preach the Gospel as a job-to get paid. Some Christians sing or serve for the wrong motive. If they are doing the ministry for these other motives, other than for the love of Christ and the gospel, it is wrong!

We need to check and be sure we are sharing the gospel for the right reasons. Paul preached and taught the gospel out of love for others. Ours should be a desire to see others saved, so they too will spend eternity with us in heaven!

Chapter 3

1 "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? 2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men: 3 clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart."

It seems that some of the legalistic teachers at Corinth carried letters of introduction from those who supported them. They were asking, who is Paul? Can he show letters from anybody? This is absurd! Does Apostle Paul need letters commending him, when he was the one who started the church in Corinth?

"Unlike the intruders trying to discredit Paul and elevate themselves, Paul did not need a letter of introduction and recommendation. His legitimacy as a minister of the gospel was proved by their changed lives as a result of the work of the Spirit in them." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"letter from Christ. Paul is no more than the instrument in the hands of the Master. Written not with ink. As a parchment or papyrus document would be. With the Spirit of the living God. As though the Spirit were a substitute for ink! Ink fades and may easily be deleted or blocked out since it is no more than an inanimate fluid. But the Spirit of the living God is himself life and therefore life-giving (v.6), and the life He gives is eternal and without defect. not tablets of stone. As at Sinai. on tablets of human hearts. See Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26. Paul explains the significance of this contrast between the old and the new covenants in vv. 7-18." (NIV Study Bible)

4 "And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

"Paul's **trust** is not self-confidence but confidence in the **sufficiency** (see 2:16) of God's Spirit, who empowers life and ministry in the reality of the **new covenant**. **The letter kills** means that the external code of the Old Covenant produces spiritual death, because the Law shows us our need but is powerless to meet the need (Romans 7:7). Only **the Spirit gives life**."

"the advantage of the New Covenant is that it is an inward power bearing the Spirit of God Himself, enabling us to keep God's Law. See Jeremiah 31:33; Romans 8; Hebrews 8:6-13." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"**letter**. In context here, the 'letter' is referring to the written Law, inscribed on tables of stone. This Law is 'holy, and just, and good' (Romans 7:12), but in and of itself can only condemn sinners, not save them, for 'by the law is the knowledge of sin' (Romans 3:20), and 'all have sinned' (Romans 3:23)." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

7 "But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?"

9 "For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. 10 For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. 11 For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious."

The 'ministry' of the Judaizers (those who teach salvation is by keeping the law) was in contrast to Paul's ministry; it was the Gospel against the teaching of salvation by the Law. One was written on Stone (the Law) the other was written on the hearts (the Gospel).

One was of the letter (trying to be a perfectionist), the other was of the Spirit of the Living God. One was unto death, the other unto life. One was veiled, the other unveiled.

One was unto condemnation, the other unto righteousness. One is passing away, the other remains.

"Paul is defending his 'ministry' of the new covenant in Christ (cf. v. 6: 4:1) and here compares the experiences of Moses, who mediated the old covenant of Sinai, and his own as a minister of the new covenant. But he now applies the word 'ministry' to the law that was 'engraved in letters on stone' and to the Spirit, who writes 'on tablets of human hearts' (v. 3).

"The point of comparison is the fading glory that shone on Moses' face and the 'ever-increasing glory' reflected in the faces of those who minister the new covenant. This contrast in regard to glory serves to highlight the temporary and inadequate character of the old covenant and the permanent and effective character of the new covenant.

"*came with glory*. The law of the old covenant given at Sinai was in no way bad or evil; on the contrary, Paul describes it elsewhere as holy, righteous, good and spiritual (Romans 7:12, 14). The evil is in the hearts and deeds of people who, as lawbreakers, bring upon themselves the condemnation of the law and the penalty of death-and the law engraved on stone could not purge away that evil. *Its glory*. The glory of God surrounded the giving of the law and was reflected on the face of Moses when he descended from the mountain (see Exodus 34:29-30).

"*ministry of the Spirit. brings righteousness*. Giving life instead of death. 'Righteousness' is here both objective (justification) and personal (sanctification).

"What was fading away. Paul here applies the fading to the old covenant of Sinai, which was not to endure forever. In due course it was superseded by the unfading and much more glorious radiance belonging to the new covenant." (NIV Study Bible)

12 "Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech-13 unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. 15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart."

"Moses, who would put a veil over his face. See Ex. 34:33-35. The purpose of the veil was to prevent the Israelites from seeing the fading of the glory. To this day the same veil remains. The veil that prevented them from seeing the fading of the glory on Moses' face is still with them, preventing them from recognizing the temporary and inadequate character of the old covenant-a 'veil' that is removed only in Christ. Only those who have received the new covenant in Christ have the power to see how the new covenant has transcended and replaced the old covenant-because of its greater glory." (NIV Study Bible)

The new covenant requires a "new man" (Eph. 2:15; 4:24) who is a "new creature" or "new creation" (2 Cor. 4:24). The regenerated person has a "new name." (Rev. 2:17), observes a "new commandment" (1 John 2:7,8), sings a "New song" (Rev. 14:3), looks for "new heavens" and a "new earth" (2 Pt. 3:13; Rev. 21:1), where there is the "new Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:2) and where all things are "new" (Rev. 21:5).

The heart of the old covenant was the Ten Commandments. There were over 200 laws altogether found in the law. The contrast here is between the Law as a system of salvation requiring perfect obedience (however Rom. 3:19-23 show us this is impossible), in comparison to the Gospel which is a free gift of 'grace' not of works or of keeping the law.

Even the law could lead a person to Christ (Gal. 5:15, 29), if that person realized they were lost and in need of Christ's help. This is really why the law was given. Someone has shown it in diagram form. The law would be like a measuring stick many times higher than us reaching endlessly into the sky, while we as little people are looking up at it wondering how high it goes. So the law was given to show us we do not measure up to God's standards in ourselves.

Degenerated Judaism had turned the law into a lifeless mass of forms. (Is. 1:10-20; Jer. 7:21-26). Our pastor has been to Israel many times as a guide taking church people to see the Holy Land. He says to this day the Rabbis have so many regulations that it is impossible to follow them. Then if that were not enough, the Rabbis disagree often with each other as to which regulation applies where and when. This was never God's intent for how the Old Testament law was to be used. Men have added so many of their own traditions that the original law is long forgotten.

16-17 "Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there is liberty."

The new age of "grace and truth" (John. 1:17), already anticipated in the Old Testament (Ez. 37:1-14; 47:1-12) is now fully realized in the dynamic dispensation of grace.

"the Lord is the Spirit. This statement should be linked with what was said at the end of v. 6: 'the Spirit gives life.' It is only by turning to the Lord (v. 16) that the condemnation and the sentence of death pronounced by the law on the lawbreaker are annulled and replaced by the free life-giving grace of the new covenant.

"There is a close relationship between the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Both are said to dwell in the believer (Ro. 8:9; Gal. 2:20). In Romans 8:9-10 the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ all seem to be used interchangeably. In Acts 16:6-7 the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Jesus appear to be one and the same. Perhaps this is because the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and the first two persons of the Trinity accomplish their purposes through the Spirit." (*NIV Study Bible*)

18 "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

As we study the Word of God (Col 3:16), and desire to become more like Christ, God does a wonderful work in our lives, changing us into the likeness of Christ. We see Christ in the Bible.

"We, like Moses when he entered the tabernacle to speak with God (Exodus 34:34), also come into His presence with open (that is, unveiled) faces when we read His Word, which both reveals us for what we are, like a mirror (compare James 1:23-35), and also reveals to us the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. In so doing we (like Moses) can begin to reflect His own image in our lives and even our countenances, from one degree of glory to another. And just as we are changed 'from glory to glory,' we also receive 'grace for grace' (John 1:16).

"Thus, we are gradually being restored to the full image of God in which we were created (Genesis 1:26, 27), being 'renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him' (Colossians 3:10), for we indeed are predestined 'to be conformed to the image of his Son' (Romans 8:29)." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

Chapter 4

1 "Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Here I would like to quote from the *New Living Translation* as I think that it will help us to understand these verses better: (1) *"And so, since God in his mercy has given us this wonderful ministry, we never give up. (2) We reject all shameful and underhanded methods. We do not try to trick anyone, and we do not distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know that."*

This reminds me of Gabriel the angel, where he was talking to Zacharias and Zacharias did not believe that he and his wife could have a baby like Gabriel said they would. Then Gabriel said, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God." (Luke 1:19) If ever a person tells the truth it is when he is in the presence of God!

Paul knew the principle set forth for us in (James 3:1 "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."), for this reason he was always honest in his handling of the Word of God.

3 "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

We must proclaim Christ Who alone can break through the darkness that Satan, the god of this present age, has over the minds of the unsaved. Christ is the divine source of this light (John 8:12). We are the human source He works through (Matthew 5:14).

We do not preach ourselves, but as Paul did, we preach Christ as Lord and we are His servants. Paul goes back to (Genesis 1:3) in verse six and explains his own conversion. The God, who created the physical light, illuminates our minds in our re-creation when we behold the face of Jesus Christ!

7 "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us."

"The treasure" of the indwelling Spirit is "in earthen vessels," fragile earthen containers (the believer's body is being referred to here) like pottery. Warren W. Wiersbe says there are three reasons Satan attacks. He comments, ".Your body is God's temple." "Not only is your body *God's temple*, but it is also *God's tool*." "The third reason Satan attacks your body is because your body is *God's treasury*."

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves." 2 Corinthians 4:7 NASB

"When God saved you, he put the treasure of eternal life within your body. You have the very life of God within you! God did not give you this great treasure simply to protect it-an earthen vessel is not the safest place for a treasure! He gave you this treasure that he might invest it through you in the lives of others. For example, God deposited this spiritual wealth in the Apostle Paul '*according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.*' 1Timothy 1:11NASB

"Paul invested this treasure in Timothy.

'O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you.' 1Timothy 6:20 NASB 'Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.' 2 Timothy 2:2 NASB

"Timothy, in turn, was to invest this treasure in the lives of others. '*And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*' 2 Timothy 2:2

"In other words, the safety and success of this spiritual investment is in the hands of weak human beings! The treasure is in an earthen vessel! Satan can rob the world of spiritual wealth by attacking the bodies of believers." (*The Strategy of Satan* by Warren W. Wiersbe)

The reason God has it this way is so people will see the power is from God and not from us. Think of the type of men God has used. It has not been mainly very brilliant men or even men of great physical strength. As a rule, God has chosen to use common, ordinary people like you and me.

Man is very fragile: Isaiah said, "Sever yourselves from such a man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils; for of what account is he?" (Isaiah 2:22)

Paul was constantly being exposed to death, as we will see later on.

8 "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh."

The believer experiences suffering and death, as did his Lord, so that Christ's life may be revealed and seen in him. This is true even today in Communist, Muslim, and Hindu countries. I think we would run into more persecution ourselves even in this country if we were bolder in our witnessing. We should not be ashamed to give out tracts wherever we go, and if we are persecuted then this is to be expected.

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)

"*COMPASS DIRECT NEW*- Pastor Mark Jaikumar was recovering recently in a private care facility in Bangalore, Karnataka state, India, after being kidnapped and blindfolded and overhearing Hindu extremists' plans to kill him. This was his second abduction in one week.

"Pastor of the Divine Gospel Church in Chelekere village, Bangalore, Jaikumar was kidnapped from the church compound on August. 25. 'They kept cursing and mocking the Christian faith in filthy language and told each other that all my conversion activities would end once they killed me,' he told *Compass*. He managed to escape after a commercial bus he and one of the kidnapers had gotten on broke down.

"Three days earlier, the pastor had been kidnapped from an orphanage he was visiting. 'They kept cursing the Christian faith and made allegations of converting the orphans. Then they tore my shirt and tried to strangle me, while one of the attackers took a big stone to crush my head,' he said. The headlights of an approaching vehicle beamed onto them, and the assailants fled." (*Persecution UPDATE, Israel My Glory January/February 2008*)

"*COMASS DIRECT NEW*- Eritrean authorities tortured a woman to death in September, 2007, for refusing to recant her Christian faith, the fourth such killing in less than a year.

"Citing Christian sources in the East African nation of Eritrea, Open Doors said in a statement that it has confirmed that 33-year-old Nigisti Haile was killed for refusing to sign a letter recanting her faith. Held at the Wi'a Military Training Center 20 miles south of the Red Sea port of Massawa, Haile was one of 10

single Christian women arrested at a church gathering in Keren who have spent 18 months under severe pressure.

"Eritrea outlawed independent Protestant churches in May, 2002, closing their buildings and banning them from meeting even in private homes. Haile was a member of a Rhema church, an independent Protestant group, according to Open Doors. Before her arrest, according to the organization, Haile worked for a relative while studying to complete high school-level education.

"In February, 2007, Magos Solomon Semere died under torture at the Adi-Nefase Military Confinement facility outside Assab, four and a half years after the Eritrean regime jailed him for worshiping in a banned Protestant church. According to one source, the 30-year-old Semere died 'due to physical torture and persistent pneumonia, for which he was forbidden proper medical treatment.'

"In October, 2006, two other Christians died under torture for holding a religious service in a private home south of Asmara.

"In August, 2007, Open Doors became aware that the 10 Christian women arrested earlier were separated from other prisoners and taken to the Wi'a military center, where they underwent torture for refusing to recant.

"On August, 19, ten members of the Full Gospel Church were arrested as they gathered in a house in Kahawata, a suburb of Asmara, sources said. On August, 12, Leul Gebreab, 35, a pastor at the evangelical Apostolic Church, was arrested in Asmara.

"Amnesty International said the detainees from the Full Gospel Church are believed to be held without charge or trial in the Karchele security prison, together with dozens of other pastors and members of banned evangelical churches.

"More than 2,000 Eritrean Christians are imprisoned in Eritrea. All have been denied legal counsel or trial, with no written charges filed against them. Amnesty reported that most of the more than 2,000 imprisoned Christians have been held for more than two years in harsh conditions, with little or no medical treatment.

"Members of evangelical churches have been subjected to arrest, torture and coercion by the security forces to try and force them to deny their faith, Amnesty reported.

"Since May, 2002, Eritrea has officially recognized only Islam and the Orthodox, Catholic, and Lutheran Christian churches. At the same time, Amnesty noted, religious persecution has also affected the Orthodox and Catholic churches." (*Persecution UPDATE Israel My Glory January/February 2008*)

"Heroic courage, such as that found in Hebrews 11, is dependent only upon our love for our Savior. He is our courage. We have courage not because of who we are, but because of Whom we serve.

"Tribal Christians in Communist Laos and Vietnam are told they must sign a paper promising not to worship together again, and by signing they will 'protect' their family. Most of them do not sign, however, one Vietnamese brother was trembling as he told me about his house church that had been attacked that evening by the police, but he was smiling. A Vietnamese pastor told us, 'We have learned

that suffering is not the worst thing that can happen to us. Disobedience to God is the worst thing.' Their modern-day witness encourages us not to sign up with the world, no matter how or where we are tested.

"It is important that we obediently continue to hold our light on the hill (Matthew 5:14). As we maintain our gracious Christian witness, we are links in God's several thousand-year chain of courage. You may be maintaining your witness in a difficult family or toiling as a single parent, juggling both job and children.

"You may be laboring as a pastor, one of the most criticized, overworked professions today. But, we are all presented with moments of heroism in our life, which require faith, obedience and courage.

"Few may give us any recognition, yet, we courageously walk in a family of thousands of Daniels, Shadrachs, Stephens and Pauls who are currently obedient in hostile nations. Some will, for the joy which is set before them, even walk up that hill to their death (Revelation 12:11).

"Thousands of angels clap for us when we stand up for Christ, the same way they clap for a Muslim convert who refuses to go back to Islam and is beaten by their family in Bangladesh or Abu Dhabi, or believers who refuse to give up meeting even after fanatical neighbors burn down their church building in Nigeria. Together with our brothers and sisters, we produce a chain reaction of joy, even in heaven.

"Although chained by Rome, the Apostle Paul referred to himself as 'a prisoner of the Lord.' He was securely captive to a greater empire than Rome could ever imagine. He demanded his right to testify about Christ in courts. He understood the Holy Spirit's chain reaction, declaring in Philippians 1:14, 'most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear.'

"Brother Asif, [a] Pakistani believer was in chains seven years for his faith under the Islamic law, 295-B. Muslim policemen, guards and prisoners are brought to Christ by Christians in chains in Pakistan, Egypt, Indonesia and other countries. Asif, and other Pauls of today, who stand before the courts or village councils for their faith, help us to be bold, giving us courage to share the Word of God.

"It is not strange that Bibles are confiscated in Iran, Libya, China and other countries opposed to the gospel. The Bible is a subversive book. The Word of God brings a chain reaction of life in the midst of oppression.

"In Communist China, the police seized three tons of Bibles being shipped to a group of Christians. These rural Christians needed this quantity of Bibles as they evangelize and bring many into God's fold. Though evangelism is against the law in China, it is impossible to stop the spread of the gospel. The Chinese government tries to contain it, limiting Christians to the inside of state-controlled Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) church buildings on Sunday. Many tourists at the 2008 Olympics will probably enjoy their services.

"It is normal that the atheistic communists would try to corral the gospel, hoping to keep it from spreading. Satan tries the same tactics with us here at home. He wants us to believe that obedient Christians, who are respectful of others, keep their mouths shut and only discuss 'religion' in a special building one day a week. Why should we stick out our necks? But when we obediently open our mouth

for Jesus out in the world, we become His living Bible-part of God's chain reaction, passing on life and courage.

"Christians in Cuba know about chain reactions. In 1962, communist-leader Fidel Castro stated that in eight years there would be no churches in Cuba. Since then, the state has not permitted new buildings to be constructed. However, there are now thousands of house churches in Cuba.

"In September, 2005, the Cuban government desperately tried to contain the damage, enacting Resolution 46, which says churches may only meet three times a week. The churches refuse. Would our own church obey such a law?

"One house church threatened by the state dug up their church building's steel posts. They carried them, along with the sheet metal roofing and wooden walls, to another location!

"From his deathbed, Castro still refuses to give up his futile efforts to stop Christians. He is trying to hold his atheistic model together with a block-to-block campaign called 'The Battle of Ideas.'

"It is futile. The atheists in Cuba cannot win against God's law of multiplication, His chain reaction-one obedient Christian multiplied by God equals many new believers. God's chain cannot be broken.

"Whether in a Cuban house church, an Iranian prison or an American high school hallway, the courage to be a school witness for Christ stems from obedience rooted in love, not from feelings. The Lamb of God on the way to be sacrificed was in pain, yet He obeyed the will of His Father and purchased our salvation. He tells us to obediently take up our cross, knowing we will also pass through painful moments.

"The courage and faith that is obediently acted out by Christians in hostile Pakistan, Vietnam, China and more than 40 other countries around the world produces a chain reaction, which touches others and lifts all of us. Your life can do the same." (Tom White, *The Voice of the Martyrs Special Issue 2008*)

12 "So then death is working in us, but life in you."

Paul is showing them how foolish they are in thinking that they know it all. Paul uses a little sarcasm in what he says, because they really should have been laying their life on the line for what they believed, but instead they were compromising, and going along with these false teachers so as to save face.

Paul was ready to die for what he believed because he believed what Jesus had said. 24 *"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?'"* Matthew 16:24-26

13 "And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you."

Really the Corinthians had the same faith Paul had. What I mean by this is most of those in the church were truly born again. They should be speaking the same thing that Paul is preaching because they too are trusting in the death and resurrection of Christ to save them.

Yes, and so should we be speaking about Christ's death and resurrection, no matter what the cost! Some day even if we die or Christ returns, He will raise these dying bodies to life eternal. Just like God raised Jesus from the dead, He will raise you and I who have believed on Him.

15 "For all things *are* for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God."

We should be continually thanking God when we see new ones saved. It should never become "old hat" to us!

16 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. 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."

When we see things in the light of eternity these present trials can be seen in their proper perspective. This is the only time we can live by faith, because when we get to heaven we will live by sight. Let's do all we can for Christ now!

Chapter 5

1 "For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee."

6 "So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

There is no time element here between when we die (as Christians) and when our spirit is with the Lord. It is true that your body you leave here on earth will not be resurrected until Christ returns at the rapture, but we are given some kind of body, and we are present with the Lord.

The reason I say this is because there are those who believe that our soul sleeps until the final resurrection. You will not find this anywhere in Scripture. Some say they believe in soul sleep, but the Bible does not teach this. The Bible and Jesus teach body sleep. If you will look at every passage where Jesus comments on a believer who has died, He would say they are sleeping. So their body was sleeping but their spirit was very much alive.

At any rate, what type of body will we have? From reading about Christ's resurrected body we find that our bodies will be eternal. They will be able to appear or disappear and change forms. It will not decay. We will have a perfect character, capable of doing anything we choose. It will not be subject to laws of gravity or other laws related to this earth.

42 "So also is the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, "*The first man Adam became a living being.*" The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.

46 "However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 47 The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of dust; the second Man *is* the Lord from heaven. 48 As *was* the *man* of dust, so also *are* those *who are made* of dust; and as *is* the heavenly *Man*, so also *are* those *who are* heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *Man*." (1 Corinthians 15:42-47)

With this hope in mind, Paul, could overlook the present troubles with his body and so can we. 22 "who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." (2 Corinthians 1:22) We have a pledge from God that there is more to come -- what more could you ask for?

9 "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

"The Judgment Seat of Christ: Every person who does not accept Jesus Christ will one day stand before the 'Great White Throne of Judgment,' to be judged for their sins (Rev. 20:11). But every Christian will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. These are two different kinds of judgments.

"At the judgment seat of Christ, it will be about rewards that are given. The word for 'judgment' here in the Greek is *Bema* which was the word used for the judging stands in the Olympics. The Olympic judges would place the laurel wreath on the head of the winner, in front of the *Bema* seat. When we Christians stand before Jesus and the judgment seat of Christ, we will be rewarded based on what we have done for the Lord and especially for the motives we had for what we did.

"If I do good things to impress people, my reward is here on earth. I receive the adulation of men. But the things I do that are motivated by a love for God and a love for people, those will be rewarded by Jesus on this day of judgment. This was a significant motivation for Paul to want to please the Lord. Just to stand in front of the judge's stand and hear Jesus say, 'Well done!' (Matthew 25:21)." (*The Word for Today Bible* by Pastor Chuck Smith)

11 "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences."

"**The terror of the Lord** (the appropriate reverential awe or fear of our Creator and Judge) strengthens our resolve to please Christ ourselves (vv. 9, 10) and motivates our attempts to **persuade** others to trust in Christ." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

12 "For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have *an answer* for those who boast in appearance and not in heart."

When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ at His coming we are judged according to our works. This judgment does not determine whether we are saved or lost. It, rather, determines the reward or loss of rewards for our service to the Lord.

10 "But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Romans 14:10 [**SEAT** a sitting place of great importance. The mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant was reserved only for the Lord (Ex. 25:22). A seat could also refer to a royal throne (Judges 3:20; Esther 3:1). In the New Testament, the word often refers to a judgment seat, sometimes Christ's judgment seat in particular (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10).]

9 "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 "Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." 1 Corinthians 3:9-15

13 "For if we are beside ourselves, *it is* for God; or if we are of sound mind, *it is* for you."

Paul may be talking about some occasion when his enemies charged him with insanity. It is strange how the world considers a man unbalanced when his life is fully consecrated to the lord.

14 "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."

Paul says if we are beside ourselves it is because we love you. This is a pretty hard reason to argue with!

"One died for all, then all died." this teaches us about the substitutionary death of Christ for us. You can see a story in our tracts that goes along with the substitutionary death of Christ, it is called [Heaven- How to Get There](#).

I read in the encyclopedia about how during the Civil War in the U.S.A. you could get someone to go fight in your place. Now if this person was killed and the government then tried to draft you, you needed only to show the death certificate of the one who died for you, or in your place.

Then they could not draft you because you were considered 'dead' in respect to the draft. This is the way salvation works for us. God looks at our position in respect to 'eternal punishment' as though we are already dead. We have died through Christ. Therefore we should not live for ourselves, but for Christ who died for us. 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;

and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20

16 "Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him thus* no longer."

This is referring to the time before Paul was saved, and at that time he thought Christ was just another man. Now that he is a Christian, he realizes that Christ is the Son of God.

17 "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

He is saying this about everyone who is saved, his thinking and everything about him/her is changed, he/she is a new creation (creature), we are now new beings. When I think of this verse, I think of the illustration of the caterpillar, which spins a cocoon around itself and comes out a beautiful butterfly. Salvation produces a beautiful, new person inside of us!

"The miracle of regeneration-being born again and baptized by the Holy Spirit into the spiritual body of Christ-is a true miracle of special creation, not psychological redirection, or anything of that sort. It is comparable in quality, though not quantity, to the creation of the universe. No natural process can accomplish or explain such a miracle." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

We also have a tract that I have written that goes along with what we are addressing here. It is called, [*What Does it Mean to be Born Again?*](#)

18 "Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation."

First, a definition of reconciliation is: God through the death of His Son on the cross removed sin as a barrier between us and Him.

20 "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."

Now who is God's channel for reconciling men and women to Himself? We are that channel! He tells us that not only are our sins taken away, that would not be enough, but we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. When we stand before God, it will just be like He is looking at Christ, Whom He is well pleased with!

"The marvelous truth is that God has already reconciled sinners to Himself by virtue of the sacrifice of His Son. The problem now is that sinners are not yet reconciled to Him. Therefore, He has committed to us 'the ministry of reconciliation' and the 'word of reconciliation' (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19), as His ambassadors, to beseech men to accept His Son and His great work of salvation. This is 'the Great Commission.'" (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

21 "For He made Him who knew no sin to *be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

"According to Paul, Christ 'knew no sin.' Peter says He 'did no sin' (1 Peter 2:22) and John says that 'in him is no sin' (1 John 3:5). Yet He was made sin for us, suffering and dying as the 'propitiation for the sins of the whole world' (1 John 2:2), in order to reconcile God to sinful mankind. We are then 'made the righteousness of God,' being given credit before God for His perfect righteousness. No wonder Paul could say: 'The love of Christ constraineth us' (2 Corinthians 5:14)." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

For more information: bible-christian.org