2nd Corinthians

Series:

August 26, 2018

Message 4

**A Finale to Remember**

2nd Corinthians 13

*Guests - Connection Card - Table - won’t call or visit -*

*See the details in the handout about our Growth Track today! You are invited!*

*Generosity -*

**Intro:** If you like movies - often a great movie is defined by it’s conclusion.

Sometimes people really like surprise endings - “Don’t give away the ending!”

Great ballgames are the ones which leave you in suspense until the very end, then have a great conclusion -

And OVERTIME is always awesome!

But - since I usually give illustrations from sports that most of the guys can relate to - I’ll give an opening illustration here from a chick flick -

An opening illustration about the power of a great conclusion -

One of my parents favorite movies - An Affair to Remember - (I like it too!)

Cary Grant, Deborah Kerr - story …

At the end, he discovers she has been crippled … he loves her anyway … it is really a powerful conclusion! Because of the power of the conclusion, you remember the whole movie!

That’s what Paul wants with this letter - it’s been hard - but he wants to give them something here that will help them remember the power of his message in this letter.

**Big Idea: Remember Truth to Retain your Testimony**

T.S.: Paul makes 3 closing appeals:

**> The Word of God is real power.**

2nd Corinthians 13:1-4 - This is the third time I am coming to visit you (and as the Scriptures say, “The facts of every case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses”). I have already warned those who had been sinning when I was there on my second visit. Now I again warn them and all others, just as I did before, that next time I will not spare them.

I will give you all the proof you want that Christ speaks through me. Christ is not weak when he deals with you; he is powerful among you. Although he was crucified in weakness, he now lives by the power of God. We, too, are weak, just as Christ was, but when we deal with you we will be alive with him and will have God’s power.

There are those he had previously cautioned … he’s giving them a big warning now …

They thought Paul was weak - they had been convinced of that by false teachers who accused him for their own gain. They came in and manipulated the people - telling them that it was ok to sin - live any way you want - what does Paul know? He’s a weak little guy anyway!

Christianity is all about the cross -you can’t have Christianity without the cross.

You can’t have Christianity without a man who appears weak, being beaten by Roman soldiers, and given up to death on a cross -

Paul says Christ appeared weak when he went to the cross - but you can’t have Christianity without he resurrection! You can’t have Christianity without the one who defeated death - the only one - and you can’t have Christianity without the One who ascended and is seated at the right hand of God the Father - the right hand of power -

Matthew 28:18 - Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.”

1st Corinthians 15:27 - For the Scriptures say, “God has put all things under his authority.”

Ephesians 1:22 - God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church.

Hebrews 2:9 - What we do see is Jesus, who for a little while was given a position “a little lower than the angels”; and because he suffered death for us, he is now “crowned with glory and honor.”

1st Peter 3:22 - Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.

Jude 25 - All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.

Christianity is not based on the appearance of the one who brings the message - it is based on the Message itself.

Jesus is the Message -

John 1:1-4, 14 - In the beginning the Word already existed.

The Word was with God,

and the Word was God.

He existed in the beginning with God.

God created everything through him,

and nothing was created except through him.

The Word gave life to everything that was created,

and his life brought light to everyone…

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.

Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

Jesus, the living Word … If we are true to what the Bible teaches - we are teaching Christ - that is power.

**It is not strength to say you’re a Christian and live any way you want -**

**It is real strength to live a life different than the prevailing culture of the world -**

and that can only happen with Jesus - and it is the evidence that one is a true follower of Jesus!

**> Examine yourself … PLEASE!**

2nd Corinthians 13:5-10 - Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith. As you test yourselves, I hope you will recognize that we have not failed the test of apostolic authority.

We pray to God that you will not do what is wrong by refusing our correction. I hope we won’t need to demonstrate our authority when we arrive. Do the right thing before we come—even if that makes it look like we have failed to demonstrate our authority. For we cannot oppose the truth, but must always stand for the truth. We are glad to seem weak if it helps show that you are actually strong. We pray that you will become mature.

I am writing this to you before I come, hoping that I won’t need to deal severely with you when I do come. For I want to use the authority the Lord has given me to strengthen you, not to tear you down.

Get the sense of Paul’s appeal here - for all the extremely hard the difficult things he’s had to write, there is amazing emotion in his words -

* surely you know …
* I hope you will recognize …
* We pray to God …
* I hope …
* Do the right thing before we come …
* We are glad to seem weak if it helps show that you are actually strong …
* We pray that you will become mature …
* I am writing … hoping …
* I don’t want to tear you down …

How do you examine yourself?

Before we go out, we look in a mirror … face clean … hair in place … buttons buttoned properly … zippers up …

How do you examine your spiritual life? Do you do that?

What is your mirror?

It’s not me! It’s not even Paul! It’s the Word of God! That’s our mirror!

Paul says, “Don’t let these false teachers tell you what is right and wrong - look at the Word of God - look at what you have been taught - yes, by me - but I’m the one who brought you to Christ!”

Paul contends that he is the one who had given them the Word.

There are arguments today about what is the Word and what is not the Word - no time to go into all that today - but the fact that this has been around in it’s current form for 2000 years is pretty good evidence - …

Measure yourself by God’s Word so that you won’t have to endure correction - again, that’s no fun for anyone!

**Closing Arguments: 10 Keys to a Powerful Summation**

By Dennis S. Ellis and Adam M. Reich

**10. Conclude with a memorable phrase, sentence, or anecdote.** Conclude your opening with a memorable phrase or anecdote. Remind the jury not just of the important role that they play in the legal system and the impact that their verdict will have on your client, but also the message that any verdict will send to our society as a whole. Plaintiffs want their jurors to be agreeable, so implore all members of the jury to consider the viewpoints of their fellow jurors, as the collective will of the panel is more important than individual beliefs. Defendants want their jurors to feel empowered. Remind them that their individual voices must be heard. Acknowledge that it is humbling to entrust 12 strangers with the fate of your client, but that you are confident the facts you have presented will lead them to conclude in your client’s favor. Finally, leave the jury with a phrase, sentence, or anecdote that they will remember when they go to deliberate; perhaps a historic quote or something that they can rely on when considering the case. For example, “Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.” John Adams, Closing Argument in Defense of the Solders in the Boston Massacre Trials (Dec. 1770).

**> Let love rule.**

2nd Corinthians 13:11-13 - Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words: Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.

Greet each other with a sacred kiss. All of God’s people here send you their greetings.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

It’s been hard to say these things. This may be the hardest letter in all of the New Testament - this was probably the most difficult church in the New Testament -

The Galatians had their problems - they were going back into legalism - but the Corinthians had numerous problems - and it was putting them in danger of falling completely away from the faith and their relationship with Christ.

Paul concludes by saying - Hey - I know this has been hard - if you don’t straighten up it will still be hard when I get there - but I want you to know this - I love you - love one another - be joyful - encourage one another - live in harmony with one another —

Let’s love one another -

John 13:34-35 - So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

1st John 4:7-12 - Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

**Invitation -**

**Don’t forget the Connection Card**

**Blessing -**