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2 Corinthians

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2 Corinthians

Chapter 1

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy {our} brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, and to all the saints who are in all of Achaia. ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Blessed {be} the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, ⁴the one who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we are able to comfort those {who are} in every kind of affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ abound toward us, in the same way also our comfort abounds through Christ. ⁶But if we are afflicted, {it is} for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, {it is} for your comfort, that is working in the patient endurance of the same sufferings that we also suffer. ⁷And our hope concerning you {is} firm, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, in the same way also of the comfort. ⁸For we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond {our} strength, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹Indeed, we have the sentence of death on us so that we would not be trusting in ourselves, but in God, who raises the dead, ¹⁰who rescued us from so great a deadly peril, and he will rescue us—on whom we have set our hope that he also will continue to deliver us, ¹¹you also joining together in prayer on our behalf—so that thanks may be given through many on our behalf for the gracious favor to us by many faces.

¹²For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience, that we have conducted ourselves in the world in holiness and sincerity of God, and not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, and all the more toward you.

¹³For we write no other things to you but that which you read or also understand. But now I hope that you will understand completely— ¹⁴just as you also have understood us in part—so that we are your boasting on the day of our Lord Jesus, just as you also {will be} ours.

¹⁵And with this confidence, I intended to come to you before so that you might have a second blessing, ¹⁶and to pass through you into Macedonia and to come to you again from Macedonia and to be sent on my way to Judea by you. ¹⁷Therefore, when I was planning this, I did not then take it lightly, did I? Or {was} what I planned according to fleshly planning, so that there would be with me “Yes, yes” and “No, no”? ¹⁸But God {is} faithful, so that our word to you is not “Yes” and “No.” ¹⁹For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the one who was proclaimed among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but it has become “Yes” in him. ²⁰For all the promises of God {are} “Yes” in him. So also through him the “Amen” {is} through us to God for {his} glory. ²¹Now God {is} the one who establishes us with you in Christ, and he anointed us, ²²the one who also sealed us and gave us the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts.

²³Now I call God as a witness to my soul that sparing you—I have not yet come to Corinth. ²⁴Not that we are ruling over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy, for you stand firm in the faith.

Chapter 2

¹For I decided this for myself, that I not would come to you again in sorrow. ²For if I cause you sorrow, then who {is} the one who cheers me up, except the one who was hurt by me? ³And I wrote this same thing so that, having come, I might not have sorrow from those over whom I should rejoice, having confidence in all of you that my joy is {the joy} of all of you. ⁴For I wrote to you from great affliction and anguish of heart, through many tears, not so that you would be grieved, but so that you might know the love that I have all the more for you.

⁵But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved {only} me, but in some measure—in order not to put it too harshly—all of you. ⁶This punishment on such a one—which {is} by the majority—{is} enough, ⁷so that, on the contrary, you should rather forgive and comfort him. Otherwise, such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸So I encourage you to affirm {your} love for him. ⁹Indeed, I also wrote for this reason: so that I might know your proof, whether you are obedient in everything. ¹⁰Now to whomever you forgive anything, I also {forgive}—for indeed the one whom I have forgiven (if I have forgiven anything), {is} for your sake in the presence of Christ, ¹¹so that we would not be taken advantage of by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

¹²Now having come to Troas, indeed a door for the gospel of Christ was opened to me in the Lord. ¹³I had no relief in my spirit, as I did not find my brother Titus there. So having left them, I went on to Macedonia.

¹⁴But thanks {be} to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ and makes known through us the aroma of the knowledge of him in every place. ¹⁵For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing— ¹⁶to one indeed, an aroma from death to death, but to the other, an aroma from life to life. And in regard to these things, who {is} worthy? ¹⁷For we are not like the many who are selling the word of God for profit, but instead, as from sincerity—even as from God—we speak before God in Christ.

Chapter 3

¹Are we beginning to praise ourselves again? Or we do not need, like some, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? ²You yourselves are our letter written in our hearts, known and read by all men, ³revealing that you are a letter of Christ cared for by us, not written with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of hearts of flesh. ⁴Now we have such confidence through Christ toward God. ⁵Not that we are competent from ourselves to consider anything as from ourselves. Instead, our competence {is} from God, ⁶who indeed made us competent as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. ⁷Now if the ministry of death—engraved in letters on stones—came in such glory that the sons of Israel were not able to look directly at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, which was fading, ⁸how will the ministry of the Spirit not be with much more glory? ⁹For if the ministry of condemnation {was} glory, the ministry of righteousness abounds much more in glory! ¹⁰For indeed, that which was glorious is not glorious in this respect, because of the glory that exceeds it. ¹¹For if that which is fading away {was} with glory, much more {is} that which remains with glory!

¹²Therefore, having such a hope, we act with much boldness, ¹³and not like Moses putting a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look directly at the end of that which was fading away. ¹⁴But their minds were hardened, for until the present day, the same veil remains at the reading of the old covenant, not being lifted, because in Christ is it fading away. ¹⁵But until today, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart, ¹⁶but whenever one might turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord {is}, {there is} freedom. ¹⁸Now we all, with unveiled face, seeing as a reflection the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Chapter 4

¹Therefore, having this ministry, just as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. ²Instead, we have rejected the shameful hidden things, not walking in craftiness, nor distorting the word of God, but by the presentation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience before God. ³But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴in whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so that they do not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Christ Jesus {as} Lord, and ourselves {as} your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," {is} the one who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay, so that the surpassing power might be from God and not from us; ⁸in every way being afflicted, but not being overwhelmed; being perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹being persecuted, but not being forsaken; being struck down, but not perishing; ¹⁰always carrying in {our} body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus also may be shown in our body; ¹¹for we who are alive are always being handed over to death for the sake of Jesus so that also the life of Jesus may be shown in our mortal flesh. ¹²So then, death is at work in us, but life in you. ¹³But having the same spirit of faith according to that which was written: "I believed; therefore I spoke," we also believe; therefore we also speak, ¹⁴knowing that the one who raised Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you. ¹⁵For all these things {are} for your sake, so that the grace, having abounded to more and more, may cause thanksgiving to increase to the glory of God.

¹⁶So we do not become discouraged. Rather, even if our outer man is wasting away, yet our inner {man} is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our momentary, light affliction is producing in us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison. ¹⁸We are not watching the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen. For the things that are seen {are} temporary, but the things that are not seen {are} eternal.

Chapter 5

¹For we know that if our earthly dwelling—this tent—would be destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in the heavens, not made by human hands. ²For indeed, in this we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling that {is} from heaven, ³and if indeed we have put it on, we will not be found naked. ⁴For indeed, we who are in this tent groan, being burdened because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, so that the mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵Now the one who prepared us for this very thing {is} God, who gave us the Spirit {as} the down payment. ⁶Therefore, always being confident and knowing that being at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord— ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Now we are confident and would prefer rather to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹And therefore we strive, whether being at home or being away, to be pleasing to him. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive back the things {done} in the body, according to what he did, whether good or evil.

¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. But we are clearly known by God, and I hope also to be clearly known in your consciences. ¹²We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an opportunity to boast on our behalf, so that you may have {an answer} for those who boast about the face and not about the heart. ¹³For if we are out of our minds, {it is} for God; if we are in our right minds, {it is} for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ compels us, having concluded this: that one died for all; therefore, all died. ¹⁵And he died for all so that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.

¹⁶Therefore, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we regarded Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer regard him {that way}. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone {is} in Christ, {he is} a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new. ¹⁸Now all these things {are} from God, the one who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹just as God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and having committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as God is appealing through us: We plead with you on behalf of Christ: "Be reconciled to God!" ²¹The one who did not know sin he made sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Chapter 6

¹Now working together with him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— ²for he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you,

and in a day of salvation I helped you.”

Behold, now {is} a favorable time. Look, now {is} a day of salvation—³placing no stumbling block in anything, so that {our} ministry might not be discredited, ⁴instead, we commend ourselves in everything as God’s servants; in great endurance, in affliction, in distress, in hardship, ⁵in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in hard work, in sleeplessness, in hunger, ⁶in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, ⁷in the word of truth, in the power of God; through the weapons of righteousness {for} the right hand and the left, ⁸through honor and dishonor, through bad report and good report; as imposters, yet true; ⁹as being unknown, yet well known; as dying yet—behold!—living; as being disciplined, yet not being killed; ¹⁰as being sorrowful, but always rejoicing; as poor, but making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

¹¹Our mouth has been opened to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened wide. ¹²You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your inner parts; ¹³and in similar exchange—I speak as to children—open yourselves wide also. ¹⁴Do not be yoked together with unbelievers, for what partnership {does} righteousness and lawlessness {have}? Or what fellowship {does} light {have} with darkness? ¹⁵And what agreement {does} Christ {have} with Beliar? Or what share {does} a believer {have} with an unbeliever? ¹⁶And what agreement {does} the temple of God {have} with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said:

“I will dwell among them, and walk among them;

and I will be their God,

and they will be my people.”

¹⁷Therefore,

“Come out from among them,

and be separate,” says the Lord,

“and touch no unclean thing,”

“and I will receive you.”

¹⁸“And I will be to you as a Father,

and you will be to me as sons and daughters,”

says the Lord Almighty.

Chapter 7

¹Therefore, beloved, having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

²Make room for us! We have wronged no one; we have harmed no one; we have exploited no one. ³I do not speak for {your} condemnation; for I have already said that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together.

⁴Great {is} my confidence in you; great {is} my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with encouragement. I overflow with joy in all our afflictions.

⁵For even when we had come to Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled in every way—conflicts without, fears within. ⁶But God, the one who comforts the humble, comforted us by the arrival of Titus, ⁷and not only by his arrival, but also by the comfort with which he had been comforted by you, reporting to us your longing, your mourning, {and} your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more. ⁸For even if I grieved you in the letter, I do not regret it (even though I did regret it, seeing that that letter grieved you, if only for an hour). ⁹Now I rejoice, not that

you were grieved, but that you were grieved to the point of repentance. For you were grieved with respect to God, so that you would not suffer loss in anything through us. ¹⁰For the sorrow with respect to God works repentance towards salvation without regret. But the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹For behold how much earnestness this very same thing has produced in you, this sorrow with respect to God: what eagerness to defend yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, {and} what avenging of wrong! In everything you have proved yourselves to be pure in this matter. ¹²So even though I wrote to you, {it was} not for the sake of the one who did wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but so that your earnestness which {is} on our behalf might be revealed to you before God. ¹³For this reason we are encouraged.

Now in addition to our own comfort, we rejoiced even more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit had been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴For if I had boasted anything to him about you, I was not ashamed, but as we have spoken everything to you in truth, in the same way also our boasting became the truth to Titus. ¹⁵And his affections towards you are even greater, remembering the obedience of all of you, how you received him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I rejoice that in everything I am confident in you.

Chapter 8

¹Now we make known to you, brothers, the grace of God that has been given in the churches of Macedonia, ²that during a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the riches of their generosity. ³For I testify that {they gave} according to {their} ability, and beyond {their} ability, voluntarily, ⁴with much urging, they pleaded with us for the blessing and the fellowship of this ministry that {is} to the saints. ⁵And not as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and then to us, by the will of God. ⁶So we urged Titus that, just as he had begun, in the same way he would also complete among you this act of grace as well. ⁷But even as you abound in everything—in faith and in speech and in knowledge and in all diligence and in our love from you,^[1] so also you should abound in this act of grace. ⁸I say this not according to a command but also testing the sincerity of your love through the diligence of others. ⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he became poor for your sake, {though} being rich, so that {through} his poverty you might become rich. ¹⁰And I give {my} opinion in this, for this is profitable for you who not only began to do this a year ago, but also desired to do it. ¹¹But now also finish doing it, so that just as {there was} the readiness of the desire, so also there may be the completion, from that which you have. ¹²For if the readiness is present, {it is} acceptable according to whatever one might have, not according to what he does not have. ¹³For {this is} not for the ease of others {and} your affliction, but for equality. ¹⁴At the present time, your abundance {is} for their need, so that also their abundance may be for your need, so that there may be equality, ¹⁵just as it is written:

“The one with much did not have too much,
and the one with little did not have too little.”

¹⁶But thanks {be} to God, the one who put the same earnestness on your behalf into the heart of Titus. ¹⁷For he not only accepted {our} appeal, but being very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. ¹⁸Now we have sent with him the brother who {is} praised among all of the churches in the gospel. ¹⁹And not only {this}, but he also was chosen by the churches as our traveling companion, along with this act of grace which is being administered by us to the glory of the Lord, and {to show} our readiness. ²⁰We took this precaution, {so that} no one might blame us concerning the administration by us of this generous gift. ²¹For we considered beforehand {what is} good, not only before the Lord, but also before men. ²²Now we sent our brother with them, whom we have tested in many ways {and} often being eager. But now he is even more eager because of {his} great confidence that {is} in you. ²³As for Titus, {he is} my partner and fellow worker for you. As {for} our brothers, {they are} messengers of the churches, a glory of Christ. ²⁴Therefore, prove to them to the faces of the churches the proof of your love and of our boasting about you.

8:7 ^[1] Some other versions read

Chapter 9

¹For concerning the ministry that {is} to the saints, it is unnecessary for me to write to you. ²For I know your readiness, of which I boasted to the Macedonians concerning you, that Achaia has been ready since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. ³But I have sent the brothers so that our boasting which {is} about you might not be futile in this matter, so that you might be ready, as I was saying. ⁴Otherwise, if Macedonians might come with me and might find you unprepared, we would be ashamed—in order not to speak of you—in this confidence. ⁵So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers that they would go to you beforehand and prepare in advance this promised gift of yours, to be ready in this way as a blessing and not as something forced.

⁶Now this {I say}: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows with blessings will also reap with blessings. ⁷{Let} each one {give} just as he has decided in {his} heart, not from sorrow or from compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, always, having all you need, you may abound in every good work. ⁹Just as it is written:

“He scattered widely, he gave to the poor,
his righteousness endures to eternity.”

¹⁰Now the one who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and will increase the fruits of your righteousness, ¹¹in every way enriching you for all generosity, which produces thanksgiving to God through us. ¹²For the ministry of this service not only is fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing with many thanksgivings to God. ¹³Because of the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for {your} obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and the generosity of {your} fellowship with them and with everyone. ¹⁴And their prayers {are} for you, longing for you because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵Thanks {be} to God for his indescribable gift!

Chapter 10

¹Now I, Paul, myself who {am} meek according to face among you, but being absent, am bold toward you, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. ²Now I beg of you that, being present, I will not need to be bold with the confidence with which I plan to be courageous against some of those who regard us as walking according to the flesh. ³For walking in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare {are} not fleshly, but {are} divinely powerful for the destruction of strongholds {and} pulling down arguments ⁵and every high thing that rises up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive into obedience of Christ. ⁶And we have readiness to avenge every act of disobedience, when your obedience would be complete. ⁷You are looking at the things according to face. If anyone is convinced that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself: that just as he {is} Christ's, so also {are} we. ⁸For even if I might boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave us to building up and not for your destruction, I will not be ashamed, ⁹so it would not appear as if I would terrify you through {my} letters. ¹⁰Indeed, someone says, “{His} letters {are} weighty and forceful, but {his} bodily presence {is} weak, and {his} speech is worthless.” ¹¹Let such a one consider this, that what we are in word through letters being absent, that {we are} also in deed being present. ¹²For we do not dare to group or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But these—who measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves—do not understand. ¹³We, however, will not boast about the things beyond measure, but according to the measure of the area that God has assigned to us, a measure that reached even as far as you. ¹⁴For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach to you, for we came even as far as to you with the gospel of Christ. ¹⁵Neither do we boast beyond limits in the labors of others, but having hope that as your faith continues to grow, our area among you will greatly expand ¹⁶to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you—not to boast about the things accomplished in another's area.

¹⁷“But let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

¹⁸For that one who commends himself is not approved, but whom the Lord commends.

Chapter 11

¹I wish that you would bear with me in a little bit of foolishness, but you are indeed bearing with me! ²For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you {as} a pure virgin to Christ. ³But I am afraid lest, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts might be led astray from the sincerity and the purity that {are} in Christ. ⁴For if one who comes proclaims another Jesus whom we did not proclaim, or you receive a different spirit which you did not receive or a different gospel which you did not accept, you are bearing with it well! ⁵For I consider myself not inferior to the “super-apostles.” ⁶But even if I am untrained in speech, yet not in knowledge. But in every way we have made this clear to you in all things. ⁷Or did I commit a sin, humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I freely preached the gospel of God to you? ⁸I robbed other churches, having accepted wages for the ministry to you. ⁹And being present with you—and I being in need—I did not burden anyone. For the brothers who came from Macedonia completely met my need, and in everything, I kept and will continue to keep myself from being a burden to you. ¹⁰The truth of Christ is in me, so that this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. ¹¹Why? Because I do not love you? God knows {I do}! ¹²And what I do I will also keep doing so that I may take away the opportunity of those who desire an opportunity, so that they may be regarded in what they are boasting about just as we also {are}. ¹³For these of such kind {are} false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no wonder, for Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore, {it is} no great thing if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

¹⁶I say again: Let not anyone think me to be a fool. But if not, receive me even as a fool so that I too may boast a little bit. ¹⁷What I am saying, I am not saying according to the Lord, but as in foolishness, in this boastful confidence. ¹⁸Since many boast according to the flesh, I will also boast. ¹⁹For you, being wise, gladly put up with the foolish. ²⁰For you put up with it if anyone enslaves you, if anyone consumes you, if anyone takes advantage of you, if anyone exalts himself, if anyone slaps you in the face. ²¹According to dishonor, I say that with respect to that, we were weak! However, in whatever anyone might dare to boast—I am speaking in foolishness—I too dare to boast. ²²Are they Hebrews? I {am} also. Are they Israelites? I {am} also. Are they descendants of Abraham? I {am} also. ²³Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as out of my mind.) I {am} more so: in even more hard work, in far more imprisonments, in beatings beyond measure, often in danger of death. ²⁴Five times I received from Jews 40 {lashes} minus one. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the deep; ²⁶in frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, in danger from robbers, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from the Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the wilderness, in danger at sea, in danger from false brothers; ²⁷in hard work and hardship, in many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often in fasting, in cold and nakedness; ²⁸apart from these external things, {there is} the pressure on me of the daily concern for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who has been caused to stumble, and I do not burn? ³⁰If it is necessary to boast, I will boast about the things of {my} weakness. ³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, the one who is blessed to eternity, knows that I am not lying!

³²in Damascus, the governor of Aretas the king was guarding the city of Damascus to arrest me. ³³But I was lowered in a basket through a window through the wall, and I escaped from his hands.

Chapter 12

¹It is necessary to boast, {though} not profitable. But I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. ²I know a man in Christ who, 14 years ago—whether in the body, I do not know, or out of the body, I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up as far as the third heaven. ³And I know that such a man—whether in the body, or out of the body, I do not know, God knows—⁴that he was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words

which are not permitted for a man to speak. ⁵On behalf of such a one I will boast. But on behalf of myself I will not boast, except about {my} weaknesses. ⁶For even if I desire to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from this, {so that} no one might think more of me than what he sees in me or hears from me. ⁷And therefore, so that I would not become arrogant by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me—a messenger from Satan—so that he might torment me, so that I would not become arrogant. ⁸Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it would depart from me. ⁹But he said to me, “My grace is enough for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So I will rather gladly boast in my weakness so that the power of Christ might reside on me. ¹⁰Therefore I am content for Christ’s sake in weaknesses, in insults, in troubles, in persecutions and distressing situations; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

¹¹I have become a fool! You forced me to this, for I should have been commended by you, for I was not at all inferior to the “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing. ¹²Indeed, the signs of an apostle were performed among you with all perseverance—signs and wonders and miracles. ¹³For in what respect is it that you were treated worse than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

¹⁴Behold! I am ready to come to you this third time, and I will not burden you. For I do not seek what {is} yours, but you. For the children should not save up for the parents, but the parents for the children. ¹⁵Now I will most gladly spend and be completely spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? ¹⁶But be that as it may, I did not burden you, but, being a crafty person, I caught you by deceit. ¹⁷I did not take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you, did I? ¹⁸I urged Titus {to go} and sent the {other} brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not walk in the same spirit? {Did we} not {walk} in the same steps?

¹⁹Do you think all of this time that we have been defending ourselves to you? Before God in Christ we are speaking, but all these things, beloved, {are} for your strengthening. ²⁰For I fear that perhaps when I come I may not find you such as I wish, and I may not be found by you such as you wish; perhaps {there may be} quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalries, slander, gossip, arrogance, {and} disorder, ²¹lest having come to you again, my God might humble me before you, and I would be grieved by many of those who have sinned and who have not repented of the impurity and sexual immorality and lustful indulgence that they practiced.

Chapter 13

¹This {is} the third time that I am coming to you. “Every matter must be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses.” ²I have already warned when being present the second time, and now even though being absent, I warn those who sinned before and all the rest, that if I would come to them again, I will not spare anyone, ³since you are seeking proof of the Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you but is powerful among you. ⁴For he was indeed crucified in weakness, but he lives by God’s power. For we also are weak in him, but we will live with him by God’s power toward you. ⁵Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ {is} in you—unless you are unapproved? ⁶And I hope that you will realize that we are not unapproved. ⁷Now we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong, not so that we might appear approved, but so that you might do what {is} good, even if we {might seem} to be unapproved. ⁸For we are not able to do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. ⁹For we rejoice whenever we are weak, but you are strong. We also pray this: for your perfection. ¹⁰Therefore, I write these things while being absent so that when I am present, I would not treat you harshly according to the authority which the Lord gave to me for building up and not for tearing down.

¹¹Finally, brothers, rejoice! Be restored, be encouraged, be of the same mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹²Greet each other with a holy kiss. All of the saints greet you.^[1]

¹³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit {be} with all of you.^[2]

13:12 ^[1] to verse 13, but the best manuscripts include it here.

13:13 ^[2] from verse 12 and place it this verse. The text of this verse then becomes verse 14.

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