

# **1 and 2 Corinthians**

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# 1 Corinthians

## Greetings from Paul

**1** Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

**2**To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

**3**Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Thanksgiving

**4**I always thank my God for you because of the grace He has given you in Christ Jesus. **5**For in Him you have been enriched in every way, in all speech and all knowledge, **6**because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you.

**7**Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. **8**He will sustain you to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9**God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

## Unity in the Church

**10**I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree together, so that there may be

no divisions among you and that you may be united in mind and conviction. <sup>11</sup>My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. <sup>12</sup>What I mean is this: Individuals among you are saying, "I follow Paul," "I follow Apollos," "I follow Cephas,"<sup>a</sup> or "I follow Christ."

<sup>13</sup>Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup>I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup>so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. <sup>16</sup>Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that I do not remember baptizing anyone else. <sup>17</sup>For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with eloquent words of wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

### **The Message of the Cross**

<sup>18</sup>For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;  
the intelligence of the intelligent I will  
frustrate."<sup>b</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

<sup>a</sup> 12 That is, *Peter*    <sup>b</sup> 19 Isaiah 29:14

<sup>22</sup>Jews demand signs and Greeks search for wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

<sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

### **Wisdom from God**

<sup>26</sup>Brothers, consider the time of your calling: Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were powerful; not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup>He chose the lowly and despised things of the world, and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no one may boast in His presence.

<sup>30</sup>It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God: our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. <sup>31</sup>Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."<sup>a</sup>

### **Paul's Message by the Spirit's Power**

**2** When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>2</sup>For I decided to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. <sup>31</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 31 Jeremiah 9:24

came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. <sup>4</sup>My message and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup>so that your faith would not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

### **Spiritual Wisdom**

<sup>6</sup>Among the mature, however, we speak a message of wisdom—but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup>No, we speak of the mysterious and hidden wisdom of God, which He destined for our glory before time began. <sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understood it. For if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>Rather, as it is written:

“No eye has seen,  
no ear has heard,  
no heart has imagined,  
what God has prepared for those who love Him.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>10</sup>But God has revealed it to us by the Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup>For who among men knows the thoughts of man except his own spirit within him? So too, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. <sup>13</sup>And this is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

<sup>a</sup> 9 Isaiah 64:4



<sup>14</sup>The natural man does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. For they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup>The spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is not subject to anyone's judgment. <sup>16</sup>"For who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to instruct Him?"<sup>a</sup> But we have the mind of Christ.

### God's Fellow Workers

**3** Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual, but as worldly—as infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for solid food. In fact, you are still not ready, <sup>3</sup>for you are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and dissension among you, are you not worldly? Are you not walking in the way of man? <sup>4</sup>For when one of you says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

<sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? They are servants through whom you believed, as the Lord has assigned to each his role. <sup>6</sup>I planted the seed and Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. <sup>7</sup>So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. <sup>8</sup>He who plants and he who waters are one in purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. <sup>9</sup>For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

### Christ Our Foundation

<sup>10</sup>By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise master builder, and someone else is building on it. But

<sup>a</sup> 16 Isaiah 40:13

each one must be careful how he builds. <sup>11</sup>For no one can lay a foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

<sup>12</sup>If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, <sup>13</sup>his workmanship will be evident, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will prove the quality of each man's work. <sup>14</sup>If what he has built survives, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup>If it is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as one being snatched from the fire.

### **You are God's Temple**

<sup>16</sup>Do you not know that you yourselves are God's temple, and that God's Spirit dwells in you? <sup>17</sup>If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

### **Worldly Wisdom**

<sup>18</sup>Let no one deceive himself. If any of you thinks he is wise in this age, he should become a fool, so that he may become wise. <sup>19</sup>For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness."<sup>a</sup> <sup>20</sup>And again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."<sup>b</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Therefore stop boasting in men. All things are yours, <sup>22</sup>whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas<sup>c</sup> or the world or life or death or the present or the future. All of them belong to you, <sup>23</sup>and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

<sup>a</sup> 19 Job 5:13    <sup>b</sup> 20 Psalm 94:11    <sup>c</sup> 22 That is, Peter

## Servants of Christ

**4** So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup>Now it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

<sup>3</sup>I care very little, however, if I am judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. <sup>4</sup>My conscience is clear, but that does not vindicate me. It is the Lord who judges me.

<sup>5</sup>Therefore judge nothing before the proper time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

## Fools for Christ

<sup>6</sup>Brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us not to go beyond what is written. Then you will not take pride in one man over another. <sup>7</sup>For who makes you so superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

<sup>8</sup>Already you have all you want. Already you have become rich. Without us, you have become kings. How I wish you really were kings, so that we might be kings with you. <sup>9</sup>For it seems to me that God has displayed us apostles at the end of the procession, like prisoners appointed for death. We have become a spectacle to the whole world, to angels as well as to men.

<sup>10</sup>We are fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are honored, but we are dishonored. <sup>11</sup>To this very hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clad, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. <sup>12</sup>We work hard with our own hands. When we are vilified, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; <sup>13</sup>when we are slandered, we answer gently. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.

### Paul Warns His Children

<sup>14</sup>I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you as my beloved children. <sup>15</sup>Even if you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. <sup>16</sup>Therefore I urge you to imitate me. <sup>17</sup>That is why I have sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus,<sup>a</sup> which is exactly what I teach everywhere in every church.

<sup>18</sup>Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. <sup>19</sup>But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only what these arrogant people are saying, but what power they have. <sup>20</sup>For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. <sup>21</sup>Which do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and with a gentle spirit?

### Immorality Rebuked

**5** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is intolerable even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. <sup>2</sup>And you are

<sup>a</sup> 17 BYZ and TR *my way of life in Christ*,

proud! Shouldn't you rather have been stricken with grief and removed from your fellowship the man who did this?

<sup>3</sup>Although I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit, and I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. <sup>4</sup>When you are gathered in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, along with the power of the Lord Jesus, <sup>5</sup>hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? <sup>7</sup>Get rid of the old yeast, that you may be a new unleavened batch, as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>Therefore let us keep the festival, not with the old bread, leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and of truth.

### **Expel the Immoral Brother**

<sup>9</sup>I wrote you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. <sup>10</sup>I was not including the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. <sup>11</sup>But now I am writing you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a verbal abuser, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

<sup>12</sup>What business of mine is it to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? <sup>13</sup>God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 5 BYZ and TR *the Lord Jesus*    <sup>b</sup> 13 Deuteronomy 17:7

## Lawsuits among Believers

**6** If any of you has a grievance against another, how dare he go to law before the unrighteous instead of before the saints! <sup>2</sup>Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

<sup>4</sup>So if you need to settle everyday matters, do you appoint as judges those of no standing in the church? <sup>5</sup>I say this to your shame. Is there really no one among you wise enough to arbitrate between his brothers? <sup>6</sup>Instead, one brother goes to law against another, and this in front of unbelievers!

<sup>7</sup>The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you are thoroughly defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? <sup>8</sup>Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, even against your own brothers!

## Members of Christ

<sup>9</sup>Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who submit to or perform homosexual acts, <sup>10</sup>nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor verbal abusers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

<sup>12</sup>“Everything is permissible for me,” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me,” but I will not be mastered by anything. <sup>13</sup>“Food for the stomach and the stomach for food,” but God will destroy them both. The body is not intended for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup>By His power God raised the Lord from the dead, and He will raise us also.

<sup>15</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup>Or don’t you know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”<sup>a</sup> <sup>17</sup>But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in spirit.

### **The Temple of the Holy Spirit**

<sup>18</sup>Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a man can commit is outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup>you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.<sup>b</sup>

### **Principles of Marriage**

**7** Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good to abstain from sexual relations. <sup>2</sup>But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.

<sup>a</sup> 16 Genesis 2:24    <sup>b</sup> 20 BYZ, TR include *and with your spirit, which belong to God*

<sup>3</sup>The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup>The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife.

<sup>5</sup>Do not deprive one another, except by mutual consent for a limited time, so you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again, so that Satan will not tempt you through your lack of self-control. <sup>6</sup>I say this as a concession, not as a command. <sup>7</sup>I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

<sup>8</sup>Now to the unmarried and widows I say this: It is good for them to remain unmarried, as I am. <sup>9</sup>But if they cannot control themselves, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

<sup>10</sup>To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. <sup>11</sup>But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

<sup>12</sup>To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If a brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. <sup>13</sup>And if a woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. <sup>14</sup>For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.



<sup>15</sup>But if the unbeliever leaves, let him go. The believing brother or sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you<sup>a</sup> to live in peace. <sup>16</sup>How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

### **Live Your Calling**

<sup>17</sup>Regardless, each one should lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is what I prescribe in all the churches. <sup>18</sup>Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man still uncircumcised when called? He should not be circumcised. <sup>19</sup>Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commandments is what matters.

<sup>20</sup>Each one should remain in the situation he was in when he was called. <sup>21</sup>Were you a slave when you were called? Do not let it concern you, but if you can gain your freedom, take the opportunity. <sup>22</sup>For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman. Conversely, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave.

<sup>23</sup>You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

<sup>24</sup>Brothers, each one should remain in the situation he was in when God called him.

### **The Unmarried and Widowed**

<sup>25</sup>Now about virgins, I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. <sup>26</sup>Because of the present<sup>b</sup> crisis, I think it is

<sup>a</sup> 15 SBL, BYZ, and TR *us*    <sup>b</sup> 26 Or *impending*

good for a man to remain as he is. <sup>27</sup>Are you committed to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you free of commitment? Do not look for a wife. <sup>28</sup>But if you do marry, you have not sinned. And if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

<sup>29</sup>What I am saying, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; <sup>30</sup>those who weep, as if they did not; those who are joyful, as if they were not; those who make a purchase, as if they had nothing; <sup>31</sup>and those who use the things of this world, as if not dependent on them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

<sup>32</sup>I want you to be free from concern. The unmarried man is concerned about the work of the Lord, how he can please the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But the married man is concerned about the affairs of this world, how he can please his wife, <sup>34</sup>and his interests are divided. The unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the work of the Lord, how she can be holy in both body and spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world, how she can please her husband.

<sup>35</sup>I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but in order to promote proper decorum and undivided devotion to the Lord.

<sup>36</sup>However, if someone thinks he is acting inappropriately toward his betrothed, and if she is beyond her youth and they ought to marry, let him do as he wishes; he is not sinning; they should get married. <sup>37</sup>But the man who is firmly

established in his heart and under no constraint, with control over his will and resolve in his heart not to marry the virgin, he will do well.

<sup>38</sup>So then, he who marries the virgin does well, but he who does not marry her does even better.

<sup>39</sup>A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, as long as he belongs to the Lord. <sup>40</sup>In my judgment, however, she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

### **Food Sacrificed to Idols**

**8** Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup>The one who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. <sup>3</sup>But the one who loves God is known by God.

<sup>4</sup>So about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world, and that there is no God but one. <sup>5</sup>For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many so-called gods and lords), <sup>6</sup>yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we exist. And there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we exist.

<sup>7</sup>But not everyone has this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that they eat such food as if it were sacrificed to an idol. And since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. <sup>8</sup>But food does not bring us closer to

God: We are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

<sup>9</sup>Be careful, however, that your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup>For if someone with a weak conscience sees you who are well informed eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged to eat food sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup>So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. <sup>12</sup>By sinning against your brothers in this way and wounding their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to stumble.

### **The Rights of an Apostle**

**9** Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you yourselves not my workmanship in the Lord? <sup>2</sup>Even if I am not an apostle to others, surely I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

<sup>3</sup>This is my defense to those who scrutinize me: <sup>4</sup>Have we no right to food and to drink? <sup>5</sup>Have we no right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas?<sup>a</sup> <sup>6</sup>Or are Barnabas and I the only apostles who must work for a living?

<sup>7</sup>Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Who tends a flock and does not drink of its milk?

<sup>a</sup> 5 That is, Peter

<sup>8</sup>Do I say this from a human perspective? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? <sup>9</sup>For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."<sup>a</sup> Is it about oxen that God is concerned? <sup>10</sup>Isn't He actually speaking on our behalf? Indeed, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they should also expect to share in the harvest.

<sup>11</sup>If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much for us to reap a material harvest from you? <sup>12</sup>If others have this right to your support, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not exercise this right. Instead, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.

<sup>13</sup>Do you not know that those who work in the temple eat of its food, and those who serve at the altar partake of its offerings? <sup>14</sup>In the same way, the Lord has prescribed that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. <sup>15</sup>But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this to suggest that something be done for me. Indeed, I would rather die than for anyone to nullify my boast.

<sup>16</sup>Yet when I preach the gospel, I have no reason to boast, because I am obligated to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! <sup>17</sup>If my preaching is voluntary, I have a reward. But if it is not voluntary, I am still entrusted with a responsibility. <sup>18</sup>What then is my reward? That in preaching

<sup>a</sup> 9 Deuteronomy 25:4

the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not use up my rights in preaching it.

### **Paul the Servant to All**

<sup>19</sup>Though I am free of obligation to anyone, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. <sup>20</sup>To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the Law I became like one under the Law (though I myself am not under the Law), to win those under the Law. <sup>21</sup>To those without the Law I became like one without the Law (though I am not outside the law of God but am under the law of Christ), to win those without the Law. <sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some of them.

<sup>23</sup>I do all this for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

### **Run Your Race to Win**

<sup>24</sup>Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way as to take the prize. <sup>25</sup>Everyone who competes in the games trains with strict discipline. They do it for a crown that is perishable, but we do it for a crown that is imperishable. <sup>26</sup>Therefore I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight like I am beating the air. <sup>27</sup>No, I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

## Warnings from Israel's Past

**10** I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud, and that they all passed through the sea. <sup>2</sup>They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. <sup>3</sup>They all ate the same spiritual food <sup>4</sup>and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup>These things took place as examples to keep us from craving evil things as they did. <sup>7</sup>Do not be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written: "The people sat down to eat and to drink, and got up to revel in idolatry."<sup>a</sup> <sup>8</sup>We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. <sup>9</sup>We should not test Christ,<sup>b</sup> as some of them did, and were killed by snakes. <sup>10</sup>And do not complain, as some of them did, and were killed by the destroying angel.

<sup>11</sup>Now these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. <sup>12</sup>So the one who thinks he is standing firm should be careful not to fall. <sup>13</sup>No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide an escape, so that you can stand up under it.

<sup>a</sup> 7 Exodus 32:6    <sup>b</sup> 9 WH, NE, and Tischendorf *test the Lord*

## Flee from Idolatry

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. <sup>15</sup>I speak to reasonable people; judge for yourselves what I say. <sup>16</sup>Is not the cup of blessing that we bless a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup>Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf.

<sup>18</sup>Consider the people of Israel: Are not those who eat the sacrifices fellow partakers in the altar? <sup>19</sup>Am I suggesting, then, that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? <sup>20</sup>No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God. And I do not want you to be participants with demons. <sup>21</sup>You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot partake in the table of the Lord and the table of demons too. <sup>22</sup>Are we trying to provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

## All to God's Glory

<sup>23</sup>“Everything is permissible,” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible,” but not everything is edifying. <sup>24</sup>No one should seek his own good, but the good of others.

<sup>25</sup>Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, <sup>26</sup>for, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>27</sup>If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat anything set before you without raising questions of

<sup>a</sup> 26 Psalm 24:1



conscience. <sup>28</sup>But if someone tells you, “This food was offered to idols,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience—<sup>a</sup><sup>29</sup>the other one’s conscience, I mean, not your own. For why should my freedom be determined by someone else’s conscience? <sup>30</sup>If I partake in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

<sup>31</sup>So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. <sup>32</sup>Do not become a stumbling block, whether to Jews or Greeks or the church of God, <sup>33</sup>just as I try to please everyone in all I do. For I am not seeking my own good, but the good of many, that they may be saved.

## Roles in Worship

**11** You are to imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.

<sup>2</sup>Now I commend you for remembering me in everything and for maintaining the traditions, just as I passed them on to you. <sup>3</sup>But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

<sup>4</sup>Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. <sup>5</sup>And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for it is just as if her head were shaved. <sup>6</sup>If a woman does not cover her head, let her hair be cut off. And if it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head.

<sup>a</sup> 28 BYZ and TR *and for the sake of conscience, for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof*

<sup>7</sup>A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. <sup>8</sup>For man did not come from woman, but woman from man. <sup>9</sup>Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. <sup>10</sup>For this reason a woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels.

<sup>11</sup>In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. <sup>12</sup>For just as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

<sup>13</sup>Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? <sup>14</sup>Doesn't nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, <sup>15</sup>but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. <sup>16</sup>If anyone is inclined to dispute this, we have no other practice, nor do the churches of God.

### **Sharing in the Lord's Supper**

<sup>17</sup>In the following instructions I have no praise to offer, because your gatherings do more harm than good. <sup>18</sup>First of all, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. <sup>19</sup>And indeed, there must be differences among you to show which of you are approved.

<sup>20</sup>Now then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat. <sup>21</sup>For as you eat, many of you proceed with your own meal to the exclusion of others. While one remains hungry, another gets drunk. <sup>22</sup>Don't you have your own homes in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise

the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What can I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Of course not!

<sup>23</sup>For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: that the Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, <sup>24</sup>and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you;<sup>a</sup> do this in remembrance of Me." <sup>25</sup>In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." <sup>26</sup>For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

<sup>27</sup>Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup>Each one must examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. <sup>29</sup>For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup>That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

<sup>31</sup>Now if we judged ourselves properly, we would not come under judgment. <sup>32</sup>But when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

<sup>33</sup>So, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. <sup>34</sup>If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you come together it will not result in judgment. And when I come, I will give instructions about the remaining matters.

<sup>a</sup> 24 BYZ and TR *which is broken for you*

## Spiritual Gifts

**12** Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup>You know that when you were pagans, you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. <sup>3</sup>Therefore I inform you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup>There are different gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup>There are different ministries, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different ways of working, but the same God works all things in all men.

<sup>7</sup>Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup>To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in various tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who apportions them to each one as He determines.

## The Body of Christ

<sup>12</sup>The body is a unit, though it is comprised of many parts. And although its parts are many, they all form one body. So it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given one Spirit to drink.

<sup>14</sup>For the body does not consist of one part, but of many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not

belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

<sup>18</sup>But in fact, God has arranged the members of the body, every one of them, according to His design. <sup>19</sup>If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

<sup>21</sup>The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you." Nor can the head say to the feet, "I do not need you." <sup>22</sup>On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup>and the parts we consider less honorable, we treat with greater honor. And our unpresentable parts are treated with special modesty, <sup>24</sup>whereas our presentable parts have no such need.

But God has composed the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, <sup>25</sup>so that there should be no division in the body, but that its members should have mutual concern for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

### **The Greater Gifts**

<sup>27</sup>Now you are the body of Christ, and each of you is a member of it. <sup>28</sup>And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, and those with gifts of healing, helping, administration, and various tongues. <sup>29</sup>Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup>Do

all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup>But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

And now I will show you a way that is beyond comparison.

## Love

**13** If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a ringing gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have absolute faith so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give all I possess to the poor and exult in the surrender of my body,<sup>a</sup> but have not love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup>It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no account of wrongs. <sup>6</sup>Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup>It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

<sup>8</sup>Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be restrained; where there is knowledge, it will be dismissed. <sup>9</sup>For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup>but when the perfect comes, the partial passes away.

<sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I set aside childish ways. <sup>12</sup>Now we see but a dim reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

<sup>a</sup> 3 SBL, NE, BYZ, and TR *surrender my body to be burned*

<sup>13</sup>And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love.

## Prophecy and Tongues

**14** Earnestly pursue love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. <sup>2</sup>For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries in the Spirit. <sup>3</sup>But he who prophesies speaks to men for their edification, encouragement, and comfort. <sup>4</sup>The one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but the one who prophesies edifies the church.

<sup>5</sup>I wish that all of you could speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.

<sup>6</sup>Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? <sup>7</sup>Even in the case of lifeless instruments, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone recognize the tune they are playing unless the notes are distinct? <sup>8</sup>Again, if the trumpet sounds a muffled call, who will prepare for battle? <sup>9</sup>So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air.

<sup>10</sup>Assuredly, there are many different languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. <sup>11</sup>If, then, I do not know the meaning of someone's language, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me.

<sup>12</sup>It is the same with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, strive to excel in gifts that build up the church. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. <sup>14</sup>For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.

<sup>15</sup>What then shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. <sup>16</sup>Otherwise, if you speak a blessing in spirit, how can someone who is uninstructed say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? <sup>17</sup>You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other one is not edified.

<sup>18</sup>I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. <sup>19</sup>But in the church, I would rather speak five coherent words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

<sup>20</sup>Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. <sup>21</sup>It is written in the Law:

“By strange tongues  
and foreign lips  
I will speak to this people,  
but even then they will not listen to Me,  
says the Lord.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers. Prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers.

<sup>a</sup> 21 Isaiah 28:11,12



<sup>23</sup>So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who are uninstructed or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your minds? <sup>24</sup>But if an unbeliever or uninstructed person comes in while everyone is prophesying, he will be convicted and called to account by all, <sup>25</sup>and the secrets of his heart will be revealed. So he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, "God is truly among you!"

### **Orderly Worship**

<sup>26</sup>What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a psalm or a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. All of these must be done to build up the church.

<sup>27</sup>If anyone speaks in a tongue, two, or at most three, should speak in turn, and someone must interpret. <sup>28</sup>But if there is no interpreter, he should remain silent in the church and speak only to himself and God.

<sup>29</sup>Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. <sup>30</sup>And if a revelation comes to someone who is seated, the first speaker should hold his peace. <sup>31</sup>For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. <sup>32</sup>The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. <sup>33</sup>For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace.

As in all the congregations of the saints, <sup>34</sup>women are to be silent in the churches. They are not permitted to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. <sup>35</sup>If they wish to

inquire about something, they are to ask their own husbands at home; for it is dishonorable for a woman to speak in the church.

<sup>36</sup>Did God's word originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached? <sup>37</sup>If anyone considers himself a prophet or spiritual person, let him acknowledge that what I am writing you is the Lord's command. <sup>38</sup>But if anyone ignores this, he himself will be ignored.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>39</sup>So, my brothers, be eager to prophesy and do not forbid speaking in tongues. <sup>40</sup>But everything must be done in a proper and orderly manner.

### The Resurrection of Christ

**15** Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, and in which you stand firm. <sup>2</sup>By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

<sup>3</sup>For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that He appeared to Cephas<sup>b</sup> and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup>After that, He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup>Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup>And last of all He appeared to me also, as to one of untimely birth.

<sup>a</sup> 38 BYZ and TR *let him be ignorant*    <sup>b</sup> 5 That is, Peter

<sup>9</sup>For I am the least of the apostles and am unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup>But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not in vain. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. <sup>11</sup>Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

### **The Resurrection of the Dead**

<sup>12</sup>But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup>If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. <sup>14</sup>And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is worthless, and so is your faith. <sup>15</sup>In that case, we are also exposed as false witnesses about God. For we have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead, but He did not raise Him if in fact the dead are not raised.

<sup>16</sup>For if the dead are not raised, then not even Christ has been raised. <sup>17</sup>And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup>Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup>If our hope in Christ is for this life alone, we are to be pitied more than all men.

### **The Order of Resurrection**

<sup>20</sup>But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup>For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes

also through a man. <sup>22</sup>For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup>But each in his own turn: Christ the firstfruits; then at His coming, those who belong to Him.

<sup>24</sup>Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power. <sup>25</sup>For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. <sup>26</sup>The last enemy to be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup>For "God has put everything under His feet."<sup>a</sup> Now when it says that everything has been put under Him, this clearly does not include the One who put everything under Him. <sup>28</sup>And when all things have been subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will be made subject to Him who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all.

<sup>29</sup>If these things are not so, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? <sup>30</sup>And why do we endanger ourselves every hour? <sup>31</sup>I face death every day, brothers, as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. <sup>32</sup>If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for human motives, what did I gain? If the dead are not raised,

"Let us eat and drink,  
for tomorrow we die."<sup>b</sup>

<sup>33</sup>Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good character."<sup>c</sup> <sup>34</sup>Sober up as you ought, and stop sinning; for some of you are ignorant of God. I say this to your shame.

<sup>a</sup> 27 Psalm 8:6    <sup>b</sup> 32 Isaiah 22:13    <sup>c</sup> 33 Probably a quote from the Greek comedy 'Thais' by Menander

## The Resurrection Body

<sup>35</sup>But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" <sup>36</sup>You fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. <sup>37</sup>And what you sow is not the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or something else. <sup>38</sup>But God gives it a body as He has designed, and to each kind of seed He gives its own body.

<sup>39</sup>Not all flesh is the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another, and fish another. <sup>40</sup>There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But the splendor of the heavenly bodies is of one degree, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is of another. <sup>41</sup>The sun has one degree of splendor, the moon another, and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

<sup>42</sup>So will it be with the resurrection of the dead: What is sown is perishable; it is raised imperishable. <sup>43</sup>It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup>It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup>So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being;"<sup>a</sup> the last Adam a life-giving spirit.

<sup>46</sup>The spiritual, however, was not first, but the natural, and then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup>The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. <sup>48</sup>As was the earthly man, so also are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup>And

<sup>a</sup> 45 Genesis 2:7

just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so also shall we bear the likeness of the heavenly man.

### **Where, O Death, is Your Victory?**

<sup>50</sup>Now I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

<sup>51</sup>Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— <sup>52</sup>in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. <sup>53</sup>For the perishable must be clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

<sup>54</sup>When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come to pass: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>55</sup>“Where, O death, is your victory?  
Where, O death, is your sting?”<sup>b</sup>

<sup>56</sup>The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law. <sup>57</sup>But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

<sup>58</sup>Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast and immovable. Always excel in the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

<sup>a</sup> 54 Isaiah 25:8    <sup>b</sup> 55 Hosea 13:14

## The Collection for the Saints

**16** Now about the collection for the saints, you are to do as I directed the churches of Galatia: <sup>2</sup>On the first day of every week, each of you should set aside a portion of his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will be needed. <sup>3</sup>Then, on my arrival, I will send letters with those you recommend to carry your gift to Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>And if it is advisable for me to go also, they can travel with me.

## Paul's Travel Plans

<sup>5</sup>After I go through Macedonia, however, I will come to you; for I will be going through Macedonia. <sup>6</sup>Perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I may go. <sup>7</sup>For I do not want to see you now only in passing; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. <sup>8</sup>But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, <sup>9</sup>because a great door for effective work has opened to me, even though many oppose me.

## Timothy Commended

<sup>10</sup>If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is doing the Lord's work, just as I am. <sup>11</sup>No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he can return to me, for I am expecting him along with the brothers.

<sup>12</sup>Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was not at all inclined to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.

## Concluding Exhortations

<sup>13</sup>Be on the alert. Stand firm in the faith. Be men of courage. Be strong. <sup>14</sup>Do everything in love.

<sup>15</sup>You know that Stephanas and his household were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. Now I urge you, brothers, <sup>16</sup>to submit to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer.

<sup>17</sup>I am glad that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus have arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. <sup>18</sup>For they refreshed my spirit and yours as well. Show your appreciation, therefore, to such men.

## Final Greetings

<sup>19</sup>The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings.

Aquila and Prisca<sup>a</sup> greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house.

<sup>20</sup>All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

<sup>21</sup>This greeting is in my own hand—Paul.

<sup>22</sup>If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be under a divine curse. Come, O Lord!<sup>b</sup>

<sup>23</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

<sup>24</sup>My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

Amen.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 19 Or *Priscilla*    <sup>b</sup> 22 Greek *Maranatha* (a transliteration of Aramaic)

<sup>c</sup> 24 SBL, WH, and NA do not include *Amen*.



# 2 Corinthians

## Paul Greets the Corinthians

**1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia:

<sup>2</sup>Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## The God of All Comfort

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup>who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. <sup>5</sup>For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

<sup>6</sup>If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which accomplishes in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we experience. <sup>7</sup>And our hope for you is sure, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you will share in our comfort.

<sup>8</sup>We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the hardships we encountered in the province of Asia. We were under a burden far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup>Indeed, we felt we were under the sentence of death, in order that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God, who raises the dead.

<sup>10</sup>He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us. In Him we have placed our hope that He will yet again deliver us, <sup>11</sup>as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the favor shown us in answer to their prayers.

### **Paul's Change of Plans**

<sup>12</sup>And this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in relation to you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God—not in worldly wisdom, but in the grace of God. <sup>13</sup>For we do not write you anything that is beyond your ability to read and understand. And I hope that you will understand completely, <sup>14</sup>as you have already understood us in part, so that you may boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of our Lord Jesus.

<sup>15</sup>Confident of this, I planned to visit you first, so that you might receive a double blessing. <sup>16</sup>I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to return to you from Macedonia, and then to have you help me on my way to Judea.

<sup>17</sup>When I planned this, did I do it carelessly? Or do I make my plans by human standards, so as to say “Yes, yes” when I really mean “No, no”? <sup>18</sup>But as surely as God is faithful,

our message to you is not “Yes” and “No.” <sup>19</sup>For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed among you by me and Silvanus<sup>a</sup> and Timothy, was not “Yes” and “No,” but in Him it has always been “Yes.” <sup>20</sup>For all the promises of God are “Yes” in Christ. And so through Him, our “Amen” is spoken to the glory of God.

<sup>21</sup>Now it is God who establishes both us and you in Christ. He anointed us, <sup>22</sup>placed His seal on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a pledge of what is to come. <sup>23</sup>I call God as my witness that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. <sup>24</sup>Not that we lord it over your faith, but we are fellow workers with you for your joy, because it is by faith that you stand firm.

### Reaffirm Your Love

**2** So I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. <sup>2</sup>For if I grieve you, who is left to cheer me but those whom I have grieved? <sup>3</sup>I wrote as I did so that on my arrival I would not be saddened by those who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would share my joy. <sup>4</sup>For through many tears I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart, not to grieve you but to let you know how much I love you.

<sup>5</sup>Now if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you—to some degree, not to overstate it. <sup>6</sup>The punishment imposed on him by the majority is sufficient for him. <sup>7</sup>So instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. <sup>8</sup>Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

<sup>a</sup> 19 That is, Silas

<sup>9</sup>My purpose in writing you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. <sup>10</sup>If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And if I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven it in the presence of Christ for your sake, <sup>11</sup>in order that Satan should not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

### **Triumph in Christ**

<sup>12</sup>Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and a door stood open for me in the Lord, <sup>13</sup>I had no peace in my spirit, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.

<sup>14</sup>But thanks be to God, who always leads us triumphantly as captives in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. <sup>15</sup>For we are to God the sweet aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup>To the one, we are an odor of death and demise; to the other, a fragrance that brings life. And who is qualified for such a task?

<sup>17</sup>For we are not like so many others, who peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as men sent from God.

### **Ministers of a New Covenant**

**3** Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? <sup>2</sup>You yourselves are our letter, inscribed on our hearts, known and read by everyone. <sup>3</sup>It is

clear that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

<sup>4</sup>Such confidence before God is ours through Christ. <sup>5</sup>Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim that anything comes from us, but our competence comes from God. <sup>6</sup>And He has qualified us as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

### **The Glory of the New Covenant**

<sup>7</sup>Now if the ministry of death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at the face of Moses because of its fleeting glory, <sup>8</sup>will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? <sup>9</sup>For if the ministry of condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry of righteousness! <sup>10</sup>Indeed, what was once glorious has no glory now in comparison to the glory that surpasses it. <sup>11</sup>For if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which endures!

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. <sup>13</sup>We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at the end of what was fading away.

<sup>14</sup>But their minds were closed. For to this day the same veil remains at the reading of the old covenant. It has not been lifted, because only in Christ can it be removed. <sup>15</sup>And even

to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. <sup>16</sup>But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

<sup>17</sup>Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup>And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into His image with intensifying glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

### **The Light of the Gospel**

**4** Therefore, since we have this ministry through the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. <sup>2</sup>Instead, we have renounced secret and shameful ways. We do not practice deceit, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by open proclamation of the truth, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. <sup>3</sup>And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

<sup>4</sup>The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup>For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"<sup>a</sup> made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.<sup>b</sup>

### **Treasures in Jars of Clay**

<sup>7</sup>Now we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this surpassingly great power is from God and not from us. <sup>8</sup>We

<sup>a</sup> 6 Genesis 1:3    <sup>b</sup> 6 SBL, NE, and WH *in the face of Christ*

are pressed on all sides, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

<sup>10</sup>We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

<sup>11</sup>For we who are alive are always consigned to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal bodies. <sup>12</sup>So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

<sup>13</sup>And in keeping with what is written: "I believed, therefore I have spoken,"<sup>a</sup> we who have the same spirit of faith also believe and therefore speak, <sup>14</sup>knowing that the One who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in His presence. <sup>15</sup>All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is extending to more and more people may overflow in thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, yet our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For our light and temporary affliction is producing for us an eternal glory that far outweighs our troubles. <sup>18</sup>So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

## Our Eternal Dwelling

**5** Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is dismantled, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. <sup>2</sup>For in this tent

<sup>a</sup> 13 Psalm 116:10

we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup>because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>So while we are in this tent, we groan under our burdens, because we do not wish to be unclothed but clothed, so that our mortality may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup>And God has prepared us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a pledge of what is to come.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore we are always confident, although we know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord. <sup>7</sup>For we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>We are confident, then, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So we aspire to please Him, whether we are here in this body or away from it. <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive his due for the things done in the body, whether good or bad.

### **Ambassadors for Christ**

<sup>11</sup>Therefore, since we know what it means to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is clear to God, and I hope it is clear to your conscience as well. <sup>12</sup>We are not commending ourselves to you again. Instead, we are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you can answer those who take pride in appearances rather than in the heart.

<sup>13</sup>If we are out of our mind, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. <sup>14</sup>For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that One died for all, therefore all died. <sup>15</sup>And He died for all, that those who live should no longer



live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and was raised again.

<sup>16</sup>So from now on we regard no one according to the flesh. Although we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. <sup>17</sup>Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.<sup>a</sup> The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!

<sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup>that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup>Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>God made Him who knew no sin to be sin<sup>b</sup> on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

### Paul's Hardships and God's Grace

**6** As God's fellow workers, we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. <sup>2</sup>For He says:

"In the time of favor I heard you,  
and in the day of salvation I helped you."<sup>c</sup>

Behold, now is the time of favor; now is the day of salvation!

<sup>3</sup>We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no one can discredit our ministry. <sup>4</sup>Rather, as servants of God we com-

<sup>a</sup> 17 Or *creature*    <sup>b</sup> 21 Or *be a sin offering*    <sup>c</sup> 2 Isaiah 49:8

mend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships, and calamities; <sup>5</sup>in beatings, imprisonments, and riots; in labor, sleepless nights, and hunger; <sup>6</sup>in purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; <sup>7</sup>in truthful speech and in the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; <sup>8</sup>through glory and dishonor, slander and praise; viewed as imposters, yet genuine; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, yet well-known; dying, and yet we live on; punished, yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

<sup>11</sup>We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians. Our hearts are open wide. <sup>12</sup>It is not our affection, but yours that is restrained. <sup>13</sup>As a fair exchange, I ask you as my children: Open wide your hearts also.

### **Do Not Be Unequally Yoked**

<sup>14</sup>Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership can righteousness have with wickedness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? <sup>15</sup>What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup>What agreement can exist between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will live with them  
and walk among them,  
and I will be their God,  
and they will be My people.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 16 Leviticus 26:12; Ezekiel 37:27

<sup>17</sup>“Therefore come out from among them  
and be separate,

says the Lord.

Touch no unclean thing,  
and I will receive you.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>18</sup>And:

“I will be a Father to you,  
and you will be My sons and daughters,  
says the Lord Almighty.”

### Paul's Joy in the Corinthians

**7** Therefore, beloved, since we have these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that defiles body and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

<sup>2</sup>Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. <sup>3</sup>I do not say this to condemn you. I have said before that you so occupy our hearts that we live and die together with you. <sup>4</sup>Great is my confidence in you; great is my pride in you; I am filled with encouragement; in all our troubles my joy overflows.

<sup>5</sup>For when we arrived in Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were pressed from every direction—conflicts on the outside, fears within. <sup>6</sup>But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the arrival of Titus, <sup>7</sup>and not only by his arrival, but also by the comfort he had received

<sup>a</sup> 17 Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 20:34

from you. He told us about your longing, your mourning, and your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced all the more.

<sup>8</sup>Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Although I did regret it, I now see that my letter caused you sorrow, but only for a short time. <sup>9</sup>And now I rejoice, not because you were made sorrowful, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you felt the sorrow that God had intended, and so were not harmed in any way by us. <sup>10</sup>Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

<sup>11</sup>Consider what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what vindication! In every way you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. <sup>12</sup>So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did wrong or the one who was harmed, but rather that your earnestness on our behalf would be made clear to you in the sight of God. <sup>13</sup>On account of this, we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were even more delighted by the joy of Titus. For his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. <sup>14</sup>Indeed, I was not embarrassed by anything I had boasted to him about you. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting to Titus has proved to be true as well. <sup>15</sup>And his affection for you is even greater when he remembers that you were all obedient as you welcomed him with fear and trembling. <sup>16</sup>I rejoice that I can have complete confidence in you.

## Generosity Commended

**8** Now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace God has given the churches of Macedonia. <sup>2</sup>In the terrible ordeal they suffered, their abundant joy and deep poverty overflowed into rich generosity. <sup>3</sup>For I testify that they gave according to their ability and even beyond it. Of their own accord, <sup>4</sup>they pleaded earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. <sup>5</sup>And not only did they do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, because it was the will of God.

<sup>6</sup>So we urged Titus to help complete your act of grace, just as he had started it. <sup>7</sup>But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, and in the love we inspired in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. <sup>8</sup>I am not making a demand, but I am testing the sincerity of your love in comparison to the earnestness of others.

## Christ's Example

<sup>9</sup>For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. <sup>10</sup>And this is my opinion about what is helpful for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give, but even to have such a desire. <sup>11</sup>Now finish the work, so that you may complete it just as eagerly as you began, according to your means. <sup>12</sup>For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

<sup>13</sup>It is not our intention that others may be relieved while you are burdened, but that there may be equality. <sup>14</sup>At the

present time, your surplus will meet their need, so that in turn their surplus will meet your need. Then there will be equality. <sup>15</sup>As it is written:

“He who gathered much had no excess,  
and he who gathered little had no shortfall.”<sup>a</sup>

### **Titus Commended**

<sup>16</sup>But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same devotion I have for you. <sup>17</sup>For not only did he welcome our appeal, but he is eagerly coming to you of his own volition.

<sup>18</sup>Along with Titus, we are sending the brother who is praised by all the churches for his work in the gospel. <sup>19</sup>More than that, this brother was chosen by the churches to accompany us with the offering—the gracious gift we administer to honor the Lord Himself and to show our eagerness to help.

<sup>20</sup>We hope to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this generous gift. <sup>21</sup>For we are taking great care to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of men.

<sup>22</sup>And we are sending along with them our brother, whose earnestness has been proven many times and in many ways, and now even more so by his great confidence in you. <sup>23</sup>As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you. As for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches to the glory of Christ. <sup>24</sup>In full view of the churches, then, show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our boasting about you.

<sup>a</sup> 15 Exodus 16:18

## God Loves a Cheerful Giver

**9** Now about the service to the saints, there is no need for me to write to you. <sup>2</sup>For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting to the Macedonians that since last year you in Achaia were prepared to give. And your zeal has stirred most of them to do likewise.

<sup>3</sup>But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove empty, but that you will be prepared, just as I said. <sup>4</sup>Otherwise, if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—to say nothing of you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. <sup>5</sup>So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you beforehand and make arrangements for the bountiful gift you had promised. This way, your gift will be prepared generously and not begrudgingly.

<sup>6</sup>Consider this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup>Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not out of regret or compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup>And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. <sup>9</sup>As it is written:

“He has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor;  
His righteousness endures forever.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 9 Psalm 112:9

<sup>10</sup>Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your store of seed and will increase the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup>You will be enriched in every way to be generous on every occasion, and your giving through us will produce thanksgiving to God. <sup>12</sup>For this ministry of service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgiving to God.

<sup>13</sup>Because of the proof this ministry provides, the saints will glorify God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the generosity of your contribution to them and to all the others. <sup>14</sup>And their prayers for you will express their affection for you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. <sup>15</sup>Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

### **Paul's Apostolic Authority**

**10** Now by the mildness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am humble when face to face with you, but bold when away. <sup>2</sup>I beg you that when I come, I may not need to be as bold as I expect toward those who presume that we live according to the flesh.

<sup>3</sup>For though we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>The weapons of our warfare are not the weapons of the world. Instead, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup>We tear down arguments, and every presumption set up against the knowledge of God; and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to



Christ. <sup>6</sup>And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, as soon as your obedience is complete.

<sup>7</sup>You are looking at outward appearances. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should remind himself that we belong to Christ just as much as he does. <sup>8</sup>For even if I boast somewhat excessively about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed.

<sup>9</sup>I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you by my letters. <sup>10</sup>For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but his physical presence is unimpressive, and his speaking is of no account." <sup>11</sup>Such people should consider that what we are in our letters when absent, we will be in our actions when present.

<sup>12</sup>We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they show their ignorance. <sup>13</sup>We, however, will not boast beyond our limits, but only within the field of influence that God has assigned to us—a field that reaches even to you. <sup>14</sup>We are not overstepping our bounds, as if we had not come to you. Indeed, we were the first to reach you with the gospel of Christ.

<sup>15</sup>Neither do we boast beyond our limits in the labors of others. But we hope that, as your faith increases, our area of influence among you will greatly increase as well, <sup>16</sup>so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. Then we will not be boasting in the work already done in another man's territory.

<sup>17</sup>Rather, “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”<sup>a</sup> <sup>18</sup>For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

## Paul and the False Apostles

**11** I hope you will bear with a little of my foolishness, but you are already doing that. <sup>2</sup>I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. For I promised you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

<sup>3</sup>I am afraid, however, that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may be led astray from your simple and pure devotion to Christ. <sup>4</sup>For if someone comes and proclaims a Jesus other than the One we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit than the One you received, or a different gospel than the one you accepted, you put up with it way too easily.

<sup>5</sup>I consider myself in no way inferior to those “super-apostles.” <sup>6</sup>Although I am not a polished speaker, I am certainly not lacking in knowledge. We have made this clear to you in every way possible.

<sup>7</sup>Was it a sin for me to humble myself in order to exalt you, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? <sup>8</sup>I robbed other churches by accepting their support in order to serve you. <sup>9</sup>And when I was with you and in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my needs. I have refrained from being a burden to you in any way, and I will continue to do

<sup>a</sup> <sup>17</sup> Jeremiah 9:24

so. <sup>10</sup>As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. <sup>11</sup>Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

<sup>12</sup>But I will keep on doing what I am doing, in order to undercut those who want an opportunity to be regarded as our equals in the things they boast about. <sup>13</sup>For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup>And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup>It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their actions.

### **Paul's Suffering and Service**

<sup>16</sup>I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. <sup>17</sup>In this confident boasting of mine, I am not speaking as the Lord would, but as a fool. <sup>18</sup>Since many are boasting according to the flesh, I too will boast. <sup>19</sup>For you gladly tolerate fools, since you are so wise. <sup>20</sup>In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or exalts himself or strikes you in the face. <sup>21</sup>To my shame I concede that we were too weak for that!

Speaking as a fool, however, I can match what anyone else dares to boast about. <sup>22</sup>Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. <sup>23</sup>Are they servants of Christ? I am speaking like I am out of my mind, but I am so much more: in harder labor, in more imprisonments, in worse beatings, in frequent danger of death. <sup>24</sup>Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. <sup>25</sup>Three times I was beaten with rods,

once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked. I spent a night and a day in the open sea.

<sup>26</sup>In my frequent journeys, I have been in danger from rivers and from bandits, in danger from my countrymen and from the Gentiles, in danger in the city and in the country, in danger on the sea and among false brothers, <sup>27</sup>in labor and toil and often without sleep, in hunger and thirst and often without food, in cold and exposure.

<sup>28</sup>Apart from these external trials, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. <sup>29</sup>Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not burn with grief?

<sup>30</sup>If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. <sup>31</sup>The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is forever worthy of praise, knows that I am not lying. <sup>32</sup>In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas secured the city of the Damascenes in order to arrest me. <sup>33</sup>But I was lowered in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his grasp.

## Paul's Revelation

**12** I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to gain, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. <sup>2</sup>I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of it I do not know, but God knows. <sup>3</sup>And I know that this man—whether in the body or out of it I do not know, but God knows—<sup>4</sup>was caught up into Paradise. The things he heard were too sacred for words, things that man is not permitted to tell.

## Paul's Thorn and God's Grace

<sup>5</sup>I will boast about such a man, but I will not boast about myself, except in my weaknesses. <sup>6</sup>Even if I wanted to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me, <sup>7</sup>or with these surpassingly great revelations.

So to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. <sup>8</sup>Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. <sup>9</sup>But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me. <sup>10</sup>That is why, for the sake of Christ, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

## Concern for the Corinthians

<sup>11</sup>I have become a fool, but you drove me to it. In fact, you should have commended me, since I am in no way inferior to those "super-apostles," even though I am nothing. <sup>12</sup>The true marks of an apostle—signs, wonders, and miracles—were performed among you with great perseverance. <sup>13</sup>In what way were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was not a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

<sup>14</sup>See, I am ready to come to you a third time, and I will not be a burden, because I am not seeking your possessions, but you yourselves. For children should not have to save up

for their parents, but parents for their children. <sup>15</sup>And for the sake of your souls, I will most gladly spend my money and myself. If I love you more, will you love me less?

<sup>16</sup>Be that as it may, I was not a burden to you; but crafty as I am, I caught you by trickery. <sup>17</sup>Did I overreach by anyone I sent you? <sup>18</sup>I urged Titus to visit you, and I sent our brother with him. Did Titus exploit you in any way? Did we not walk in the same spirit and follow in the same footsteps?

<sup>19</sup>Have you been thinking all along that we were making a defense to you? We speak before God in Christ, and all of this, beloved, is to build you up. <sup>20</sup>For I am afraid that when I come, I may not find you as I wish, and you may not find me as you wish. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, rage, rivalry, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder. <sup>21</sup>I am afraid that when I come again, my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of their acts of impurity, sexual immorality, and debauchery.

### Examine Yourselfs

**13** This is the third time I am coming to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."<sup>a</sup>

<sup>2</sup>I already warned you the second time I was with you. So now in my absence, I warn those who sinned earlier and

<sup>a</sup> 1 Deuteronomy 19:15

everyone else: If I return, I will not spare anyone, <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 He was indeed crucified in weakness, yet He lives by God's power. And though 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. Can't you see for yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you—unless you actually fail the test? <sup>6</sup>And I hope you will realize that we have not failed the test.

<sup>7</sup>Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not that we will appear to have stood the test, but that you will do what is right, even if we appear to have failed. <sup>8</sup>For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. <sup>9</sup>In fact, we rejoice when we are weak but you are strong, and our prayer is for your perfection.

<sup>10</sup>This is why I write these things while absent, so that when I am present I will not need to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

### **Final Greetings and Blessing**

<sup>11</sup>Finally, brothers, rejoice! Aim for perfect harmony, encourage one another,<sup>a</sup> 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>a</sup> 11 Or *listen to my appeal*

<sup>13</sup>All the saints send you 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 all of you.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 14 Texts vary in verse numbering for the last three verses of 2 Corinthians 13. BYZ ends with *Amen*.