

Series: 2 Corinthians  
Title: The Spirit of Christ in Paul  
Text: 2 Corinthians 12: 13-19  
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## **2 Corinthians 12: 13: For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches,...**

They were not. Christ fills all in all, making certain that all his churches receive exactly what is needful for our good. Their pastor was not inferior to any of the chiefest apostles therefore the church at Corinth was not inferior to any of the churches. They had the same Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace preached to them as other churches. They were born-again by the same Holy Spirit. Christ bestowed the same graces and gifts upon them as other churches, so that they came behind in no gift (1Co\_1:7) Christ confirmed the gospel to them by working the same miracles through Paul as he did in other churches. But to add to their ingratitude, the one way they differed from other churches was Paul received no monetary support from them.

## **2 Corinthians 12: 13:...except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.**

While the poorer churches fully supported Paul so that he could devote himself to preaching the gospel, this wealthy church at Corinth did not. When Paul discovered they would not support him, he refused to take money from them. Why?

- **Verse 14: For I seek not yours but you**
- **Verse 15: I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.**
- **Verse 19: *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.**

**Proposition:** The new spirit that Christ imparts to his people is the same spirit that was in Christ, which edified his brethren at his own expense. We will consider Christ as we look at Paul.

**Subject:** The Spirit of Christ in Paul.

## **THE SPIRIT TO SEEK THE LORD'S PEOPLE**

The spirit in Paul that made him seek the salvation of those at Corinth was the Spirit of Christ. Christ sought nothing from his people, he sought only his people. We that Spirit of Christ in Paul in three ways here.

One, Paul came to them—**2 Corinthians 12: 14: Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you.** While they lived at home in comfort, Paul risked life and limb to come to them with the gospel:

2 Corinthians 11: 24: Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25: Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26: In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27: In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

But Paul's suffering is nothing compared to what Christ suffered coming to his people.

Philippians 2: 6: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

We treated Christ far worse than the Corinthians' treated Paul; far worse than anyone has ever treated us:

Isaiah 53: 3: He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Since Christ suffered, Paul knew (and you and I should know) that we shall suffer in the cause of Christ. Christ said, "*Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.*" (Joh 15:20)

Two, Paul did not come to lay a burden on them—**2 Corinthians 12: 14...and I will not be burdensome to you.** It should not have been a burden for believers to support the man who paid so dearly to bring the unsearchable riches of Christ to them. But seeing they considered it so, Paul would not lay that burden on them. He preached Christ freely to them. That spirit came from Christ who came and took all the burden off his people. He removed the burden of the curse of the law by being made a curse for us, justifying us from our sins. He removes the burden of the bondage of our flesh, when he gives us a new spirit so that we can believe and rest in him. He removed our burden of fulfilling the law by fulfilling the law for us so that through faith in Christ we establish the whole law of God that we might live unto God rather than Moses.

Three, the love Christ gives his pastor for his people is that of a father for his children; he gives the same love to those older in the faith for those younger in the faith—**2 Corinthians 12: 14: I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.** Christ sought nothing his people could give him. He only sought those God elected unto salvation in Christ and gave to him before the foundation of the world. He came to seek and to save his people that were lost in the fall.

Christ gave the illustration of a woman who lost a valuable coin. She will not rest till she has searched the whole house and found that coin. Then she will call all her friends and rejoice that she found it. Christ said there is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents more than 99 that think they need no repentance. Oh, sinner, repent and cast all your care on this loving, merciful Redeemer!

Since Christ is our Everlasting Father, the last Adam by whom his children are born of incorruptible seed, he does not expect his children to lay up for him, but our Everlasting Father lays up for his children. When Sarah bore Abraham a son in his old age, scripture says, Abraham gave Isaac "*all that he had.*" Christ gave his children all that he had. We are joint-heirs with Christ. He laid up "*salvation ready to be revealed.*" He said, "*I go to prepare a place for you that where I am there you may be also.*" He laid up eternal life for you who are born of him—"*for ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.*" That is the spirit and love he puts in the heart of his people for one another. Paul said to the Thessalonians:

1 Thessalonians 2: 5: For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God *is* witness: 6: Nor of men sought we glory, [monetary gain] neither of you, nor *yet* of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. [even when it was our just due] 7: But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: 8: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us....19: For what *is* our hope, or joy, or

crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? 20: For ye are our glory and joy.

Each child Christ saves—robed in his righteousness, created anew with his spirit—is Christ’s crown of rejoicing, his glory, a trophy of his grace, what he has created! Even the good works of a believer are not because Christ desires that we give to him but Christ brings us to do good works that he might behold his glory in what he has made by the fact our works prove our faith to be the genuine article that he gave us. Likewise, Paul did not desire money from them, he desired to see fruit that proved they were spiritually alive. He said,

Philippians 4: 17: Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

## **THE SPIRIT OF LOVE**

Christ loved his people even when we did not love him. That is the love he put in Paul for his people—**2 Corinthians 12: 15: And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.**

Consider that through Paul preaching the gospel, Christ gave the Corinthians the same gifts, grace, and knowledge as other churches. He gave them life through Paul’s preaching. He called their own children out of darkness into his light through Paul’s preaching. Through Paul, Christ established them as a church so the gospel would be preached to them through other pastors. Yet the more abundantly Paul loved them, the less they loved Paul. And because that was their heart toward Christ’s minister, it proved for many that the same was true of their love for Christ. That spirit in Paul was by the Spirit of Christ. Christ loved his people even more though we did not love him.

1 John 4: 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, [if he loved us when we did not love him] we ought also to love one another [when their love is cold toward us]

If we feel otherwise, remember Christ knew our hearts of enmity against him, yet he said, *“I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.”* Free justification cost us nothing because it cost Christ everything!

2 Corinthians 8: 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

I desire for God to increase his love in me toward his people. I want to spend all the time, talents, strength and money that Christ has given me for your profit; I want to be exhausted of everything for your good and Christ’s glory!

## **THE SPIRIT TO EDIFY**

Christ does everything to edify his people. Even when Christ sent us the gospel and revealed to us the deceit of our own hearts, as painful as it is, it was for our edification—**2 Corinthians 12: 16: But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.**

Paul is saying what the false preachers said of him. They accused Paul of not taking money because he was being crafty and deceitful to take advantage of them some other way. Yet, in a sense, Paul was crafty and caught the Corinthians using deceit. While they professed to believe on Christ and love the gospel, they really were divided into factions, each one worshipping a different preacher and some had even turned to

false preachers preaching a false gospel. Yet, it was only for their edification, that Paul wrote the convicting things he wrote in his two letters.

Brethren, it was only for our edification when Christ revealed in our hearts that we were full of deceit, worshipping the idol of self!

Yet, Christ does nothing to fleece his sheep, only to edify us. Christ sent them their preachers so Christ could say through Paul—**2 Corinthians 12: 17: Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? 18: I desired Titus, and with *him* I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we not in the same steps?***

So this was the spirit Christ put in Paul. Paul said **2 Corinthians 12: 19: Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you?** Paul was not guilty of the things they charged him with, so he could not be making an excuse for any injustice on his part; he was not making apology, he had nothing to apologize for. He said, **“we speak before God in Christ: but *we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.*”**

Repeatedly, Paul said Christ himself gave him *“authority as an apostle for their edification, not for their destruction.”* (2 Cor 10: 8; 13: 10) Christ only edifies his people and he gave Paul the same spirit:

1 Corinthians 9: 12: We have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ...19: For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more...22:...I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23: And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

1 Corinthians 10: 33...not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Let this same spirit be in us which is in our Lord. Let us do all things for one another's edification!

**Amen!**