

NT Reading Plan 2020

Living Hope Fellowship
2 Corinthians 8-13

Affliction & Comfort

The body of this letter opens with a great section on comfort in the midst of affliction. God is the God of all comfort and he comforts us in all of our afflictions so that we may be able to comfort others in their afflictions. Chapters 8-9 demonstrate the practical application of that doctrine and are some of the best chapters on a biblical view of finances. Saints are responding to Christians suffering from famine in Jerusalem by giving money to alleviate their affliction.

1. Which region's church does Paul commend as being great examples of generous giving?
Boasting & Commending

Giving Generously

Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to prepare a collection for the Jerusalem saints in advance so a certain brother can pick it up and take it to them. He's confident that they will come through as they have promised and no one will be embarrassed when the delivery man comes, probably with plenty of other witnesses, to pick up the collection.

2. Paul writes a letter to this famous brother. Who is he (8:6)?

3. What, or better put, who should be the ultimate motivation for sacrificial giving (see and memorize 8:9!)?

Sarcasm

Paul plays quite a bit of devil's advocate in this letter by assuming the arguments and position of the false apostles. They're commending themselves to the Corinthian consciences in a bunch of worldly ways. Chapters 10 & 11 really capture this, though his sarcasm can be detected throughout the letter.

[From last week] To help understand the flow of 2 Corinthians, you must know that Paul is making a **personal defense** of his ministry in light of the false apostles (aka super-apostles) who are discrediting him...If something doesn't make sense, ask yourself if Paul is being sarcastic or using hyperbole (exaggeration) to make his point.

4. Where is Paul's confidence and reason for boasting (see 10:13-18)?

5. According to this passage, where does Paul want to take the gospel (also see Rom 15)?

Weakness

The reality of gospel ministry is that weakness is a constant companion of the Christian. Our weaknesses, however, are only meant to highlight the power of God in which we trust.

6. What are some of the afflictions and weaknesses Paul has endured in 11:21-33. Note how he starts with sarcasm and ends with affirming the power of God in his weakness.

7. Though we are not told specifically what the "thorn" Paul suffered was, what was it given Paul to prevent him from doing? Are you willing to be humbled that God may be exalted?