

# 2 Corinthians 13

(New International Version)

## Final Warnings

<sup>1</sup>*This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." <sup>1a</sup><sup>2</sup>I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, <sup>3</sup>since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. <sup>4</sup>For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.*

<sup>5</sup>*Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you unless, of course, you fail the test? <sup>6</sup>And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. <sup>7</sup>Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. <sup>8</sup>For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. <sup>9</sup>We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your perfection. <sup>10</sup>This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.*

## <sup>11</sup>Final Greetings

<sup>11</sup>*Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. <sup>12</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss. <sup>13</sup>All the saints send their greetings. <sup>14</sup>May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

## Study Notes

### 2 CORINTHIANS 13:2

When Paul arrived the third time in Corinth, he would not be lenient toward unrepentant sinners. His actions could include (1) confronting and publicly denouncing their behavior, (2) exercising church discipline by calling them before the church leaders, or (3) excommunicating them from the church.

### 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5

The Corinthians were called to examine and test themselves to see if they really were Christians. Just as we get physical checkups, Paul urges us to give ourselves spiritual checkups. We should look for a growing awareness of Christ's presence and power in our life. Then will we know if we are true Christians or

merely impostors. If we're not actively seeking to grow closer to God, we are drawing farther away from him.

#### **2 CORINTHIANS 13:8, 9**

Just as parents want their children to grow into mature adults, so Paul wanted the Corinthians to grow into mature believers. As we share the Good News, our goal should be not merely to see others profess faith or begin attending church but to see them become mature in their faith. Don't set your sights too low.

#### **2 CORINTHIANS 13:11**

Paul's closing words - what he wanted the Corinthians to remember about the needs facing their church -are still fitting for the church today. When these qualities are not present, there are problems that must be dealt with. These traits do not come to a church by glossing over problems, conflicts, and difficulties. They are not produced by neglect, denial, withdrawal, or bitterness. They are the by-products of the extremely hard work of solving problems. Just as Paul and the Corinthians had to hammer out difficulties to bring peace, so we must *apply* the principles of God's Word and not just hear them.

#### **2 CORINTHIANS 13:14**

Paul's farewell blessing invokes all three members of the Trinity: Father (God), Son (Lord Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit. Although the term *Trinity* is not explicitly used in Scripture, verses such as this one show that it was believed and experienced through knowing God's grace, love, and fellowship. See Luke 1:35 - the angel Gabriel's announcement of Jesus' birth to Mary; Matthew 3:17 - the Father's voice was heard at the baptism of Jesus; and Matthew 28:19 - Jesus' commission to the disciples.

#### **2 CORINTHIANS 13:14**

Paul was dealing with an ongoing problem in the Corinthian church. He could have refused to communicate until they cleared up their situation, but he loved them and reached out to them again with the love of Christ. Love, however, means that sometimes we must confront those we care about. Both authority and personal concern are needed in dealing with people who are ruining their lives with sin. But there are several wrong approaches in confronting others, and these can further break relationships rather than heal them.

We can be legalistic and blast people away with the laws they should be obeying. We can turn away from them because we don't want to face the situation. We can isolate them by gossiping about their problem and turning others against them as well. Or, like Paul, we can seek to build relationships by taking a better approach - sharing, communicating, and caring. This is a difficult approach that can drain us

**emotionally, but it is the best way for other people, and it is the only Christlike way to deal with others' sin.**