



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

1 & 2 CORINTHIANS

Week 3

Reviewing the Essentials

DAY 15

1 Corinthians 15

Have you ever taken a “refresher course” for your business or profession, where you reviewed the essentials?

1. What are the essential truths of the gospel that need to be received and passed on? Why are they of “first importance”(vs. 1-8)?
 2. Why are Peter and James singled out? What struggles did they each face in receiving the gospel (Peter–Mt 16:21-28; 26:31,73; James, (brother of Jesus)–Mk 3:21; Jn 7:5)?
 3. In verses 12-19 there are seven “ifs” that list the consequences if Christ had not been raised from the dead. What are these consequences?
 4. Why is it vital to believe that Christ rose from the dead (20-28)?
 5. What contrasts does Paul draw between the body that is sown and the body that is raised (vs. 42-44)?
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1. What struggles have you had in understanding and living the great gospel truths highlighted by Paul?
 2. In what ways does Christ’s resurrection from the dead help you face the issues of life that trouble you the most?
 3. What comfort can you draw from the comparisons between your physical and resurrected body?
 4. If you are tempted to give up because the Christian life is tough going for you, draw encouragement from verse 58.

*The reference to those **who are baptized for the dead** (v. 29) has puzzled many readers. There is no other mention in the New Testament of the practice of baptism by proxy for those who have already died. If the text is understood literally, then the practice may have been a local one, but other interpretations are possible. Some interpret this to mean being baptized with the same commitment that believers who are now dead had when they were alive.*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

A Financial Plan

1 Corinthians 16

OPENING
up to the Word

There's an old saying: "charity begins at home." Can you think of any times when it may not only begin with a group or family but never extend outward?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What principles of Christian giving can be drawn from Paul's instructions to the Corinthians? Why was the church in Jerusalem suffering extreme hardship at this time (see Ac 11:28 for one reason)?

2. What two things often go together in Christian work according to Paul's experience in Ephesus (vs. 8; Ac 19:23-34)?

3. What exhortation did Paul give the Corinthians (v. 13) and what expression of support (1Co 16:19, 20, 24)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How do you contribute financially to the body of Christ? Do you need to make any adjustments in light of Paul's teaching?

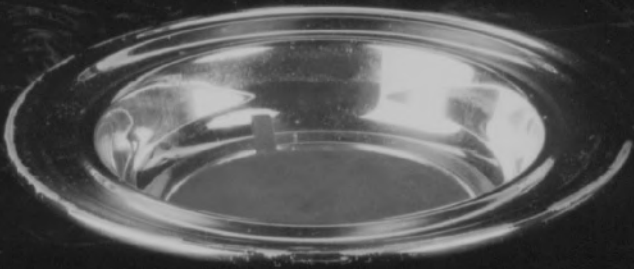
2. Can you identify any places around the world today where Christ-followers are facing extreme hardship and danger?

WINDOW
on the Word

"The church that meets at their house." Aquila and Priscilla used their home as a gathering place for the church in Corinth, and later for the church in Ephesus (Ac 18). For its first 150 years, the Christian movement spread around the Mediterranean world without specially-built meeting places.

“Now about the collection for God’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.”

1 Corinthians 16:1-2



2 Corinthians

Some months passed between the writing of 1 and 2 Corinthians. During that time Paul paid a brief, painful visit to Corinth to solve some of the problems. The response was not as whole-hearted as he had hoped, and in the meantime new problems had arisen. In response, he had written his severe letter, referred to in 2 Corinthians 2:3-4, 9 and 7:8. Some scholars believe parts of this letter comprise 2 Corinthians 10-13.

Having moved from Ephesus to Macedonia, to the north of Corinth, Paul now follows up with a further letter to encourage and exhort the Corinthian believers as well as to counter the false teachers. These individuals had penetrated the ranks of the church and were threatening to derail Paul's work through discrediting his credentials as an apostle.

Outline of 2 Corinthians. Capital letters do not necessarily correspond to daily readings.

I. PAUL EXPLAINS HIS CONDUCT, 1:1-2:17

- A. Greetings to the church, 1:1, 2
- B. Suffering enables us to minister to others, 1:3-11
- C. Paul's change of plans in response to God's leading, 1:12-2:17

II. THE MINISTRY OF PAUL, 3:1-7:16

- A. The Corinthian believers were a living message from Christ, 3:1-11
- B. The renewal of ministry reflecting the glory of God, 3:12-4:6
- C. God's treasure entrusted to clay pots, 4:7-15
- D. Our earthly sojourn and heavenly home, 4:16-5:10
- E. Christ ministering reconciliation through us, 5:11-6:10
- F. Relating to unbelievers, 6:11-7:4
- G. Paul is comforted by the news brought by Titus, 7:5-16

III. THE COLLECTION FOR POOR CHRISTIANS IN JUDEA, 8:1-9:15

- A. The example of generous giving set by the Macedonians, 8:1-7
- B. The greatest motive in Christian giving, 8:8-15
- C. Trusted delegates from the churches, 8:16-9:5
- D. How God will bestow blessing on the generous, 9:6-15

IV. PAUL'S APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY, 10:1-13:10

- A. The weapons of his warfare, 10:1-6
- B. His consistency in service, 10:7-11
- C. His appointed sphere of service, 10:12-18
- D. His justifiable claims on the loyalty of the Corinthian believers, 11:1-6
- E. His pride in his self-sufficiency, 11:7-12
- F. Exposing the real nature of Paul's opponents, 11:13-15
- G. Paul's credentials and experiences, 11:16-33
- H. His visions and thorn in the flesh, 12:1-10
- I. His behavior toward them in his previous and future visits, 12:11-21
- J. Paul's determination to restore discipline in the Corinthian church, 13:1-10

V. CONCLUSION, 13:11-14

“How Can I Help?”

2 Corinthians 1

OPENING
up to the Word

How flexible (or inflexible) are you? If you use a daily planner to schedule activities, have you ever included some “free” time, in case you need to rearrange your schedule to help someone?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What important truths can you learn from verse 1?
2. How can our experience of suffering and opposition help us help others through difficult circumstances (vs. 4-7)?
3. How severe were Paul’s troubles in Asia (modern western Turkey)? What valuable lessons did he learn through the experience of reaching his breaking point (vs. 9-11)?
4. What accusations were made against Paul because of his change of plans (vs. 15-19)? How did he respond (vs. 12-14; 19-23)?
5. How is the believer encouraged to “stand firm in Christ” (vs. 21-22)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Did your parents or guardians play a role in helping you understand God as your heavenly Father? If you are a parent, how do verses 3 and 4 both challenge and encourage you?
2. Have you been through tough experiences in which you proved the love and strength of God? Has the Lord used you to share these experiences with others facing similar trials?
3. Have other people encouraged you out of their experiences of hardship and suffering? Consider thanking God for bringing those individuals into your life.

WINDOW
on the Word

***The promises of God** (v. 20) find their fulfillment in Christ whose life and death demonstrated the faithfulness of God.*

“Why Should I?”

DAY 18

2 Corinthians 2

When it come to rules, are you more likely to (a) make them, (b) enforce them, (c) obey them, (d) stretch them, (e) break them, (f) ignore them?

1. How many times can you find a word or phrase used in the first five verses of this chapter that expresses the depth of Paul’s concern?
2. Why was Paul reluctant to pay the Corinthians another visit?
3. Having disciplined an erring brother or sister in Christ what should fellow Christians now do, and what was Paul himself prepared to do (vs. 6-11)?
4. What does this passage teach about the purpose of discipline?
5. How can Christians be both “the aroma of Christ” and the “smell of death” at the same time (vs. 14-16)?
6. What two kinds of religious teachers and leaders are identified in verse 17?

1. Is there someone with whom you have had a long-standing grievance whom you now need to forgive?
2. To whom can you be an “aroma of Christ” and the “fragrance of life” today?

The **triumphal procession** refers to the victory parade given in honor of a military commander after a successful military campaign. People marching in the parade burned incense. To the victors it represented the scent of victory. To the prisoners of war who were exhibited in the procession, it was the stench of death, as many of them would soon face the gladiators and wild animals in the arena.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

“Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?”

2 Corinthians 3:7-8



Artwork by Gustav Doré

Substance of Service

DAY 19

2 Corinthians 3

How do you measure your success in this life? (a) the power of your position, (b) the size of your salary, (c) the bulk of your belongings, (d) the extent of your education, (e) the immensity of your influence, (f) the substance of your service.

1. What is the best commendation that a Christian worker can receive (vs. 1-3)?

2. What is the source of a Christian worker's competence? How does the new covenant differ from the old in this regard (vs. 4-6; see also Jer 31:33; Eze 11:19; 36:26; Jn 7:37-38)?

3. How does the glory associated with Paul's ministry differ from the glory associated with the ministry of Moses (2Co 3:7-11)?

4. How is the veil removed from the eyes of those who cannot see beyond a legalistic form of religion as represented by the law of Moses (vs. 12-17)?

5. How is the life of the Christ-follower continually transformed (v. 18)?

1. Have you ever been mired in old covenant teachings and practices? How were you transformed?

Glory represents the presence of God. It is both attractive because of its beauty, splendor and awesome power—yet it causes sinful humans to draw back in the realization of their own sinfulness and unworthiness. In the new covenant, this divine glory is present in the believer through the reconciling work of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—in those who have been forgiven by their heavenly Father.

OPENING

up to the Word

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WINDOW

on the Word

Don't Judge the Contents by the Container

2 Corinthians 4

OPENING
up to the Word

When was the last time you bought a book because the cover looked exciting, only to discover that it was badly written or boring?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How does Paul describe his own ministry in contrast to those false teachers in Corinth who were trying so hard to discredit him (vs. 1-6)?
2. What does “the god of this age” do to prevent people from understanding and responding to the gospel (vs. 4)? How does Paul respond (vs. 6)?
3. On what two foundational principles does Paul base his ministry?
4. A *jar of clay* is easily broken. How does Paul describe his experiences that took him beyond the breaking point, but did not break him?
5. Why do you think God chose to put the treasure of the gospel into ordinary “clay pot” people (vs. 7-11)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Are you going through a difficult time? If so, what can you learn from Paul’s experiences to see your challenges in a positive light? Note: J.B. Phillips paraphrases “struck down but never destroyed” (NIV), as, “we may be knocked down but never knocked out!”

WINDOW
on the Word

Jesus’ death and resurrection sets a pattern for all future ministry undertaken in his name (v. 14). Compare John 12:23-26 with Philippians 1:29; 3:10.

*“But we have this treasure in jars
of clay to show that this all-
surpassing power is from God and
not from us.”*

2 Corinthians 4:7



Our New Home

2 Corinthians 5

OPENING
up to the Word

People are increasingly mobile today. Have you lived most of your life in one place or have you moved around a lot? Is there one location you think of as “home”?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Which is described as more substantial—our earthly home or our heavenly home (v. 1)?
2. What causes even Christians to “groan” in the circumstances of their earthly existence? What anticipation sustains them (compare v. 5 with 1:22)? How will the heavenly body of a Christ-follower differ from their earthly one (vs. 4-5)?
3. How does Paul describe the experience of death, and how does his language contrast with the way many unbelievers speak of death and dying (vs. 6-9)?
4. Why was it so important for Paul to persuade the Corinthians that he was a genuine apostle? What accusations were his detractors making (vs. 11-13)?
5. What word describes the central idea of the gospel (vs. 18-20)? Why is “ambassador” an appropriate term for someone who seeks to communicate that message?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How does Paul’s perspective help us face our own mortality and come to terms with the death of persons close to us?
2. How has your life been different since you became part of God’s “new creation”?
3. What central truths of the gospel are contained in verses 15 and 21?

WINDOW
on the Word

“Since, then, we know the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade men” (v. 11). This does not refer to Paul’s motivation in sharing the gospel, but in guarding his reputation, so that the gospel was not undermined.