

PREACHING THROUGH I AND II CORINTHIANS

REQUIRED READING

To the present-day Christian, confused by many conflicting claims and urges, within the church and without, the letters to the Corinthians bring needed strength from the Lord's inspired apostle Paul. Growing out of Paul's experience and relationship with the church at Corinth, the letters meet directly the problems of the Church in a worldly setting. No person who is not familiar with them can be well-informed concerning the Lord's will for His Church.

GREAT PASSAGES

The great passages in Corinthians are not single verses easily memorized. They are grand treatments of great themes. Memorizing should be done in blocks of half a dozen verses to a chapter. Here are some of them:

Christ's Church is one—I Cor. 1:10-15

God's building—I Cor. 3:5-15

The Communion—I Cor. 10:14-22; 11:23-32

The body of Christ—I Cor. 12:12-27

The best gift is love—I Cor. 13

The resurrection—I Cor. 15

The future life—II Cor. 5:1-10

The ministry of Christ—II Cor. 5:17-21

Christian generosity—II Cor. 8:1-5

BACKGROUND

Read the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of Acts. They tell that Paul established the church at Corinth while on his second missionary journey, and that he went to Ephesus, from which city he wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians. The first letter deals with practical problems in the Corinthian church, as those problems had come to Paul's attention—factions in the church; the presence of evil-doers; marriage problems; the relationship of Christians to the pagan feasts and customs about them; the conduct of public worship; death and the resurrection.

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The second epistle, written from Macedonia several months later, deals largely with Paul's ministry as an apostle, and with the gathering of gifts for the poor in Jerusalem. This epistle answers the question, "How can one know the true servant of Christ from the false teacher?"

Sermon Outlines Provided:

- "Building the Temple" (I Cor. 3:10-17)
- "All Things Are Yours" (I Cor. 3:18-23)
- "Get in the Game" (I Cor. 9:24-27)
- "As Oft as Ye Eat" (I Cor. 11:26)
- "Where Is Thy Victory?" (I Cor. 15:54-58)
- "Heaven" (II Cor. 5:1-10)
- "The Unequal Yoke" (II Cor. 6:14-18)
- "Loans and a Gift" (II Cor. 9:8-15)
- "Reaching With the Gospel" (II Cor. 10:13-18)

Other Sermon Topics Suggested:

- "Is Christ Divided?" (I Cor. 1:10-17)
- "I Know Nothing Against Myself" (I Cor. 4:1-6)
- "Communion With Whom?" (I Cor. 10:14-22)
- "The More Excellent Way" (I Cor. 12:31 - 13:13)
- "The Uses of Adversity" (II Cor. 1:3-11)

QUESTIONS OVER I AND II CORINTHIANS

1. What was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks? (I Cor. 1:23)
2. Paul said he was determined not to know anything among the Corinthians except what? (2:2)
3. Whom does Paul say he sent to the Corinthians to remind them of Paul's work and teaching? (4:17)
4. Instead of brother going to court against a brother Paul recommends what? (6:7)
5. In I Corinthians 6:19 we read that what is the temple of the Holy Spirit?
6. If a wife's husband dies she is free to remarry, but with what restriction? (7:39)

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7. If eating meat causes our brother to stumble, what is our duty? (8:13)
8. Paul said he became all things to all men for what purpose? (9:22)
9. As often as we partake of the Lord's Supper we show forth what? (11:26)
10. In I Corinthians Paul compares the church to what? (12:13-27)
11. Which chapter in I Corinthians describes and tells the importance of love? (13)
12. Paul closes chapter 14, "Let all things be done decently" and in what? (14:40)
13. More than how many people saw the risen Lord at one time? (15:6)
14. Paul says, "Let him be anathema," for the person who does not do what? (16:22)
15. Paul said when Moses was read by the Jews what was on their hearts? (II Cor. 3:15)
16. Paul said he was willing to be absent from the body and to be what? (5:8)
17. "Be not unequally yoked with" whom? (6:14)
18. God loves what kind of a giver? (9:7)
19. Paul says some people say his letters are what? (10:10)
20. With what benediction does II Corinthians conclude? (13:14)

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BUILDING THE TEMPLE

(For the dedication of a church building.)

(I Corinthians 3:10-17)

INTRODUCTION — Congratulations on securing a good tool for your building program!

- A. The church is in a constant building program, building temples for the indwelling of God's Spirit.
- B. The material structure about us is an instrument to be used in that program.
- C. Paul wrote to the Corinthians about their own building program.

I. GOD'S TEMPLE IS YOU (vv. 16, 17).

- A. God's dwelling is in persons, not in material buildings. (See Acts 7:48; 17:24; I Cor. 6:19; II Cor. 6:16.)
- B. It is made for His occupancy and in His likeness.
- C. The temple is holy.
 - 1. Christ came to make holy people, not holy places.
 - 2. He cannot condone the occupancy of His temple by other gods.
 - 3. He cannot condone the defilement of His temple by willful sin.
 - 4. He recognizes our holiness, even if we don't; He respects us more than we often respect ourselves.

II. GOD'S TEMPLE HAS A PLAN AND A PLANNER (v. 9).

- A. The architect sees the total design.
 - 1. He knows the stresses the structure must bear.
 - 2. He provides for all the components: plumbing, wiring, heating.
 - The workman does well to follow the plan, though he may not understand.
- B. The architect knows how to make the plan work. (A visitor to a nursing home once found telephone workmen pondering a complex layout for an inter-communication system. In a few quiet sentences the visitor showed them how to hook up the system, and

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then went on. "Who is that?" a workman demanded. "Oh, just the man who dreamed up this little jewel when he was doing research and development for Bell Telephone," the owner replied. Wired up as the visitor directed, the system worked! So God in His revealed Word shows us how to order our lives. "Who is He to give orders to us?" we demand. "Oh, just the One who made the system." If we follow His directions, it will work!)

III. GOD'S TEMPLE HAS A BUILDER AND BUILDERS (v. 10).

- A. Christ himself is the ultimate builder (Matt. 16:18).
- B. Paul as an apostle served as masterbuilder of Christian lives and churches.
 - Wise workmen must respect the directives conveyed by such a one.
- C. Others must help and complete the structure.
 - 1. They must receive instruction and bear responsibility.
 - 2. They must sometimes accept correction. (The architect-overseer spots faulty workmanship and demands that it be done over.)
- D. Each of us bears responsibility in building his own life.

IV. GOD'S TEMPLE HAS A FOUNDATION THAT MUST BE LAID (vv. 10-12).

- A. Christ is the only possible foundation for a Christian life (Acts 4:11, 12).
 - A life centered and built on anything else is doomed.
- B. This is the one standard item in all Christian building.
 - A rich and amazing variety is possible as each builds on this foundation.
- C. Foundations are laid, and that requires time (v. 10; Luke 6:48).
 - 1. Church steeples have been lowered into place by helicopter; not foundations!
 - 2. Laying the Christ-foundation involves a steadily growing acquaintance with Him.

V. GOD'S TEMPLE REQUIRES QUALITY MATERIALS
(vv. 12-15).

- A. The materials will be tested by fire.
 - 1. Old Corinth had been destroyed by fire, and Paul's Corinth displayed all the varieties of remaining structures, new structures, and structures built from fragments of fire-blackened materials.
 - 2. So the Christian life will be tested and will survive, or be damaged or destroyed, as by fire at life's (or the world's) end (II Pet. 3:7-11).
 - 3. There is no fire-proof life, no fire-proof building.
— The contents, if not the structure, include flammable material.
- B. Some materials last, as gold, silver, precious stones.
 - 1. Faith, hope, and love are lasting (I Cor. 13:13).
 - 2. The Word of God: "My word shall not pass away."
 - 3. Christian influence preserved in faithful lives (I Thess. 3:8).
 - 4. "One life to live; 'twill soon be past.
What's done for Christ alone will last."
- C. Some valuable materials will be lost in the fire, as wood.
 - 1. Material substance, necessary for life and Christian service (Cf. Eph. 4:28).
 - 2. Use it wisely as an investment in things eternal.
- D. Some is worthless from the beginning and will be utterly destroyed, as hay, stubble.
 - 1. Light pastimes are gone with the moment, and may be destructive.
 - 2. The praise of men claims no standing with God, and may lead to destruction.

CONCLUSION — The material building around us is by nature temporal if not temporary.

- A. Use it wisely and carefully, but use it; perhaps use it up!
- B. Use it as an investment in building God's eternal temples—human souls. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1).

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ALL THINGS ARE YOURS

(I Corinthians 3:18-23)

INTRODUCTION — At the end of a war a sudden change makes prison camp guards into prisoners and prisoners into guards.

- A. Paul points out the danger of such trading of places between the people of God and the things which are designed to serve them. The servant becomes too soon the master, etc.
- B. Cause of division in Corinthian church was that the people had come to *belong* to their leaders.
“Ye are Christ’s.” This was written to those who had made Him Lord.

I. PAUL, APOLLOS, CEPHAS, ARE *YOURS*.

- A. The Corinthians were calling themselves by those leaders’ names, as though they belonged to them—“I am of Paul,” etc.

- B. Foolishly the church has bowed to great leaders.

Illustration—In N. Carolina certain Christian churches named their congregations for the saints. In one year we counted 8 St. James, 8 St. Pauls, 4 St. Lukes, 3 each St. John, St. Mark, St. Peter, St. Stephen; also St. Thomas, St. Matthew, St. Joseph, St. Jude, St. Mary (2), St. Rose, St. Percy and St. Galilee!

- 1. Put your tag on the great leaders, and not theirs on you!

Claim Paul’s faith, Apollos’ personality, Peter’s power.

- 2. The reformation and restoration leaders belong to us. Martin Luther’s crusading courage; Calvin’s vision of God; Knox’ zeal; John Wesley’s warm, prayer-filled life; Jacob Albright’s simple devotion; Alexander Campbell’s intelligent understanding of the Gospel; Walter Scott’s plain view of the truth; Barton Stone’s lovable Christian character.

- C. *All* are yours.

You cheat yourself if you follow only one, to learn from him.

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II. THE WORLD IS *YOURS*.

- A. On what shall we lay our hands—*not* on that which takes possession of us!
—That which one can't let go quickly is too dangerous.
- B. "Possessing our possessions lest they come to own us."
1. "I have a property that I must fix up."
2. "I'm too busy to spend time with my family."
3. "I can't leave my store."
4. "If I leave, someone will rob my hen roosts."
5. There are almost more men whom money owns than there are who own money.
(They will spend, and risk, life to gain money, and then again to save it.)

III. LIFE, DEATH, THINGS PRESENT, THINGS TO COME.

- A. Young people; life belongs to you, in Christ; and not you to it.
1. The fashion is yours to examine and perhaps enjoy; don't be a slave to it!
2. The club is yours; don't let it own you.
3. The crowd is yours—you don't belong to it!
a. With some you may keep company profitably.
b. Others are for your warning and instruction.
- B. Beware of slavery to one's own body; it belongs to you, and not you to it.
"I buffet my body and keep it in subjection" (I Cor. 9:27).
See warning to those "whose God is their belly" (Phil. 3:19).
- C. Death is yours
"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"—death is the instrument of freedom and God's presence.

IV. AND CONCLUSION —

Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

- A. This is the key to the whole passage.
B. You will belong to something "His servants ye are to whom ye lend yourself."
C. "Ye are not your own." We are bought with a price.

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GET IN THE GAME

(I Corinthians 9:24-27)

(For men's class meeting.)

INTRODUCTION —

A. College alumnus at track meet says, "I'd give every cent I own if I were young again and could run a race like that."

—But the runners themselves will soon outgrow that physical prowess.

B. There must be a game that will include more than the few for a short time. (See I Tim. 4:7, 8.)

I. GET IN THE GAME EARLY.

A. Tom Brown breaks into football his first day at Rugby.

B. Paul starts preaching before he leaves Damascus after his conversion.

C. The personal evangelist says, "Now you go and get somebody else."

D. Every notable servant of God from Moses through Paul started early.

II. EVERYBODY IS IN IT (v. 24).

A. We are not represented by champions, as David and Goliath—

In modern warfare, the entire nation is enlisted.

B. In the church, all are needed.

1. The organization—to usher, sing, pray, pay.

2. To call—not everyone will come to church until he first knows Christ.

a. Learn to introduce Christ gracefully.

b. Train callers and organize calling.

3. To serve; from taking groceries to furnishing a car to shut-ins.

4. To be responsible for teaching.

a. To learn—Be ready always to give an account.

b. To teach—either formally in class or informally in private.

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- c. To back the preacher—Never the cop-out “That is our preacher’s belief.”
- d. To check the preacher, as Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:26).

III. “NOT BEATING THE AIR.”

- A. (I recall that in my Scout football games I made every play a personal contact, and got bruised, while the opponent used his head and made plays count.)
- B. For Christ, too, the meaningful service is better than the frantic activity.

IV. RUN WITH PATIENCE.

- A. Honor “the cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 12:1ff.).
- B. “Ye were running well” (Gal. 5:7).
- C. The cross-country runner is sustained by knowing—
“The other fellow is as bad off as you are.”

V. STAY IN THE GAME.

- A. Prof. Arthur Holmes says you are not grown up until you are fifty.
- B. The coach doesn’t put the scrubs into a tough game, so don’t “step out to give the young folks a chance.”

VI. AND CONCLUSION — Finish the course.

- A. Not as Demas.
Thrice mentioned as a companion of Paul—then
“hath forsaken.”
- B. As Paul (II Tim. 4:7, 8).
- C. Rewards are for those who cross the finish line.

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AS OFT AS YE EAT

(I Corinthians 11:26)

INTRODUCTION —

This rite is typical of the whole church of Christ.

Where the church is, it is, and vice versa.

The true apostolic succession will be found in the ordinances.

I. "AS OFTEN AS YE EAT."

A. Here is an invitation to willing service.

It is not a categorical command, but a request.

John 6 presents conditions of the request.

B. The Christian is not a slave, lashed into unwilling service, but a friend, giving his all to One he loves.

C. Christ gave Himself willingly.

1. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10:18).

2. The other view of Gethsemane — He prayed that He might be spared to die.

3. "If love had not bound the Savior to the cross, the nails would never have held Him there."

II. "YE DO SHOW FORTH" — "Declare," "proclaim," "preach."

A. Every Christian becomes a preacher when the Supper is spread.

B. Why does one partake?

1. Because others do? Because it is commanded? Simply to remember a thing of the past?

2. Also to proclaim, "This happened for me."

With the acted sermon of the Supper being preached by every Christian every Lord's Day, we need to write no creeds to hold the church together.

C. How does one partake?

1. Commander Booth said of Joseph Parker "If he comes from his study and addresses his audience with light cheerfulness, you won't hear much, but if he comes thoughtfully and quietly and addresses

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the Book as though his were the vast responsibility of proclaiming its truth, then listen.”

2. He who preaches thoughtlessly does not say much.
—How much does the fact you proclaim mean to you?

III. “THE LORD’S DEATH”

- A. Here is the center of the Supper and of the Christian religion. It is made the substance of the Gospel (I Cor. 15:3, 4).
- B. Forget theology—let each theorize for himself, but not attempt to lay his thought on others.
 1. In this, the meaning of the word *communion* has sometimes been reversed, so as to be a term of division, referring to only a certain small group.
 2. Transubstantiation—not taught, but don’t divide on it. Consubstantiation—the two elements at once in the matter. Calvin’s theory of the real presence—The presence seems to be taught. Zwinglian theory of simple memorial of past event.
 3. Religious conferences meet in discussion, but split up to take “communion” in separate groups—How false to the purpose!
- C. Where theology divides, the fact unites.
 1. The Supper is centered in fact, and the fact is unchangeable.
 2. The Supper is a confession of the fact.
 3. As such it can be partaken by all, and be a uniting force on a united Christ.

IV. AND CONCLUSION — “TILL HE COME”

- A. There is prediction as well as declaration in the Supper.
- B. Again the fact is unitive and the theories divisive. Declare the fact.
- C. He who established the Supper will at that time be Host and Participant (Matt. 26:29).

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WHERE IS THY VICTORY?
(I Corinthians 15:54-58)

INTRODUCTION —

The way of the Cross a way of victory, although it seems not so.

- A. Christ's enemies were all converted or routed.
- B. It was the way looked for from the foundation.
 - 1. Death is swallowed in victory (Isa. 25:8).
God's day of jubilee fulfilled in Christ.
 - 2. Death, where is thy sting? (Hos. 13:14).
Promised salvation is accomplished.

I. DEATH IS SWALLOWED IN VICTORY.

- A. The last enemy—unconquered until Christ arose.
 - 1. Pictured as the venomous creature, inflicting poisoned and fatal wounds.
 - 2. Christ entered death once and for all.
 - 3. Promised that He should conquer death, and fulfilled promise.
- B. The last enemy for us.
 - 1. Disease is conquered by science.
 - 2. Ignorance conquered by means of communication.
 - 3. But men still helpless in the face of death.
- C. Paul realized the value of resurrection as he beheld death finally conquered.

II. GOD GIVES THE VICTORY THROUGH CHRIST.

- A. Christ's resurrection predicts our own.
 - 1. The firstfruits of them that slept.
 - 2. The farmer pulls the first ripened heads of grain.
- B. So we follow Christ to victory.
 - 1. Over sin—"I can do all things through him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).
 - 2. Over death—He returned as evidence of that victory.
(As the aged woman who would—but could not—go to see beyond the mountains, and so asked another to get the view for her.)
So Christ has gone and come back to tell us of what is there.

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C. The victory is through Christ, and not of our own selves.

1. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22).
2. He has opened the way for us, where we could not have gone.
3. "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

III. YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.

A. The seeming futility of human effort.

1. To amass wealth—came a depression.
2. To amass property—come storm and flood.
3. To gain a place in the world—no opening—What's the use?

B. Then view the risen Christ.

1. The picture of victory—survival and more.
2. The picture of a victorious Christ. Death did not end His ministry.
3. The picture of a victorious Christian—engaged in a winning cause.

C. The ultimate triumph—someone has said it:

"To see this victory accomplished and to have no part in it will be the sorest humiliation and the most painful reflection to every generous mind."

CONCLUSION —

"Where is thy victory?"

With the world which conquers Christ for a time? or
with the suffering Christ who rises from death for eternitiy?

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HEAVEN

(II Corinthians 5:1-10)

INTRODUCTION — The need for emphasis on that which is God's purpose for creation.

I. PURPOSE OF GOD (v. 5).

- A. Reasons for creation cannot be known fully except by revelation. — God made us to be with Him!
- B. "God is not willing that any should perish" (II Pet. 3:9). Heaven is the kingdom "prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).
- C. This purpose motivated Paul in the ministry.
 1. It overcame discouragement (II Cor. 4:16, 17).
 2. It directed his service to others (II Cor. 4:15).

II. PROVISION OF GOD (vv. 1, 2).

- A. Beyond the imagination (I Cor. 2:9).
(Illustration — Vernon Newland tells of trying to tell native Tibetans about America. They had neither the language nor the imagination to understand things so completely beyond their experience.)
- B. The resurrection body — "We shall be like Him" (I John 3:2).
 1. Not disembodied spirits, but recognizable persons.
 2. Neither dependent upon material bodies.
"Mortal shall have put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:52-54).
- C. The place prepared.
 1. Beggars description; but in Revelation.
"John bankrupts human language to provide a glimpse."
 2. Riches of gold and precious stone.
— The values of Heaven are immeasurably greater.
 3. Beauty of the bride.
— Where in human experience is anything more fitting?
 4. Comfort of the tears wiped away.
— How shall it be known to those who have not wept?

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111. PRESENCE OF GOD—this is central in every description (vv. 6-8).

1. “So shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thess. 4:17, 18).
2. “Having a desire to depart and to be with the Lord” (Phil. 1:20-23).
3. “That where I am there ye may be also” (John 14:2, 3).
(Illustration—The boys disliked the rich schoolmate, but liked his well stocked play room. If they could have been turned loose there without him, they would have liked it fine. So are many in respect to God.)
4. The presence of God is actually a threat to those who love Him not.

IV. PLEASING GOD—Here the purpose of man comes into harmony with God (v. 9).

1. A means of getting acquainted with Him.
(As we come to know a friend or spouse by learning and doing what pleases.)
2. “Your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58).
(Illustration—Father decided to turn his attention from matters of health to those things that will not meet with defeat. “Physical health will come to an end.” Twenty years later he found his victory of the spirit in defeat of the flesh.)

CONCLUSION —

“I know whom I have believed” (II Tim. 1:12). With that for a beginning all else that is heaven follows naturally.

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THE UNEQUAL YOKE

(II Corinthians 6:14-18)

INTRODUCTION –

Picture the camel and the donkey yoked to the plow. In Corinth, the wide divergence between Christian and heathen.

I. BE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED.

A. Friendship.

1. Sammy gets Bobby into trouble and runs. He plays according to different rules.
2. “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Prov. 13:20).
3. See Proverbs 1:10-19.

B. Schoolmates and roommates.

—Everyone knows some horrible example of pains in “room-mate-ism.”

C. Business.

1. Abe Lincoln’s partnership left him with bankruptcy and bills to pay.
2. A wise man refused partnership with one who said, “I have the experience; you have the money.” “No!” he said, “Soon I’d have the experience and you’d have the money.”

D. Marriage.

1. The woman carries the load, while the man does as he pleases, unkindly, or
2. The man left with a family of children.
In each case, the believer is imposed upon by one who operates under other rules.

But there is an even more serious side of the matter:

11. COME OUT AND BE SEPARATE.

A. The theme of all God’s dealings with His people.

1. Noah; Abraham; the children of Israel;
“Ye shall not be like the nations round about”; serve their gods; do as they.

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“Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:14).

B. Real danger is that the Christian partner will lose hold on Christ.

“It was just a fight every time I went to church, so I gave it up.”

C. How much separate?

I Cor. 5:9-11 directs refusal of communion with the flagrant sinner.

Let it be known that this is no part of Christianity.

III. WHAT FELLOWSHIP HAVE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND INIQUITY?

(*Belial*, “worthlessness.”)

A. Amos “How can two walk together except they be agreed?”

—As far as men go together, they must be going the same way; when one changes direction, they must part.

B. Ordinary business and social contact can be carried on with most people.

—the more intimate and constant the contact, the more agreement is required—and developed.

C. With unbelievers Christians can not have, must not have, the agreement necessary for partnership.

CONCLUSION — “I will be to you a father.”

A preacher’s teen-age boy comes home in bitterness—the gang doesn’t want the preacher’s kids around. Then he considers, and says at last, “But it’s worth it to come home to a Dad and Mother like you!”

What separation is it worth now to come home to God as our Father?

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LOANS AND A GIFT

(II Corinthians 9:8-15)

INTRODUCTION — Thanksgiving.

It is particularly an American institution, with its thanks expressed for: material blessings, a good crop, a great land in which to build a great nation, the nation itself, and life and health. But all these are mere loans.

I. ALL OF THIS THANKSGIVING IS FOR LOANS.

A. Material blessings—a good crop (vv. 9, 10).

1. Story of the man whose fields brought forth plentifully.

“Then whose shall these things be?” They are no longer his (Luke 12:16-21).

2. “We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (I Tim. 6:7).

3. “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

B. The great land is also a loan.

1. Its life span is longer than that of the individual only by comparison.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (II Pet. 3:10).

2. If the earth is to come and go without anything further, what is the purpose to creation?

C. The nation is a loan.

1. The tenure of the enjoyment of the loan depends on how it is used.

2. Many nations have thought themselves imperishable.

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

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Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on those lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away!

3. Now we would warn that the seeds of decay which honeycombed the Roman Empire and caused it to crumble—liquor, luxury, immorality,—are sown in the U.S. some 400 years earlier in its national life, and whereas Rome lasted some 1250 years, we are not well started.

D. Life and health are loans.

1. It is only a blind and foolish optimism which makes us say that all will be well, and that we shall recover perfectly from every ill.
2. As national life, this may be lengthened and made more enjoyable by care.
3. But the loan will be recalled soon or late, in complete physical defeat.

II. CHRIST WITH THE THINGS WHICH HE GIVES, IS THE ONLY GIFT.

- A. Given from above, He gave himself completely in life.
- B. His body and the cross, He made the giving complete with a prayer.
- C. Resurrected, he made it plain that that, too, was for us.
- D. Ascended, He is still ours, at the right hand of God making intercession for us.
- E. The life, love, joy, peace, temperance, patience, meekness, all abide.

CONCLUSION — the non-Christian has no gift from God. Let us accept the Gift with the loans.

PREACHING THROUGH II CORINTHIANS
REACHING WITH THE GOSPEL
(II Corinthians 10:13-18)

INTRODUCTION —

- A. Present world contacts are bringing Christianity into collision with other religions. It is charged that the Christian overreaches himself in his claims for Christ.
 - 1. Collision with atheism— itself an aggressive religion.
 - 2. Collision with agnosticism— a part of human pride.
 - 3. Collision with world religions, driven into contact for mutual protection against communism.
 - 4. Collision with denominationalism, with teachings so near the truth.
- B. Bold claims are inherent to Christianity.
Half measures will not accomplish what it proposes to do.
- C. Paul, in his ministry to Corinth, collided with the ego of some there.
They charged him with overreaching his rightful authority.

I. WE MAKE NO CLAIMS LARGER THAN OUR
ASSIGNMENT (v. 13).

- A. Paul had assignment as apostle to the Gentiles. That took in Corinth.
 - 1. Assignment given at the time of his conversion (Acts 26:16-18).
 - 2. Re-affirmed in vision at Jerusalem (Acts 22:17-21).
Positive witness indicated.
 - 3. Recognized by the other apostles (Gal. 2:7-9).
Demands and direction given.
- B. Christians have an assignment to the world.
 - 1. Inclusive of the whole world; not to be limited by agreement.
 - 2. Inclusive of all people, economically, socially, intellectually, morally.
 - 3. Includes the whole of every man; total commitment totally accepted— unconditional surrender.

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE

II. WE MAKE NO CLAIMS LARGER THAN DEMONSTRATED ACCOMPLISHMENTS (v. 14).

A. Paul had reached to the Corinthians.

1. Geographically, the journey took longer than to any place on earth now—the westward limit of Christian invasion to the time.
2. Morally—if Corinth could be reached, any could be.
3. Religiously—The revealed faith separated from the religions. —Accomplished at a cost: (11:23-28).

B. The church has accomplished much.

1. Probably no place is harder to reach than Tibet and upper Burma have been.
—Yet there are places unreached.
2. No convert more improbable than Augustine.
—Yet such conversions are all too few.
3. The town drunk becomes mayor, beginning with conversion to Christ.
—Yet the demonstration is incomplete.

III. WE MAKE NO CLAIMS LARGER THAN THE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE (v. 16).

A. Paul's self-prediction: "We shall be enlarged by you."

1. No cause for satisfaction or basis of development in the easy way.
Paul no seagull following a pelican for a free meal.
2. The reaching developed the reach.
"Reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark . . ." (Phil. 3:13, 14).

B. Possibilities in them.

1. "When your faith is increased" "Grow in grace . . ." (II Pet. 3:18).
2. ". . . May grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15).

C. Possibilities beyond them—"To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you."

IV. AND CONCLUSION — WE MAKE NO CLAIMS LARGER THAN OUR LORD (v. 17).

Here arises the balance between humility (not ourselves) and courageous boldness (II Cor. 4:5).