

The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the congregation of God which is at Corinth, with all the holy *ones* who are in the whole *province* 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 God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow in abundance to us, even so through Christ our comfort also overflows in abundance. ⁶But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation, or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which works in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer. ⁷And our hope for you is steadfast, knowing that, as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you are of the comfort.

⁸For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning the affliction that befell us in Asia, that we were weighed down exceedingly,

beyond our power, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹Indeed, we ourselves have had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not have confidence in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead, ¹⁰who rescued us out of so great a death, and will rescue. On him we have set our hope that he will also still rescue us, ¹¹you also helping together on our behalf by your supplications, so that, for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many, thanks may be given by many people on our behalf.

¹²For our boast, the testimony of our conscience, is this: that we behaved ourselves in the world, and especially toward you, in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God. ¹³For we do not write any other things to you than what you read or even acknowledge, and I hope you will acknowledge to the end, ¹⁴as also you did acknowledge us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

¹⁵And in this confidence I planned to come to you first (in order that you might have a second *experience of grace*) ¹⁶and travel by way of you into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and have you send me on my way to Judea. ¹⁷Was I vacillating when I intended to do this? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose

according to the flesh, that with me there should be the “Yes, yes” and the “No, no?”¹⁸ But as God is faithful, our word toward you is not “Yes” and “No.”¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not “Yes and no,” but in him is “Yes.”²⁰ For as many as are the promises of God, in him is the “Yes,” therefore, through him is the “Amen!,” to the glory of God through us.²¹ Now he who establishes us with you in *union with* Christ, and anointed us, is God,²² who also sealed us, and put the spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

²³ But I call God for a witness upon my soul, that *it was in order* to spare you I did not come to Corinth.²⁴ Not that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy, for in faith you stand fast.

2 But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.² For if I grieve you, who then is he who makes me glad but he who is grieved by me?³ And I wrote this very thing, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice, having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.⁴ For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears, not that you should be

grieved, but that you might know the love that I have especially for you.

⁵ But if anyone has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow, not to me, but in some degree (not to put it too severely) to you all.⁶ For such a one this punishment *inflicted* by the majority is enough,⁷ so that on the contrary, you should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his excessive sorrow.⁸ Therefore I urge you to confirm *your* love toward him.⁹ For this is even why I wrote, that I might know your proven character, whether you are obedient in all things.¹⁰ But to whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also, for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes *have I forgiven it* in the presence of Christ,¹¹ in order that the Adversary gain no advantage over us, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

¹² Now when I came to Troas for the Good News of Christ, even though a door was opened to me in the Lord,¹³ I had no relief for my spirit because I did not find Titus my brother, but saying goodbye to them, I departed into Macedonia.¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us in a triumphal procession in Christ, and through us reveals the fragrance of the knowledge of him in every place.¹⁵ For we are the fragrance of Christ to God among those who are saved, and among

those who perish. ¹⁶To the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is sufficient for these things? ¹⁷For we are not as the many, adulterating the word of God; but indeed, *speaking* from sincerity, but indeed, *speaking* from God, *so* in Christ we speak in the sight of God.

3 Are we beginning again to recommend ourselves? Or do we need, as do some, letters of recommendation to you or from you? ²You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men. ³It is plain that you are a letter from Christ, produced by our service, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets *that are* hearts of flesh.

⁴Moreover, such is the confidence we have in God through Christ. ⁵Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶who also qualified us to be servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit. For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. ⁷But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel were not able to look steadfastly at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, which was passing away, ⁸how will not the ministry of the spirit have

even more glory? ⁹For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, the ministry of righteousness much more *surely* excels in glory! ¹⁰For indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all because of the glory that surpasses *it*. ¹¹For if what was set aside had passing glory, much more that which remains has permanent glory!

¹²Therefore, having such a hope, we use great boldness of speech, ¹³and *are* not like Moses, *who* put a veil upon his face so that the sons of Israel could not look steadfastly on the end of that which was passing away. ¹⁴But their minds were hardened. For until this very day at the reading of the Old Covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because *only* through Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵Yes, to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart. ¹⁶But whenever one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of *the* Lord *is*—freedom! ¹⁸And we all, with unveiled faces reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same appearance, from glory into glory, even as from the Lord *who is the* Spirit.

4 Therefore, since we have this ministry, just as we received mercy, we are not discouraged. ²On the contrary, we have renounced the

hidden, shameful things, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the open display of the truth we are commending ourselves to every person's conscience in the sight of God. ³(But even if our Good News is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, to keep them from seeing *and shining forth* the light of the Good News of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.) ⁵For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake, ⁶because *it is* God who said "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shined in our hearts, to provide illumination by way of the knowledge of the glory of God, *which is* on the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves. ⁸*We are* pressed on every side, yet not crushed; perplexed, yet not driven to despair; ⁹persecuted, yet not forsaken; struck down, yet not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying around in our body the putting to death of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made visible in our body. ¹¹For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be made visible in our mortal flesh.

¹²So then that death keeps working in us, but that life in you.

¹³But since we have the same spirit of faith in accord with what has been written, **I believed, and therefore I spoke**, we also believe and therefore we also speak, ¹⁴knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise up us also *to be* with Jesus, and will bring us, along with you, into his presence. ¹⁵For all these things *are* for your sakes, so that grace, as it is spreading to more and more people, may cause thanksgiving to abound, to the glory of God.

¹⁶Therefore we are not discouraged; but even though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light momentary affliction is working out for us an everlasting weight of glory beyond all measure, ¹⁸because we do not look at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporary, but the things that are not seen are everlasting.

5 For we know that if our house here on earth, our tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, everlasting in the heavens. ²For indeed, *while we are* in this *tent* we continually groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation that is from heaven, ³because indeed,

after we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴For indeed, we who are in this tent continually groan, being burdened, not that we want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵Now *it is* God who prepared us for this very thing, who gave to us the spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. ⁶Therefore, always being of good courage, and knowing that *while* remaining at home in the body we are away from home—away from the Lord ⁷(for we walk by faith, not by sight), ⁸we are of good courage, I say, and are well pleased rather to be away from home, out of the body, and to be at home with the Lord. ⁹Therefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or away from home, to be pleasing to him. ¹⁰For we must all be exposed before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that each one may be repaid for the things *done* by means of the body, according to what he has made a practice of doing, whether good or worthless.

¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we are persuading others. Now we have been made *completely* visible to God, and I hope that we have been made visible to your consciences also. ¹²We are not commending ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to boast about us, in order that you may have *an answer* for those who take pride in

appearance, and not in heart. ¹³For if we are out of our mind, it is to God, or if we are reasonable, it is for you.

¹⁴For the love of Christ constrains us, because we have concluded this: that one died in place of everyone, therefore everyone died. ¹⁵And he died in place of everyone, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but to him who died in their place and rose again.

¹⁶So then, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh (even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *him that way* no more). ¹⁷So then, if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creation, the old things have passed away; Look!, *things* have become new. ¹⁸But all this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹that is, that God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ, not counting their transgressions against them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, God, as it were, making his appeal through us. We implore on behalf of Christ, “Be reconciled to God!” ²¹He made him who did not know sin *to be* a sin offering on our behalf, so that, through *union with* him, we might become the righteousness of God.

6 And working together *with him*, we exhort you also, that you do not receive the grace of God in an empty, *fruitless* way ²(for he says, **At an acceptable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I helped you.** Look!, now is the acceptable time. Look!, now is the day of salvation), ³giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that no fault be found with the ministry. ⁴On the contrary, *we are* demonstrating ourselves as servants of God in everything: in much patience, in pressure, in hardships, in difficulties, ⁵in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in labors, in sleepless nights, in hunger, ⁶in pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in holy spirit, in unhypocritical love, ⁷in the word of truth, in the power of God; through the instruments of righteousness from the right hand and the left, ⁸through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true; ⁹as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and Look!, we live; as punished, and *yet* not killed; ¹⁰as grieved, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

¹¹Our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. ¹²You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained by your own bowels. ¹³Now in a like exchange (I

speak as to *my* children), you also be enlarged!

¹⁴Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? ¹⁵And what harmony does Christ have with Belial? Or what portion does a believer have with an unbeliever? ¹⁶And what agreement does God's sanctuary have with idols? For we are the living God's sanctuary, even 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 the midst of them, and be separate,** says *the* Lord, **and stop touching anything unclean, and I will welcome you,** ¹⁸**and I will be to you a Father, and you will be to me sons and daughters,** says the Lord Almighty.

7 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in *the* fear of God. ²Open your hearts to us! We wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one. ³I do not say this to condemn *you*, for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and live together. ⁴Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our affliction.

⁵For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no relief, but *we were* afflicted on every side, fighting without *and* fears within.

⁶But God, who comforts the lowly, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, *and* your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more. ⁸For though I grieved you by my letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret *it*, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a season. ⁹Now I am rejoicing, not that you were grieved, but that you grieved to *the point of* repentance, for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of* God, so that you suffered no loss through us. ¹⁰For godly sorrow produces repentance that leads to salvation *and* brings no regret, but worldly sorrow produces death.

¹¹For see what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment for wrongdoing! In everything you approved yourselves to be pure in the matter. ¹²So although I wrote to you, I did not *write* for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but for the sake that your diligence on our behalf might be

revealed to you in the sight of God.

¹³Therefore, we have been comforted, and in our comfort we rejoiced more exceedingly at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. ¹⁴For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame, but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting, which I made to Titus, was found to be truth.

¹⁵And his bowels of affection are toward you all the greater, when he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. ¹⁶I rejoice that in everything I am of good courage concerning you.

8 Moreover, brothers, we *want to* make known to you the grace of God that has been given among the congregations of Macedonia, ²that in a severe test of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the riches of their generosity. ³For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord, ⁴imploring us with much pleading in regard to this grace and the participation in the service to the holy *ones*. ⁵And *they gave*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. ⁶Consequently, we urged Titus that as he had previously begun, he should also complete among you this *act of grace* as well.

⁷But just as you abound in everything—in faith, and in word, and in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.

⁸I am not saying this as a command. Rather, I am proving the sincerity of your love also by means of *comparing it with* the diligence of others. ⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. ¹⁰And in this matter I give *my* counsel, for this is profitable for you, who began a year ago not only to do *this* but also to desire *to do it*. ¹¹But now finish doing it as well, so that *your* eagerness in desiring it may be matched by *your* completing it out of what you have. ¹²For if the eagerness is there, *it is* acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what *one* does not have. ¹³For *I do not say this* that others may be eased and you pressured, but as a matter of equality, ¹⁴during this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their need, in order that their abundance also will become *a supply* for your need, so that there may be equality. ¹⁵As it is written, **Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.**

¹⁶But thanks be to God, who put the same diligent care for you

into the heart of Titus *as I have for you*. ¹⁷For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very diligent, he went to you of his own accord. ¹⁸And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in connection with the Good News *has spread* through all the congregations, ¹⁹and not only this, but who was also appointed by the congregations to travel with us in *the matter of* this grace, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord, and *to show* our eagerness *to help*. ²⁰We are taking this precaution so no one should blame us in *the matter of* this abundance that is being administered by us, ²¹for we are making provision to do what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of man. ²²And we have sent with them our brother whom we have tested and found diligent many times in many things, but now much more diligent, because *of his* great confidence in you. ²³If *anyone asks* about Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow-worker for you, or if *anyone asks about* our brothers, *they are* apostles of the congregations, *and* the glory of Christ. ²⁴Therefore demonstrate to them in the face of the congregations the proof of your love and of our boasting about you.

9 For indeed, it is superfluous for me to write to you about this service to the holy *ones*. ²For I know

your eagerness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. ³But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you in this matter may not prove empty, so that you may be prepared, just as I kept telling them.

⁴Otherwise, if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you) would be put to shame for being so confident. ⁵Therefore, I thought it necessary to urge the brothers that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised blessing, that it might be ready as a generous gift, and not as an extortion.

⁶Consider this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷*Let* each one *give* as he has previously decided in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may abound to every good work. ⁹As it is written, **He has scattered abroad, he has given to the poor, his righteousness remains forever.** ¹⁰And he who is supplying seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the harvest of your righteousness, ¹¹you being

enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. ¹²For the service of this ministry not only fills up the measure of the needs of the holy *ones*, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. ¹³Because of the proof given by this service, they glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the Good News of Christ, and for the generosity of *your* contribution to them and to all, ¹⁴while they themselves also, with supplications on your behalf, long for you because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

10 Now I myself, Paul, entreat you by the meekness and clemency of Christ (I who am *supposedly* “timid” when face to face with you but “bold” toward you when absent), ²yes, I implore *you* that when I am present I may not *have to* be bold *toward you* with the confidence with which I propose to take a daring stand against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. ³For *though* we walk in *the* flesh, we are not waging war according to *the* flesh, ⁴(for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but powerful through God to the casting down of strongholds). ⁵We are casting down arguments and every high-minded

thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,⁶ and we are ready to bring to justice any disobedience, as soon as your obedience is complete.

⁷Look at what is right before your face! If any man has confidence in himself that he is Christ's, let him remind himself *of this*, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we. ⁸For even if I boast somewhat excessively about our authority that the Lord gave for building you up, and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed. ⁹I do not want to seem to be frightening you by my letters.

¹⁰For they are saying, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is unimpressive, and his speech is of no account." ¹¹Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, we will also be in deed when present.

¹²For we would not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding. ¹³But we will not boast about immeasurable things, but according to the measure of the sphere that God apportioned to us as a measure, one that reaches even as far as you. ¹⁴For we are not

going too far *in our boasting*, as we *would be* if we had not reached as far as to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you with the Good News of Christ. ¹⁵We are not boasting about immeasurable things, *that is*, in other men's labors, but our hope is that as your faith increases, our sphere of influence among you will be greatly enlarged, ¹⁶so that we may tell the Good News in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's territory about things already accomplished. ¹⁷But **he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.** ¹⁸For *it is* not the one who commends himself who is approved, but *the one* whom the Lord commends.

11 I wish that you would bear with me in a little senselessness, but indeed you are bearing with me. ²For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I betrothed you to one husband, to present *you as* a pure virgin to Christ. ³But I fear that as the serpent thoroughly deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds may somehow be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is in Christ. ⁴For if someone comes who preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or *if* you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive, or a different Good News, which you did not accept, you put up with that easily *enough*. ⁵For I

maintain that I am in nothing inferior to those “super-apostles.”⁶ And even if *I am* unskilled in *public* speaking, yet *I am* not in knowledge. Indeed, in every way we have made *this* plain to you in all things.

⁷Or did I commit a sin in abasing myself so that you might be exalted, because I evangelized you with the Good News of God free of charge?⁸ I robbed other congregations, accepting wages *from them*, that I might minister to you,⁹ and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden on anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and will continue to do so.¹⁰ As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia.¹¹ Why? Because I do not love you? God knows *I do*.

¹²But I will continue to do what I am doing, in order to cut off the opportunity from those who want an opportunity to be found as our equals in that which they boast about.¹³ For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.¹⁴ And no wonder, for the Adversary himself disguises himself as an angel of light.¹⁵ So it is no surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of

righteousness. Their end will be according to their works.

¹⁶I say again, let no one think me senseless. But if *you do*, accept me as senseless, that I too may boast a little.¹⁷ That which I am speaking in this confident boasting, I am not speaking as the Lord would, but as a senseless *person*.¹⁸ Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also.¹⁹ For you gladly put up with senseless *people*, since *you yourselves* are *so wise*.²⁰ For you put up with it if someone enslaves you, if someone exploits you, if someone takes advantage of you, if someone exalts himself *over you*, if someone hits you in the face.²¹ To *my shame*, I must say, we were too weak for that!

But in whatever anyone dares *to boast* (I am speaking senselessly), I dare also.²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I.²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am speaking like a madman!) I surpass *them*! In labors—excessively; in prisons—excessively; in beatings—beyond measure; in *danger of death*—often.²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews forty *lashes* minus one.²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent adrift at sea;²⁶ *in* frequent journeys, *in* perils from rivers, *in* perils from robbers, *in* perils from

my countrymen, *in* perils from the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the open country, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brothers; ²⁷*in* labor and hardship, in many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and without adequate clothing.

²⁸Apart from *such* external things, *there is* the daily pressure upon me: my anxiety for all the congregations.

²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation*? ³⁰If I must boast, I will boast of the things that concern my weakness. ³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³²In Damascus the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, ³³but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

12 I must go on boasting. Though it is not profitable, I will move on to visions and revelations of the Lord. ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was taken to the third heaven (whether in the body, I do not know, or whether out of the body, I do not know, God knows). ³And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I do not know, God knows), ⁴that he was taken into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not permitted for a

person to speak. ⁵On behalf of such a person I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in *my* weaknesses. ⁶For if I want to boast, I would not be senseless, for I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain *from it*, so that no one can credit me with more than what he sees *in* me, or hears from me, ⁷especially because of the exceeding greatness of the revelations. Therefore, so I would not be overly exulted, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of the Adversary, to beat up on me, so I would not be overly exulted. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it might depart from me. ⁹And he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for *my* power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore, on behalf of Christ, I am content in weaknesses, in being mistreated, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties; for when I am weak, then I am powerful.

¹¹I have become senseless! You yourselves forced me *to it*. For you had a moral obligation to commend me, for in no way was I inferior to these “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing. ¹²Indeed, the signs of a *true* apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders

and miracles. ¹³For in what way were you treated as inferior to the rest of the congregations, unless *it was* that I myself was not a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong.

¹⁴Look!, this is the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you, for I do not seek what is yours, but you. For the children are not obligated to save up for the parents, but the parents for the children. ¹⁵And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you to a greater degree, am I to be loved less? ¹⁶But granting that I myself did not burden you, nevertheless, (*you say*) being crafty I took you in by deceit. ¹⁷Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I have sent to you? ¹⁸I urged Titus *to go*, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? *Did we not walk in the same steps?*

¹⁹Have you been thinking all this time that we are defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and everything *we do*, beloved, *is* for building you up. ²⁰For I am afraid that perhaps when I come, I will not find you as I want *to find you*, and will myself be found by you as you do not *want to find me*; that perhaps *there may be* strife, jealousy, anger, rivalries, backbitings, gossip, arrogance, disorder. ²¹*I am afraid* that when I

come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and have not repented of the impurity and sexual immorality and unrestrained behavior that they practiced.

13 This is the third time I am coming to you. **By the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter will be established.** ²I have warned those who have sinned previously and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as when I was present the second time, that if I come again I will not spare *anyone*, ³since you are seeking a proof of Christ speaking in me. He is not weak toward you, but is powerful among you, ⁴for he was crucified due to weakness, yet he lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we will live with him by the power of God to *serve* you.

⁵Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ *is* in you, unless indeed you fail the test? ⁶But I hope that you will realize that we have not failed the test. ⁷Now we pray to God that you do no evil, not so that we may appear approved, but so that you may do that which is honorable, even if we may seem to have failed the test. ⁸For we are not able to do anything against the truth, but *only* for the truth. ⁹For we rejoice

when we are weak but you are powerful. We also pray for this: your being fully equipped! ¹⁰For this reason I am writing these things while absent, that I may not deal sharply when I am present, in keeping with the authority that the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

¹¹Finally, brothers, rejoice! *Let yourselves* be made complete; *let yourselves* be admonished; be of the same mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³All the holy *ones* greet you.

¹⁴The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the holy spirit, be with you all.