

## SECOND CORINTHIANS

### Conversational Version

#### Salutation

**1:**<sup>1</sup>Paul, apostle of Christ<sup>Messiah</sup> Jesus by God's will, and Timothy *our* brother, to the church of God in Corinth with the saints everywhere in Achaia. <sup>2</sup>Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Cor 1:1-2

#### God's Comfort in Sufferings

<sup>3</sup>Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He's our merciful Father and comforting God. <sup>4</sup>He comforts us in every hardship so we can comfort other people in any hardship with the comfort he gave us. <sup>5</sup>As sufferings for Christ increase in us, our comfort through Christ also increases. <sup>6</sup>If we experience hardship, *it's* for your comfort and salvation. If we're comforted, *it's* for your comfort to endure the same sufferings we have. <sup>7</sup>Our hope for you *is* unmovable because we know that as you share *our* sufferings, *you share our* comfort too.

<sup>8</sup>Fellow Christians, we want you to know about our hardships in Asia. It was a burden so much beyond our own power to handle that we weren't sure we'd even live *through* it. <sup>9</sup>We had the death sentence in us so we weren't trusting in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup>He rescued us from a great threat of death, and we've put our hope in him to keep rescuing us. <sup>11</sup>You worked for us by praying so lots of people could be grateful for the grace we've received.

2 Cor 1:3-11

#### Paul's Sincerity

<sup>12</sup>We're proud of how clear our conscience feels, especially toward you. We've conducted ourselves in godly holiness and sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in divine grace. <sup>13</sup>We're writing what you can understand, and I hope you'll understand it completely. <sup>14</sup>You understand to some extent how proud we are of you—like you *will be* of us when the Lord Jesus comes. 2 Cor 1:12-14

<sup>15</sup>In this confidence I was intending at first to come so you could have a second grace. <sup>16</sup>I meant to go through you on to Macedonia and back to you, and to have you send me forward to Judaea. <sup>17</sup>With this plan I wasn't being fickle, was I? Do I make fickle plans—"Yes, *I will*"; "No, *I won't*." <sup>18</sup>As God keeps his word, we don't tell you, "Yes, *I will*" and *then say*, "No, *I won't*." <sup>19</sup>God's Son, Christ Jesus, the One Silvanus, Timothy, and I presented among you, wasn't, "Yes, *I will*"; "No, *I won't*." He's been "Yes, *I will*." <sup>20</sup>However many promises God has made, in Christ is "Yes." He's *our* Amen, to God's honor. <sup>21</sup>In Christ, God has established us, anointed us and you, <sup>22</sup>sealed us, and given us the Spirit as a pledge in our hearts. 2 Cor 1:15-22

### Paul's Delayed Visit

<sup>23</sup>God's my witness: it was to spare you that I changed my mind and didn't come to Corinth. <sup>24</sup>We aren't trying to lord it over your faith; we're fellow workers for your joy. You stand firm in *your own* faith. **2:**<sup>1</sup>I was determined not to come again with sadness. <sup>2</sup>If I make you feel bad, who's going to make me feel good except the ones I made feel bad? <sup>3</sup>I've written this so when I come, I won't be saddened by the ones I need to make me happy. I'm confident that my joy would mean your joy. <sup>4</sup>Out of hardship and anxiety, I wrote to you through many tears, not to make you sad, but to let you know how much I care about you. 2 Cor 1:23-2:4

### Forgiving the Offender in Corinth

<sup>5</sup>If somebody has caused sadness, he hasn't caused it just to me—I'm not exaggerating—but to all of you. <sup>6</sup>That discipline by the majority is enough for someone like him. <sup>7</sup>Now you need to forgive him and comfort *him* so grief doesn't overwhelm him. <sup>8</sup>So show him how much you care about him. <sup>9</sup>That's another reason I've written: to know if you obey in everything. <sup>10</sup>If you've forgiven anybody of anything, I have too. What I've forgiven I've forgiven for your sake in the presence of Christ <sup>11</sup>so Satan can't get the better of us. We know how he works. 2 Cor 2:5-11

### Paul's Push to Get to Corinth

<sup>12</sup>When I got to Troas to present the good news about Christ, a door opened up for me in the Lord. <sup>13</sup>*But* I didn't find any peace of mind because I didn't find my brother Titus. So I left and went on over to Macedonia.

<sup>14</sup>Thanks to God, who always leads us in victorious procession in Christ, and reveals through us everywhere the sweet aroma that arises from knowing him. <sup>15</sup>We're the scent of Christ *arising* to God among the saved and the perishing. <sup>16</sup>To the one *we're* the stench that leads to death; to the other *we're* the aroma that leads to life. Who's good enough for that? <sup>17</sup>We're not like many that peddle God's message for money. In Christ we speak sincerely from God in his sight. 2 Cor 2:12-17

### Ministry of the New Covenant

**3:**<sup>1</sup>Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? We don't need letters of recommendation to you or from you like some do, do we? <sup>2</sup>You're our letter that everybody can know and read, written on our hearts. <sup>3</sup>You're an open letter from Christ, served by us, not written with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets, but on human hearts.

<sup>4</sup>We have so much confidence in God through Christ, <sup>5</sup>not because we're adequate to consider anything as our own accomplishment, but adequate because of what comes from God.

<sup>6</sup>He has made us adequate ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit. The letter deadens; the spirit enlivens.

<sup>7</sup>The ministry that brought death—engraved with letters on stone—came with so much glory that the Israelites couldn't look at Moses' face—a fading glory. <sup>8</sup>Won't the ministry of the spirit have *even* more glory? <sup>9</sup>If the ministry that brought condemnation had glory, how much more glory does the ministry have that brings goodness. <sup>10</sup>What *had* glory doesn't have any in comparison to what *has* greater glory. <sup>11</sup>What faded away had glory, but what doesn't fade away has a lot more glory.

2 Cor 3:1-11

### Freedom from Law

<sup>12</sup>With that kind of hope, let's be bold. <sup>13</sup>Let's not be like Moses, who put a veil on so the Israelites wouldn't have to look at what was fading away. <sup>14-15</sup>Their minds were insensitive. To this day when they read the Old Covenant, the same veil is there. They don't understand that Christ<sup>Messiah</sup> removes it. <sup>16</sup>When *their heart* turns to the Lord, the veil disappears. <sup>17</sup>Now the Lord *is* the spirit of the Old Covenant, and where his spirit is, *there's* freedom. <sup>18</sup>When with unveiled face we look at the glory of the Lord in a mirror, the Lord, the spirit, transforms us into that same image from glory to *more* glory.

2 Cor 3:12-18

### Preaching Christ

<sup>4:1</sup>So, since we have this ministry, we don't get discouraged because we've received mercy. <sup>2</sup>We've set aside shameful secrets; we don't indulge in trickery or pervert God's message. But by showing what's true, we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in front of God. <sup>3</sup>If our good news is veiled, it's veiled to people that perish. <sup>4</sup>The god of this world has blinded the minds of disbelievers so the glorious good news about Christ, the image of God, doesn't enlighten them. <sup>5</sup>We don't present ourselves; *we present* Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for his sake. <sup>6</sup>God said, "**Light will shine out of darkness**" [Gen 1:3; Is. 9:2]; he's the One that will "*shine*" in our hearts and "*enlighten*" us with the knowledge of his glory *that shines* on the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Cor 4:1-6

### Endurance in Conflict

<sup>7</sup>We have this treasure in clay jars so *it'll be obvious* that *the* extraordinary power of the message does not come from us, but from God. <sup>8</sup>In every way we're afflicted, but not crushed; puzzled, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not abandoned; knocked down, but not destroyed, <sup>10</sup>always carrying around in *our* body the death of Jesus so his life will be obvious in our body as well. <sup>11</sup>We who are alive keep getting delivered to death because of Jesus so his life can shine in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup>So death is at work in us, but life *is at work* in you. <sup>13</sup>We have the same spirit of trust as the scripture says "**I believed; so I spoke**" [Ps 116:10]. We "*believe*" too; so we "*speak*"

<sup>14</sup>because we know that the One who raised Jesus up will raise us up with him and present us along with you. <sup>15</sup>Everything's for your sake so the grace that has spread out through an increasing number *of people* will increase the gratitude, to God's glory.

<sup>16</sup>So we don't get discouraged. Though our outer self wears out, our inner self renews daily. <sup>17</sup>Our temporary, light hardship produces for us more and more an eternal, weighty glory that's beyond comparison. <sup>18</sup>We don't look at what we can see, but what we can't. What we can see is temporary; what we can't see is eternal. **5:**<sup>1</sup>We know that if our earthly "housing" perishes, we have one from God not made with hands, eternal in heaven. <sup>2</sup>That's what we wait for. [<sup>3</sup>]  
<sup>4</sup>While we're in this tent, we groan with burdens. We don't want to be "unhoused," but fully housed so life can swallow up what's mortal. <sup>5</sup>God has prepared us for that by giving us the Spirit as a pledge.

**2 Cor 4:7-5:5**

### **Taking Courage in Christ**

<sup>6</sup>So we always take courage. We know that while we're at home in the body we're away from the Lord. (<sup>7</sup>We operate by faith more than by sight.) <sup>8</sup>We have courage and prefer to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So we aim to please him, whether we're at home or away. <sup>10</sup>We all have to appear at Christ's judgment seat to receive pay for what we did in the body, good or bad.

<sup>11</sup>So, fearing the Lord, we persuade people. We're open and obvious to God and, I hope, in your conscience too. <sup>12</sup>We're not trying to commend ourselves to you again; we're giving you a chance to take pride in us so you can answer people that take pride in appearances instead of heart. <sup>13</sup>Whether we're beside ourselves *is* for God *to decide*; whether we have a sound mind is for you *to decide*. <sup>14</sup>Christ's love controls us because we've concluded that since One died for all, all had died. <sup>15</sup>He died for all so all the living would stop living for themselves and *live* for the One that died for them and resurrected.

**2 Cor 5:6-15**

### **Salvation as Reconciliation**

<sup>16</sup>So from now on, we don't know anybody by what they look like. Even though we've known Christ that way, we don't anymore. <sup>17</sup>So if anybody's in Christ, they're a new creation. The old things are gone; they've become new; <sup>18</sup>and they've come from God. He has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us a ministry about reconciliation: <sup>19</sup>that in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not holding their trespasses against them, and putting in us the message about reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>We're ambassadors for Christ, and God is making his appeal *to the world* through us, "*Please, for the sake of Christ, be reconciled to God.*" <sup>21</sup>The One who hadn't sinned God treated as sinful on our behalf so we could become sinless in him.

**2 Cor 5:16-21**

### **Combating Opposition by Authentic Living**

**6**<sup>1</sup>We're working with him and urging you not to receive God's grace for nothing. <sup>2</sup>He says,

***"I listened to you at the right time;  
I helped you at a time of salvation"*** [Is 49:8].

That "right time" is now; that "time of salvation" is now. <sup>3</sup>We try not to offend in anything so people won't find fault with our ministry. <sup>4</sup>We try to commend ourselves as ministers in endurance, affliction, hardship, distress, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonment, mob violence, labors, sleeplessness, hunger; <sup>6</sup>in purity, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, a holy spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup>in the message about the truth, the power of God; by the weapons of goodness in the right *hand* and the left; <sup>8</sup>through honor and disrespect, bad report and good; as deceitful but true, <sup>9</sup>unknown but well-known, as dying but alive, punished but not put to death; <sup>10</sup>as grieved but always rejoicing, as owning nothing but having everything.

<sup>11</sup>We've spoken freely to you, Corinthians; we've opened our hearts wide open. <sup>12</sup>We're not restraining you; your inward parts are restraining you. <sup>13</sup>Open up to us. (I'm talking as if *I'm talking to my children.*)

**2 Cor 6:1-13**

#### Christians as God's Temple

<sup>14</sup>Don't get unequally yoked to unbelievers. How can goodness team up with lawlessness? What does light have in common with darkness? <sup>15</sup>What harmony *is there* between Christ and Belial? What part does a believer have with a disbeliever? <sup>16</sup>What agreement is there between God's sanctuary and idols? We're God's living sanctuary—like he said,

***"I'll live and move among them;  
I'll be their God,  
and they'll be my people*** [Lev 26:12; Jer 32:28; Ezek 37:27].

<sup>17</sup>***So come out from among them  
and be separate,' the LORD says.***

***'Don't touch anything unclean,  
and I'll welcome you in*** [Is 52:11; Ezek 20:34, 41].

<sup>18</sup>***I'll be your Father,  
and you'll be my sons and daughters'*** [2 Sam 7:8; Is 43:6; Jer 31:9; Hos 1:10],  
***the LORD Almighty says"*** [Amos 3:13 LXX; 4:13 LXX].

<sup>7</sup><sup>1</sup>Since we have these promises, let's "cleanse" ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, and become perfect in holiness out of respect for God.

**2 Cor 6:14-7:1**

#### The Great Value of Repentance

<sup>2</sup>Make room for us *in your hearts*. We haven't done anything wrong to anybody, misled anybody, taken advantage of anybody. <sup>3</sup>I'm not criticizing *you*; like I said earlier, you're in our

hearts whether that means living or dying together. <sup>4</sup>I'm being bold with you and expressing the great pride I take in you. **2 Cor 7:2-4**

<sup>5</sup>When we came to Macedonia, we couldn't rest. We had troubles on every *side*—conflicts outside and fears inside. <sup>6</sup>But God, who comforts the downhearted, comforted us by Titus' coming <sup>7</sup>and by the comfort he felt over you. He reported your longing, your grieving, *and* your zeal for me, so I rejoiced even more. <sup>8</sup>Though I made you sad by *my* letter, I don't regret *sending it*, though I felt bad that it made you sad for a while. <sup>9</sup>I'm happy now, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved to repentance. You were sorry in conformity with God's will, so you didn't suffer any loss because of us. <sup>10</sup>Sorrow that conforms *a person* to God's *will* produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. The grief of this world leads to a dead end. <sup>11</sup>What earnestness that grieving in conformity to God's will has produced in you! What defense and indignation! What fear and longing! What zeal and avenging of wrong! In everything you've shown yourselves to be innocent in the matter. <sup>12</sup>I didn't write to you just for the offender and the offended; I wrote for your earnestness toward us to become clear to you in front of God. <sup>13</sup>Because of that, we've been comforted. **2 Cor 7:5-13a**

Besides being comforted, we rejoiced over Titus' joy because you all refreshed his spirit. <sup>14</sup>If I ever told him how proud I was about anything in you, I wasn't embarrassed. As we told you the truth about everything, our comments to Titus proved to be true *as well*. <sup>15</sup>His affection for you is all the greater when he remembers your obedience and how you received him with heartfelt respect. <sup>16</sup>I'm glad I can be confident about you in everything. **2 Cor 7:13b-16**

#### The Collection for Homeland Christians

<sup>8:1</sup>Now I want you to know about God's grace that the churches in Macedonia have given. <sup>2</sup>During a time of obvious great hardship, in their abundant joy and deep poverty their rich generosity abounded. <sup>3</sup>I speak to the fact that by their ability and beyond *they gave* of their own accord. <sup>4</sup>They begged us for the favor of participating in this ministry to the saints, <sup>5</sup>not like we expected, but they gave themselves to the Lord first and to us by God's will. <sup>6</sup>So we urged Titus that, like he made a beginning earlier, he would complete in you this grace too. <sup>7</sup>As you excel in everything—in faith, word, knowledge, diligence, and our love for you—excel in this grace too. **2 Cor 8:1-7**

<sup>8</sup>I'm not telling; I'm testing the sincerity of your love by comparing it to the zeal that others have. <sup>9</sup>You know the graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, he became poor for you so you could become rich from his poverty. <sup>10</sup>I'm offering an opinion for your advantage. A year ago you wanted to do this. <sup>11</sup>Now according to your ability, finish what you started. <sup>12</sup>If people are ready, *it's* acceptable as they have, not as they don't have. <sup>13</sup>The idea is not to make it easy for others and hard on you. It's so there'll be equality. <sup>14</sup>Right now your

abundance supplies their lack so their abundance can supply your lack, so there'll be equality.

<sup>15</sup>Like scripture says,

***“The one that gathered a lot didn’t have too much;  
the one that gathered a little had enough”*** [Ex 16:18].

**2 Cor 8:8-15**

#### **Titus’ Role in the Collection**

<sup>16</sup>Thanks to God, who has put the same earnestness for you in Titus’ heart. <sup>17</sup>He accepted the appeal and has earnestly gone out to you of his own accord. <sup>18</sup>We’ve sent with him a brother that all the churches praise in the gospel. <sup>19</sup>We’ve chosen him to travel with us in this grace that we’re overseeing to the Lord’s honor and *to show* our commitment. <sup>20</sup>*We’re handling the matter this way* so nobody can find fault with us in this generous gift. <sup>21</sup>We’re being careful about what’s appropriate in front of the Lord and people. <sup>22</sup>We’ve sent with them our brother that we’ve often found diligent in many things. He’s all the more diligent because of the confidence he has in you. <sup>23</sup>Titus *is* my partner and fellow worker in respect to you, and our brothers *are* messengers of the churches and Christ’s honor. <sup>24</sup>So show the churches the proof of your love and the reason we’ve been so proud of you.

**2 Cor 8:16-24**

#### **Further Comments on the Collection**

<sup>9</sup><sup>1</sup>I don’t need to write to you about *this* ministry to the saints. <sup>2</sup>I know you’re committed to it, and I’ve told the Macedonians how pleased we are over it—*pleased* that *you in* Achaia have been ready since last year. Your zeal has stirred up many of them. <sup>3</sup>I’ve sent the brothers so our pride in you in this matter wouldn’t be empty talk and, like I said, so you’d be ready. <sup>4</sup>That way, if Macedonians come with me, they’ll find you ready, and we won’t be embarrassed (much less, you) by this confidence *we’ve expressed about you*. <sup>5</sup>So I considered it appropriate to urge the brothers to go on to you and prepare ahead of time the blessing you promised before and get it ready as a blessing and not something you’d be doing under pressure.

**2 Cor 9:1-5**

<sup>6</sup>Now *I tell you*, whoever doesn’t sow much doesn’t reap much, and whoever sows a lot reaps a lot. <sup>7</sup>Each person needs to do as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly, or because he has to. God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup>He can make grace overflow for you so you can overflow in every good thing you do. You’ll always have everything you need, <sup>9</sup>like scripture says,

***“He has distributed to everybody;  
he has given to the poor.***

***His goodness remains forever”*** [Ps 112:9].

<sup>10</sup>The One who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed, and increase the harvest from your goodness. <sup>11</sup>In many ways, *your* generosity will enrich you, and yield thanksgiving to God through us. <sup>12</sup>Ministering this service not only supplies what the

saints need, it overflows with their great thanksgiving to God. <sup>13</sup>By the proof this ministry gives, they'll praise him for your obedience to the good news about Christ that you express by your generous contribution to them and everyone. <sup>14</sup>While they pray for you, they'll really want *to see* you because of the surpassing grace of God that's in you. <sup>15</sup>Thank God for his indescribable gift!

2 Cor 9:6-15

#### Paul's Defense of His Ministry

<sup>10:1</sup>Now I urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who *am* meek when around, but bold when away! <sup>2</sup>I pray that when I am present, I won't be as bold as I reckon I could confidently be against some who claim that we live according to the flesh. <sup>3</sup>We do live in the flesh, but we don't fight according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>Our weapons *aren't* physical; they're powerful in front of God for destroying strongholds. *With them* we destroy speculations <sup>5</sup>and every stronghold that rises up against knowing God. We make every thought captive to obeying Christ. <sup>6</sup>We stand ready to punish every disobedience whenever your obedience is complete.

2 Cor 10:1-6

<sup>7</sup>You look at the outward appearance of things. If anybody thinks they belong to Christ, they need to think about this again: as they belong to Christ, so do we. <sup>8</sup>Even if I'm too proud of our authority—which the Lord gave us for building you up, not for tearing you down—I won't let you disregard me. <sup>9</sup>I wouldn't want to scare you with my letters! <sup>10</sup>*"His letters,"* they say, *"are heavy and strong; but his physical presence is weak, and his speech is contemptible."* <sup>11</sup>They need to realize that what we are in word by letters when absent, *we can be* in deed when present.

2 Cor 10:7-11

<sup>12</sup>We don't take it on ourselves to group *ourselves* and compare ourselves with people that put themselves forward. They measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves; that doesn't make sense. <sup>13</sup>We aren't going to take credit for more than we should, only in the area God appointed to us—to go as far as *where you are*. <sup>14</sup>We're not engaging in overreach; our work in the good news about Christ was the first to go as far *as where you live*. <sup>15</sup>We don't take credit for other men's labors. But, we hope that you'll hold us in increasingly higher regard in our area *of service*, <sup>16</sup>so we can preach the good news in places beyond you instead of bragging about what's been accomplished in somebody else's area *of service*. <sup>17</sup>***"The one that boasts should boast in the LORD"*** [Jer 9:24]. <sup>18</sup>It's not who commends himself that's approved, but who the LORD commends.

2 Cor 10:12-18

#### Paul in Contrast to Other Ministers

<sup>11:1</sup>Just bear with me in a little foolishness. <sup>2</sup>I'm jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I married you to one husband and presented *you as a* pure virgin. <sup>3</sup>I'm afraid that somehow, like the snake tricked Eve, he'll lead your minds astray from the simplicity [and purity]<sup>ms</sup> that's in Christ. <sup>4</sup>If anybody comes presenting another Jesus than the One we've presented, or you receive



a different spirit than you've received, or a different message than you've received, you pay patient attention to *him*! <sup>5</sup>In no way do I consider myself inferior to the most prominent apostles. <sup>6</sup>Even if I'm not skilled in how I speak, I am "*skilled*" in what I know, and *we*'ve made that quite clear to you in everything. 2 Cor 11:1-6

<sup>7</sup>Did I sin by humbling myself so you could be respected? Did I sin by presenting God's good news to you for free? <sup>8</sup>I robbed other churches, taking support *from them* so I could minister to you. <sup>9</sup>When I was with you and needed *something*, I didn't burden *you*. Brothers came from Macedonia to supply *those needs*. In every way I've kept from being a burden to you, and I'll continue to do that. <sup>10</sup>As Christ's truth is in me, I won't stop taking pride in that approach *to ministering* anywhere in Achaia. <sup>11</sup>Why? Because I don't love you? God knows.

<sup>12</sup>What I'm doing I'll keep doing. *I want to* take away any chance for the ones who want to be considered like us in what they're proud of. <sup>13</sup>People like them are false apostles, deceptive workers that disguise themselves as Christ's apostles. <sup>14</sup>That's no wonder; Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup>So *it's* not surprising if his ministers disguise themselves as ministers of goodness. They'll end up *rewarded* according to what they've done. 2 Cor 11:7-15

### Recounting Paul's Sufferings

<sup>16</sup>Again let me say, don't anybody consider me foolish. But, if *you do*, receive me as foolish so I can boast a little bit. <sup>17</sup>I'm not speaking here as the Lord would *have me speak*, but foolishly, in confident boasting. <sup>18</sup>Since many take pride in the flesh, I will too. <sup>19</sup>Since you're smart, you gladly put up with foolish people <sup>20</sup>who enslave you, eat you up, take advantage of you, put on airs, slap you in the face! <sup>21</sup>I'm speaking disparagingly *of myself* as if I really have been weak. But, in whatever respect anybody wants to be bold, I'll be bold too. <sup>22</sup>Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. <sup>23</sup>Are they Christ's ministers? I *am* more: in more labors, in jail more often, in scourgings more severely, in *danger of* death many times. <sup>24</sup>I received 39 lashes 5 times; <sup>25</sup>I was beaten with rods 3 times; I was stoned once; I was shipwrecked 3 times; I've spent a night and a day in the open water. <sup>26</sup>*I've* traveled often in dangers from rivers, robbers, *my* own countrymen, the Gentiles, in the desert, on the sea, among false believers. <sup>27</sup>I've been in labor and hardship, in lots of sleepless nights, hungry and thirsty often, cold and without enough clothes. <sup>28</sup>Besides external things, *there's* daily pressure on me for all the churches. <sup>29</sup>Who is weak and I'm not weak? Who falls into sin, and I'm not distressed? 2 Cor 11:16-29

<sup>30</sup>If I'm going to be proud, I'll be proud of my weaknesses. <sup>31</sup>The God and Father of the Lord Jesus—blessed forever—knows I'm not lying. <sup>32</sup>In Damascus the ethnarch under King Aretas was guarding the city to capture me, <sup>33</sup>and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped. 2 Cor 11:30-33

### Paul's Revelation Experiences

**12:**<sup>1</sup>Being proud may be appropriate, but *it's* not profitable. I'll go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. <sup>2</sup>I know a man in Christ 14 years ago—whether in the body or not, I don't know; God knows. He was caught up to the third heaven—<sup>[3]</sup>repeat <sup>4</sup>to Paradise—and heard things you can't express in words. <sup>5</sup>I'll take pride in that man; I won't boast about myself except in my weaknesses. <sup>6</sup>If I do boast, I won't be foolish *about it*; I'll talk about what's real. I don't want anybody to regard me as something more than what they can see for themselves.

### The Thorn in the Flesh

<sup>7</sup>Because of the extraordinary greatness of *those* revelations, God gave me a thorn in the flesh—a messenger from Satan—to discipline me so I wouldn't think too highly of myself. <sup>8</sup>I asked the Lord three times to take it away. <sup>9</sup>He said, "*My grace is sufficient for you; my power reaches its highest expression in weakness.*" Gladly, then, I'll take pride in my weaknesses so Christ's power can live in me. <sup>10</sup>So I delight in weakness, mistreatment, need, persecution, and difficulty for Christ. When I'm weak I'm strong.

2 Cor 12:1-10

### Concern for Corinth

<sup>11</sup>You've made me become foolish. You should've been commending me. In no way have I been inferior to the most prominent apostles, though I'm nothing. <sup>12</sup>I worked the signs of an apostle among you in an ongoing way—signs, wonders, and miracles. <sup>13</sup>How did I treat you worse than the other churches—unless *it was* by not making myself a burden to you? Forgive me that wrong! <sup>14</sup>I'm ready to come this third time, and I won't be a burden *this time either*. I want you, not yours. Children don't lay up for parents; it's the other way around. <sup>15</sup>I'll gladly spend and be spent for your souls. Do you love me less for loving you more? <sup>16</sup>Anyway, I didn't burden you, because I was sneaky; I took you in by being crafty! <sup>17</sup>Did I take advantage of you through anybody I've sent you? <sup>18</sup>I'm the one that urged Titus and the brother *to come*. Titus hasn't taken advantage of you, has he? Haven't we both conducted ourselves with the same attitude? *Haven't we walked* in the same footsteps?

2 Cor 12:11-18

<sup>19</sup>Do you think I'm saying all this to defend myself? God is witness, I'm saying this in Christ to help you. <sup>20</sup>I'm afraid that in some way, when I get there, I won't find you like I want to, and you won't find me that way either. I'm afraid *I'll find* rivalry, jealousy, anger, dispute, slander, gossip, pride, disturbances. <sup>21</sup>I'm afraid my God will humiliate me in front of you, and I'll be sad because people that sinned previously haven't repented of their impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality.

2 Cor 12:19-21

### Self-Examination Before God

**13:**<sup>1</sup>This will be the third time I'm coming to you. "*Establish everything by two or three witnesses*" [Deut 19:15]. <sup>2</sup>The second time I was there I said this—and I say it again to the ones that sinned previously and to the rest—if I come again, I won't hold back, <sup>3</sup>because you're looking for proof that Christ is speaking in me. He's not weak toward you but is strong among you. <sup>4</sup>Indeed, he was crucified out of weakness, but lives by God's power. We're weak in him too, but we'll live with him by God's power *that's directed* at you. **2 Cor 13:1-4**

<sup>5</sup>Test *to see* if you're in the faith; examine yourselves! Don't you realize that God's among you—unless you fail the test? <sup>6</sup>I hope you'll know we won't fail the test. <sup>7</sup>We pray to God that you won't do anything bad, not that we may appear approved, but that you'll do what's good even if we would fail the test. <sup>8</sup>We can't do anything against the truth, only for it. <sup>9</sup>We are happy to be weak and you to be strong. We pray for this too: your perfection. <sup>10</sup>So I'm writing this while absent so when I'm present, I won't have to be severe in using the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down. **2 Cor 13:5-10**

#### Final Greetings

<sup>11</sup>Finally, rejoice, strive for perfection, be comforted, live in harmony and peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. <sup>12</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss. <sup>(13)</sup>All the saints greet you.

<sup>13(14)</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. **2 Cor 13:11-13(14)**

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