

Hello. /We will begin our 22nd and final lecture on 1 and 2 Corinthians. /The message is from 2 Corinthians 12 and 13. /The title of chapter 12 is “Revelation.” /The title of chapter 13 is “Greetings.”

/First, verses 1-6. Paul goes to the third heaven. /Second, verses 7-8. A thorn is given to Paul in the flesh. /Third, verses 9-10. Boast in weakness. /Fourth, verses 11-13. Paul is not inferior to the other apostles. /Fifth, verses 14-18. Paul does not seek possessions, but he seeks the believers in Corinth. /Sixth, verses 19-21. Paul fears that the believers in Corinth will not repent.

/First, verses 1-6. Paul speaks about going to the third heaven.
/Verses 1-2. Let us read. /I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.

/Paul says he must go on boasting though there is nothing to be gained by it. /There is nothing a person gains by boasting. /There is especially nothing to be gained by boasting in one’s self. /Paul did not seek his own honor.

/However, because people slandered him and because the believers had misunderstandings about him, Paul is trying to make himself known to the believers. /As he does this, he talks about visions and revelations of the Lord.

/A “vision” is seeing something that doesn’t exist in reality. /A “revelation” is revealing and showing something that was once covered. /To Paul, the visions and revelations are standard revelations that allow him to write the books of the Bible.

/The apostles and their successors recorded these “standard revelations” in the Bible, and after them, standard revelations came to an end. /Receiving dreams, visions, and revelations in today’s time is not consistent with the Bible. /If we believe in the wrong things, we fall into the devil’s temptation.

/Verse 2 says, “I know a man in Christ.” /This person was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. /“Third heaven” refers to a spiritual heaven, or the spiritual world. /It also refers to paradise.

/Verses 3 and 4 say, “I know that this man was caught up into paradise... and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.” / “First heaven” refers to the material world. / “Second heaven” is the mental world. /There is a world of the spirit that transcends the material and mental worlds.

/It is clear that this paradise is a specific place. /It is completely different when Paul enters the third heaven and when mystics reach a state of ecstasy. /How are they different? /Let me give you 7 reasons why they are different.

/Mystics reaching a level of ecstasy and Paul going to the third heaven are two different things. /The second half of verse 4 says, “Whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.”

/First, Paul had control of his body. /In other words, when he went to the third heaven, Paul attempted to figure out if he was in the body or out of it. /However, mystics do not have control, but instead, they are in a drowsy state as if they are dreaming.

/Second, Paul was taken objectively while mystics feel things subjectively. /Third, Paul was passively taken whereas mystics actively have to try.

/Fourth, Paul didn’t enter the third heaven because he wanted to, but mystics desire to reach a certain state. /Fifth, Paul went one time during a fourteen year period, but mystics can frequently reach this state if they desire.

/God’s revelation is only given once. It is not repeated multiple times. /Sixth, Paul did his best to not boast, and he only boasts once after fourteen years. /However, mystics always boast and try to make money off their activity.

/Seventh, the details about Paul entering the third heaven are consistent with the Bible. /However, many of the details about mystics are not consistent with the Bible. /Paul went to the third heaven only because God took him there.

/God showed Paul this standard revelation so that believers of future generations would know this secret. /The second half of verse 2 says, “Whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.”

/If God knows, there is no need for us to try to know. /We must know what we can know as human beings, but we need to leave to God the things that are beyond. /It is wrong for us to try to know what is beyond us.

/If we force our way into knowing these things, we depart from the truth and are deceived by the devil. /Therefore, the day of Jesus’ return is not revealed to us. /Jesus himself said that he does not know the day. /It is in the authority of God the Father.

/If we say we know the day of Jesus’ return, we have already been deceived by the devil. /Paul did not say that he was the one who was taken to the third heaven. /He says it was a man he knows.

/He says it happened completely by the grace of God, not by his own effort. /Verse 4 says, “And he heard things that cannot be told, /which man may not utter.”

/Paul was used in the work that was done completely by God. /To make known the fact that it was not of his doing, Paul speaks in the third person. /The person who was used in the work of God is not the same as the current Paul.

/When he was used for the work of God, Paul was called purely by God to be used spiritually. / “Which man may not utter.” /Because the state and form of heaven is too spiritual and mysterious, Paul cannot express the things with the words of this world.

/Verses 5-6. /On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses—though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me.

/Paul says he will boast on behalf of the man who was used by God. /He boasts not because he did something, but because God did the work. /In order to boast about God, he had to boast about this.

/But Paul says he has nothing to boast on his own behalf except his weaknesses. /He always tried not to be proud. /He did not talk about everything he saw at the third heaven.

/The reason is people who listen to him may acknowledge him beyond what is true. /If this happens, they may worship Paul. /For his own self, it is okay for Paul to tell about what he experienced in the third heaven.

/But if the believers hear him and think too much of him, they leave the place of proper faith. /Though something may be true, it is better for us to not say it if it does not benefit others. /1 Corinthians 10:23 says, ““All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.”

/Although something is correct, we must not say it if it does not help others. /The outstanding Apostle Paul had a thorn. /Second, verses 7-8 are about Paul’s thorn in the flesh.

/Verses 7-8. /So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

/God gave Paul a thorn in the flesh to pierce him. /Whenever it pierced Paul, he felt severe pain. /Why did Paul have this thorn? /Verse 7 clearly tells us the purpose of the thorn.

/ “So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations.” /What was this thorn? /Some say it is the eye disease that Paul had. /Some claim it was something else.

/Because of this eye disease, Paul had someone else write his letters for him. /They say that Paul himself wrote in big letters the concluding part of his letters. /1 Corinthians 16:21. /Galatians 6:11.

/The believers in Galatia said they would give their eyes to Paul if they could. /Galatians 4:15. /Because Paul could not see well due to the eye disease, the believers had this thought.

/Sometimes, Paul's eye disease was a trial to the believers. /Galatians 4:14. /It was an object of slander. /Furthermore, it was a great obstacle for Paul when he preached the gospel and wrote letters.

/Regardless, God gave Paul this thorn because he loved him. /Paul says the thorn is Satan's messenger. /Why does he say the thorn is a messenger of Satan? /In the past, Paul served as Satan's servant.

/Because Paul was given this eye disease as a result, he calls it Satan's messenger. /On the road to Damascus, Paul saw the light of the resurrected Lord. /Because of the powerful light, Paul's eyes could not see, and he received this illness. /Acts 9:8,9.

/Afterwards, Paul's vision returned, but his eyes did not completely heal. /God gave Paul the thorn, but it was Satan who carried it out. /That is why it is a "messenger of Satan."

/When God gives people thorns, he gives what is appropriate for each person. /Every believer has a thorn. /If we do not have a thorn, we are not trained, and we cannot be made. /Therefore, we must receive with gratitude the thorn that God in his grace has given to us. /God in his grace gives us affliction.

/But Paul prayed 3 times for this thorn to disappear. /God did not answer his prayer. /God does not work with the intelligent, complete people of the world.

/He calls on the weak and lacking and works with them. /Therefore, the thorn that believers have in their flesh are a gift of God that allows the power of the Lord to dwell in us.

/Verses 9-10. /But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

/Paul made a special prayer to God, but God didn't get rid of his thorn. /The verse says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." /This is a very paradoxical sentence.

/Because of the thorn, Paul became weak and faced many difficulties when he worked. /However, God's power is made perfect in weakness. /The believer lowers himself when he is weak, and he trusts in God. Then the power of God is at work.

/With this power, the believer saves other people and successfully does the work of God. /For this reason, Paul says he is content in his weaknesses. /He says he is strong when he is weak.

/Fourth, verses 11-13. Paul isn't inferior to the other apostles.

/Verses 11-13. /I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

/Until now, Paul boasted in himself, but he isn't responsible for these things. The believers in Corinth are responsible. /The reason for this is they accepted false teachers and rejected Paul, the true apostle.

/Paul humbly says he is nothing, but he says he ought to be commended and acknowledged by the believers. /He says this because the church of Corinth is the fruit of the Apostle Paul's work.

/In terms of receiving God's revelation and understanding the truth, he wasn't inferior to the super apostles. /Paul received money from other churches, but not from the church of Corinth. /He didn't want to burden the believers.

/Apart from these things, Paul says the church of Corinth isn't less favored than the rest of the churches. /It isn't fair that Paul received wages from other churches but not from the church of Corinth. He asks them to accept this fact. /Paul also tells them that he plans to visit them a third time.

/Fifth, verses 14-18. Paul does not seek possessions, but he seeks the believers in Corinth. /Sixth, /verses 19-21. Paul fears that the believers in Corinth will not repent.

/Verses 19-21. /Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved. For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.

/Paul worries and fears that when he goes to the church of Corinth, the believers there will not find him as they wish. /Paul wished that the believers would stand firm in the word and keep their faith.

/But if Paul sees that they haven't repented or applied their faith, how unfortunate would that be? /The believers in Corinth probably want Paul to love them and comfort them.

/If he goes to Corinth and rebukes them for their wrongdoings, they will be disappointed. /However, if they repent and stand upright, Paul will treat them with benevolence and love, just as they wish.

/Thus in 1 Corinthians 4:21, Paul says, “What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?”

/We will now study chapter 13. /Chapter 13 is made up of 3 main points.
/First, establish that you have faith. Verses 1-6. /Second, desiring restoration. Verses 7-10. /Third, greetings and blessings. Verses 11-14.

/13:14 is the model for the famous benediction. /Today’s Korean church uses verse 14 as the basis for the benediction. /The title of chapter 13 is “Greetings.” First, establish that you have faith.

/Verse 1 says, “This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.” /Paul sternly warns them that he will deal with the sinners in the church of Corinth when he gets there if they do not repent.

/That is why he says, “Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.” /He does not deal with the sinners alone. /He says he will establish the charges by the evidence of prime witnesses.

/Proverbs 18:17 says, “The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.” /We have to hear from both sides of the case if we want the right verdict.

/Whenever the church deals with sin, there must be witnesses. /If a brother sins, we must first find him when he is alone and tell him he is at fault. /If he does not listen to our words, we must bring two or three witnesses and talk to him.

/If he still does not listen, we must tell the church, and if he does not listen to the church, we must treat him like a Gentile and a tax collector. /Matthew 18:15-17. /The Bible tells us not to admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. /1 Timothy 5:19.

/We must cautiously bring a case against elders or pastors only when we have solid evidence of two or three witnesses. /We must not come to a judgment based on one person’s words. /The reason is someone may have bad feelings toward someone else, or they may be used by the devil to expose someone.

/Verses 2-3. /I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not

spare them—since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you.

/Paul did not spare the sinners in the past, and he won't spare them this time either. Therefore, those who sinned must repent beforehand so that they are not punished. /It is better for believers to be rebuked and to repent beforehand than it is for them to do nothing and be punished.

/Whoever confesses his sin will obtain mercy before God. /Proverbs 28:13. /Verse 3 says, "He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you." /Christ may appear weak in dealing with them, but he appears with power.

/To appear with power means he rules with power. /God waited and still waits for the believers in Corinth to repent. However, if they do not repent, he will rule over them with power.

/During Noah's time, when people sinned, God let them be for 120 years. After these years passed, he punished them severely with a flood. /For a period of time, God gives us the opportunity to repent, and he waits.

/People treat God as if he doesn't exist because God doesn't immediately punish them when they sin. /However, when the period is over, God will appear with power to discipline the person.

/Verse 5. /Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

/This Bible verse is an important verse. /It reads, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith." /Jesus Christ is in us. /If he isn't in us, then we fail to meet the test. /The moment we believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes and lives in us.

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/If the believers in Corinth have faith in them, then they should have strong evidence about Paul. /Because they do not apply or have faith, they fall into temptation. /Evidence of Paul being a true apostle is written in their hearts. 2 Corinthians 3:2.

/To check if we have faith, we can look at our fruits. /We need to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. /Galatians 5:22,23.

/We need to test if we have faith, and if we do not have faith, we must become people with faith. /We need to receive the guidance and rule of Christ for Christ to powerfully work in us. /If we do not have the work of Christ, then our faith is dead.

/Second, verses 7-10. Desiring restoration. /Paul requests that the believers in Corinth do not deny Paul's authority as apostle, and that they do not do evil. /Paul does not say these things to show that he is correct or to be respected as an apostle.

/Verses 8-9. /For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for.

/Paul could not do anything against the truth. Therefore, Paul cannot rebuke the believers in Corinth if they stand in the truth. /But if they do evil, Paul must firmly discipline them.

/Here, the verse says, "For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong." /Paul desired for the believers in Corinth to stand in the truth and be strong. He would be glad in this. When this happens, Paul wouldn't be able to exercise his power. This is what it means when Paul is weak.

/However, if they do not stand in faith and go against the truth, then Paul cannot help but strictly rule over them with the authority given to him by God. /That is when pastors appear strong.

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/Verse 10. /For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

/Paul writes these things while he is away so that when they meet later, Paul won't severely punish them in the authority God has given him. /Paul wants the believers to read this letter, repent beforehand, and stand upright.

/Third, greetings and blessings. Verses 11-14.

/Verses 11-14. /Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

/Paul gives them his greetings, and he blesses them. /He makes one final request for them to rejoice and to be restored. /He also wishes them God's spiritual comfort, and he wants them to agree with one another to live in peace. /To agree with one another, we must have Jesus' heart.

/Paul also tells them to greet one another with a holy kiss. /In this time period and in this nation, a "kiss" was a form of greeting. /Each country has a different form of greeting. /Paul is telling the believers to warmly greet one another.

/Verse 13 says, "All the saints greet you." /Believers must greet one another and live in fellowship.

/Verse 14 talks about the blessing of God in Three Persons. /When Korean pastors give the benediction, they apply this verse. /God is one being. /He exists in three Persons.

/Because we received salvation in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we first speak of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. /Because the love of God shows us the grace of redemption, we secondly speak of God's love.

/Third, because the Holy Spirit makes us believe in the grace of redemption, we speak of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

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/It is a true blessing for the believer to dwell in Christ's grace, live with God's love, and have the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

/This concludes our lectures on 1 and 2 Corinthians. /May you be at peace in the Lord.

/Thank you.