

2 Corinthians 1:1-12

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Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 00] As you mentioned previously we'll begin a Lord willing study in the first few chapters, the opening few chapters of 2 Corinthians, having looked in different portions over the previous couple of years at the book of 1 Corinthians.

Just by way of recap, Corinth, to which Paul is writing just now, was the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire after Rome itself and Alexandria and Egypt and Antioch in Syria.

So it's a strategic city. If you've got a map at the back of your Bible you might see what it is. In Greece it's just in the tiny narrow peninsula between the northern part of the Greek landmass and the sort of sticky out almost island bit at the bottom there.

Corinth controls that narrow oostmus. It is the main port, it's on the western side and then there was a short journey by land for goods or merchandise to Canthia which was at the eastern side but effectively Corinth controlled it all.

It had been a key city in the ancient Greek civilizations. It had been destroyed in 146 BC by the Romans against whom it was in rebellion and then it lay, as I don't basically, for about 100 years until it was rebuilt in the days of Julius Caesar, 40 BC and settled, resettled with freed slaves from Italy.

[1 : 34] So then being where it was of course people from all different nations and places came there to do business merchandise and wherever you've got people gathering together, large fluid population, a lot of the maritime population, a lot of mariners and sailors who are of course men far from home, there's going to be vice then that is going to grow and Corinth, as we mentioned when we looked at 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians was basically a cesspit of depravity and of vice and so on.

One of the least likely places you would think where the gospel might flourish. And yet, as we read in Acts 18 when Paul went there and began to bring the gospel into that city, we read that the Lord appeared to Paul in the night by a vision and said, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall settle me to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city.

I have much people in this city. And we read in verse 11 of Acts 18 that Paul, on his first time in Corinth, he stayed there 18 months, a year and a half.

And when Galio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul. Now, because of inscriptions that have been found, we know that Galio became the governor of Achaia in about 51, 52 AD.

So that dates Paul's first visit to about AD 50, or then about 50, 51, 52 at the most. So he's there for about 18 months, and then he has to go off on his travels again.

[3 : 15] He writes his first, what we have as his first letter to the Corinthians about six or seven years later. He has been in touch with them, he has made a visit to them, and that visit that's probably through the winter of 56, 57 AD, is not entirely a happy experience.

Because we read in 2 Corinthians, chapter 2, I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.

And everything indicates that this sort of first visit after the planting of the Corinthian church was a kind of unhappy time, because there had become growing discontent and sort of a rebellion against Paul's authority as an apostle and so on.

You know, he writes the first letter to the Corinthians. We read, So in other words, He says, What do you want me to come, Gently or with a whip?

With a rod? With a whip to chastise you? You know, He's really having to exert his apostolic authority here, because there is division amongst them, there's rumblings, there's puffed upness because of their gifts of the Spirit.

[4 : 44] 2 Corinthians is written probably within months of 1 Corinthians. But you think, Well, that's ages afterwards. It's not that long afterwards in terms of, you know, how quickly the passage of time, how long it takes for letters to go backwards and forwards between one place and another.

And so he probably writes 1 Corinthians in about the spring of AD 57 and 2 Corinthians around the autumn of AD 57. During that first long stay in Corinth, he writes his letter to the Romans.

And we read, you know, Romans 16, verse 1, I commend unto you Phoebe, our sister, which is a servant of the church, which is at Cancra, which remember was the city, the sort of town, the satellite to the east of Corinth, that controlled the other side of the narrow Isthmus, so that the sea-going traffic would then travel over that narrow neck of land.

And then Cancra was at the other end when it did business. And whilst he's writing that from Corinth, he's staying almost certainly in the house of Gaius, because he writes the Romans 16, 23, Gaius, my host, and of the whole church, saluteth you, and Rastus, the chamberlain of the city, saluteth you, and so on.

And some commentators will point out the list of sins that he writes against in Romans chapter 1, when he's writing to Rome, and exactly the sort of depravity you would find in Corinth itself.

[6 : 09] So, we're looking at about the latter part of AD 57, within six months or so of having written 1 Corinthians. He is responding to much of what he has written in 1 Corinthians.

And one of the key reasons why he is writing, there's two or three key reasons why he's writing this second letter, which is really, of course, a third letter at least, because if you think about 1 Corinthians, in chapter 5 at verse 9, it says, I wrote unto you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators, yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, and so on.

So, he has already written one letter to Corinth by the time he writes his next one, which we now have as 1 Corinthians. We don't have a copy. It didn't come down to us.

The Lord, in his providence, did not preserve that very 1 Corinthians. What we now have as 1 Corinthians is the first of two longish letters.

And this now, 2 Corinthians, is at least the third letter that he's written to them, but all that the Lord has preserved to us as a second letter here. So, one of the main reasons he's writing is in order to reinforce his apostolic authority, maintaining his apostolic authority, and contrasting, as we'll see, as we work through this whole book, we'll see contrasting his position, his simplicity, and humility, as he says here in verse 12, rejoicing in this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation, that is, our conduct, in the world, and more abundantly, to you, word.

[7 : 56] And he is contrasting himself with those who had sort of moved in to Corinth, and said, oh yeah, we're apostles too. In fact, we're better apostles than Paul. We're like major apostles compared to him.

You know, look at him, his speech is contemptible, and his bodily presence, his weakest letters, they sound great, but when you see him in the flesh, nah, he's nothing special. Look at us. Listen to our auditory, listen to our strength, listen to our wisdom of the world.

You can understand why we should lead the church. These false apostles, Paul is having to battle against, and you would think, well, it should be obvious, surely, who's the real apostle, and who isn't, but remember that, you know, there's an awful lot more unknown out there in the world.

People don't have instant communication. Somebody turns up from Judea, say, and says, oh yeah, I'm an apostle of the church in Jerusalem here, and I've come to tell you, you know, how you should live, and what the teachings of Jesus really are, and you think, oh, that actually sounds quite plausible, and it actually says, well, I suppose we'll have to, we'll have to trust them, we'll have to take them at face value, we have to not judge, and so on.

So an awful lot of damage can be done if false teaching gets in, which people take, basically, on trust. They don't know better, so they assume that those who claim to be leaders are speaking the truth, and have the best interests at heart.

[9 : 25] Now you might think, well, how could people be so gullible? Whole sections of the church today have fallen into exactly this trap, believing what their leaders say, regardless of what they have in front of them in the scriptures, believing what the men said over them, come out with this, well, after all, they must be men of God, they wouldn't say it, if it wasn't true, we must just be misunderstanding what is there in scripture, and these must be the great men of God.

So if we are prone to it, when we have all the teaching of scripture, and all the established practice of the church for 2,000 years, how much more are they in Corinth going to be prone to it, or anywhere, in the first century church, when they haven't got a whole Bible in front of them, they haven't got the set down of teaching, they haven't got the benefit of a reformation, and, you know, a confession of faith, and all the things that we've got, they are very vulnerable, and Paul is concerned for them, and this is one reason why he intends to assert again his apostolic authority, not so that he can be built up and made a great guy, but rather so that if his authority is accepted, then his doctrine will be accepted, and they will receive what he teaches them, which again and again, if you remember from 1 Corinthians, he says, you know, I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, and that's not just to do with the Lord's Supper, but also in terms of the resurrection as well, you know what he says, when he's talking about the resurrection there, and all that, the rising from the dead, in verse 3 of chapter 15,

I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, he was buried, he rose again the third day according to the scriptures, and that he was seen as seekers of the 12, and so on, so he is passing on to them what he has received from Christ himself, and this is why he is so concerned to establish his authority again in that branch of the church, but also one reason why his authority might be undermined is because he had promised to come back and see them, and he hadn't done it, you know, 1 Corinthians chapter 4, for example, we read verse 19, and he says, so I will come to you shortly if the Lord will, he praised it, if the Lord will, and will know not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power, so he intends to come to them again, and in our own epistle, chapter 1, we would read it verse 15, if we went on, in this confidence,

I was minded to come unto you before, that you might have a second benefit, and to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea, this was his intention, and likewise, chapter 16, verse 5, I will come unto you when I shall pass through Macedonia, for I do pass through Macedonia, he intended to, but for some reason, he had not been able to do so, now if somebody promises to do something, and then they don't do it, especially if they are claiming to be an apostle of the living God, then people are entitled, at least, to some word explanation, there has to be a reason why now, this is part of the explanation in this letter, he intended to come, he wasn't lying to them, he wasn't mucking them about, he intended to come, but he was hindered, but, insofar as he can't come, he is sending this letter in the meantime, to establish his authority, to put right some things that are wrong, and that it should be for the meantime, as his personal visit to them, you know, this time of year, families are often in contact, people can't always come together physically, but maybe they send cards, or maybe they Skype, nowadays, or they'll lift the phone, or whatever, they can't be there physically, but they'll have some means of contact,

Paul doesn't have Skype, he doesn't have cards, he said, but he can send letters, and he's keeping in touch, saying, I was going to come, I meant to come, but in the meantime, I'm getting in touch, so that you can know, that I am remembering you, that you're supporting me in prayer, yes, I'm supporting you too, and that they will be remembering this, he intends also, that they should remember, the directions, of his first epistle, the first Corinthians, as we have it, and to commend, and encourage them, for what they've done right, it's not just about, beating them up, for what they've done wrong, but rather, encouraging them, for what they've done right, now we said, the other day, how all those, who follow the Lord, really apostles, or ordinary Christians, or people like ourselves, it's not that we are flawed, despite being Christians, or we are Christians, despite being flawed, we are followers of Jesus, and we are flawed, and we have faults, and we have failures, where that's part of the whole, package deal, it's like, you know, if you, if you're getting married, you take somebody, for better, for worse, you're not saying on the day, well as long as they don't have any faults, as long as they don't have no bad habits, then I'll take them, as soon as a bad habit comes along, and a fault, oh that's it, it's all over, no it's not, you take for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, sickness and in health, and so it is, with a believer, when the Lord takes his bride to himself, he takes them as they are, and they are flawed, they're full of failures, they're full of difficulties, and sins, and so on, and so likewise, because they are both, and,

[15:11] Paul knows that the Corinthians too, they got good points, and they got bad points, and just as he lectures them about the bad points, he wants to encourage them, about the good points, that's part of what this letter is about, so it's saying, look, when you think about 1 Corinthians 5, and the guy who was, you know, having an affair with his, with his stepmother, and I wrote to you about that, and told you what you had to do, you've done it, you've done really well, you've exercised this discipline, you've tried to reclaim, the offender, you've done really well, and that's part of what the letter is about too, he wants to encourage them in that, and he also wants them, to remember the poor saints, in Judea, and elsewhere, to gather in a collection for them, to make sure it gets sent, Corinth being a centre of commerce, and business, the likelihood is, that in cash terms, they would probably be richer, than a lot of other places, throughout the empire, so there's various reasons, why he's writing this letter, and he's writing it, within a few months, of 1 Corinthians, so it's not years and years, that have passed, it's just a few months, which in terms of the ancient world, that's, that's pretty quick, so we open then, in 2 Corinthians chapter 1,

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, under the church of God, which is Corinth, he's co-authoring this, with Timothy, now again, if you think about, similarities with, with 1 Corinthians, in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, there's a constant theme, of reference to Christ, Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that's how he begins, again here, you know, grace be true and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, blessed be God, even the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, verse 5, for us the sufferings of Christ, abound in us, so our consolation, also aboundeth, by Christ, and so on, it's Jesus again, right in the centre, of everything, and this, directs and informs, everything that Paul does, he is, if we can say it reverently, he is a man, obsessed with Christ, obsessed with the Lord, Jesus Christ, and that drives, everything that he does, and this essentially, is how a Christian should be, it's not that he, a sort of unhealthy obsession, in that sense, but it is a consideration, that fills up, and directs all their being, it's not that they stop being, husbands, or businessmen, or wives, or mothers, or, or you know, workers at this, or that, or whatever the case may be, but now they become,

Christian workers, Christian husband, Christian businessmen, everything they do, is directed, and informed by, their relationship to Christ, that is what drives them, that is what dominates, their lives, they are a Christian first, and they are everything else second, Paul is an apostle of Christ, first, the Lord Jesus Christ comes first, everything else, is secondary, that doesn't make it unimportant, it rather means, that it is given an importance, but in its right context, in its right relationship, to God himself, blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, who comforted us, in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them, which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves, are comforted of God, for as the sufferings of Christ, abound us, so our consolation, also aboundeth by Christ, and whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation, salvation, which is effectual, in the enduring, of the same sufferings, which we also suffer, or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation, and salvation, now these are important verses, first of all, the comfort, the consolation we have, is all from God, from verse 3 there, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforted us, in all our tribulation, whatever else, the gospel is, it is not a free ticket, to an easy life, it's never going to be that, this world, because it is fallen, and because it is sin ridden, every soul within it, is going to have problems, sorrows, afflictions, and troubles, not because they are bad people, but because that is the nature, of this world, life here, is attended, with afflictions, troubles, difficulties, sorrows, pain, you know, even if we go back to Genesis, chapter 3, where you know,

Adam and Eve are told to, replenish the earth, and yet, once they fall, God says, even to Eve, even when you have the joy, of bringing forth children, that will be in pain, and even when we have a full, and happy long life, even Methuselah himself, with 969 years, and he died, now what happens, when Methuselah dies, or somebody else dies, there is mourning, there is sorrow, in his family, with his servants, and grandsons, and so on, and his wife, and all these people, will be sorrowing, because sorrow, and loss, and suffering, are part and parcel, of this fallen world, there was none of that, in the world, before sin and forgiveness, and there is none of that, in heaven, but there is that, in this fallen world, so there is going to be affliction, so simply by not being a Christian, you are not going to escape, affliction, and trouble, and sorrow, just by saying, oh well I won't have anything, to do with that, I won't have anything, to do with that Christ, I will just keep myself, for myself, and I will try, and make my pile, and I will try, and get as much fame, and fortune, and happiness, in this world, as I can get, and it won't succeed, you won't get it, and even if you do succeed, even if you were to gain, the whole world, and lose your own soul, as Jesus says, now what does it profit you, you can't take it with you, nobody actually gains, the whole world, if 2016, has been famous, for anything, it is famous, as many of the internet, you know, chattering classes, will tell you, think how many, rich, and famous, celebrities, have met their end, in it, have died, in it, been taken out, of this world, some of them, might say, you know, before their time, but of course, it's not before their time, it's God's perfect time, but you know, people think, oh fame, and fortune, and wealth, and status, and so on, yet, it all comes to an end, sometimes much quicker, than you might think, and how many, but most of them, will have departed, this life, without Christ, now the absence, of Christ, in your life, will not guarantee, the lack of affliction, and trouble, and sorrow, but the presence, of Christ, in your life, having Christ, as the center, and soul, of your being, means that, when affliction, and trouble, and sorrow, comes, for the sake, of the gospel,

God is able, to supply, the comfort, and strength, and consolation, that we cannot give, this is the God, of all comfort, verse 4, who comforted us, in all, our tribulation, there was an important, word all, see God, is not saying, well I'm going to help you, with this, but I'm not going, help you with that, sometimes of course, he'll put his finger, on my seat, why do you think, it is that you're going, through this problem, or this suffering, and sometimes, it will be, because of a particular, choice that we have made, or a particular sin, that we are guilty of, and something, maybe we need to repent, or confess of, but it doesn't follow, that everything we suffer, is because of a sin, we committed, sometimes, we are suffering, for the gospel's sake, and that is suffering, which is, nobly to be born, you know, Paul said, to the believers, in, just after Smyrna, not Smyrna, in Lystra, and Derbe, after he himself, was stoned, there came thither, certain Jews, from Antioch, and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, that is, stoned him, as they thought, to death, drew him out of the city, dragged his body, out of the city, supposing he had been dead, how do it, as the disciples, stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city, notice the Bible's, complete understatement, he's not playing dead, he's not pretending, he must have been unconscious, so much, so badly, beaten with the stones, that his, his accusers, his persecutors, thought they had killed him, they thought they'd succeeded, they dragged his body, outside the city, and dumped it, but as the disciples, gathered round him, he regained consciousness, they managed to revive him, he rose up, came into the city, and the next day, he departed with Barnabas, to Derbe, and when they had preached, the gospel to that city, oh no, he must be literally, black and blue, with broken bones, and agony, that he must have been in, they returned again, to Mysra, where they had just, all but stormed into death, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls, of the disciples, and exalting them, to continue in the faith, and here's the key, that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom, of God, much tribulation, you see, it's not a free ride, it doesn't mean, all the problems stop, well not here, in this world, but it does mean, that God is able, not only to comfort, and strengthen you in it, but to see, and provide a purpose, a reason, a meaning for it, to comfort us, in our tribulation, one reason, why, that we may be able, to comfort them, which are in any trouble, by the comfort, wherewith we ourselves, are comforted, of God, now nothing, is for nothing, with the Lord, however much, and terrible, our own sufferings, may be, and they may be severe, it is only, often, by means, of those sufferings, and the consolation, which we receive, in Christ, that we are actually, able to get, alongside, other people, going through, the same thing, and say to them, yes, well I do know, how do you feel, because I've been through this, this is how I got through it, this is the comfort,

[25 : 16] I was able to get, the comfort, wherewith we ourselves, are comforted, of God, we're not telling them, about some pie, in the sky, when you die, we're not telling them, about something, it's always just, out of reach, we're telling them, about something, we ourselves, have received, the comfort, wherewith we ourselves, are comforted, of God, not just one beggar, telling another beggar, where there's bread, that one beggar, coming alongside, and I say, have some of the bread, that I've been given, by this great master, for as the sufferings, of Christ, abound in us, so our consolation, also, aboundeth, by Christ, and this is, sort of a, it may sound, almost too good, to be true-ish, but the more, that Paul is able, to suffer for Christ, the more proud, in that sense, if that's not a wrong word, he's able to be of it, he knows himself, blessed indeed, because, he is afflicted, for the gospel's sake, if you look at the end, of Acts chapter 5, you see that, after the apostles, still in Jerusalem, had been beaten, and whipped, by the Sanhedrin, and then, they departed, from the presence, of the council, rejoicing, that they were counted, worthy, to suffer shame, for his name, because of what, they had endured, now, which kind of soldier, is likely to have, all the medals, on his chest, is it the one, who has faced, danger, and hardship, and suffering, and the strife, and terror of battle, or is it the one, who has, yep, faithfully done his duty, getting paper clips, and signing papers, and so on, in the security, of the headquarters office,

I'm not saying, these aren't important jobs, they are important jobs, somebody has to do them, they're necessary, to the military machinery, of our services, but, the people, who are regarded, as heroes, of the armed force, will be those, who have faced, the great danger, the great suffering, the great difficulty, perhaps been wounded, and all the pain, that goes with that, perhaps they ended up, losing an arm, or a leg, or whatever, these are the guys, who are regarded, as the heroes, the front line heroes, because of, what they have, suffered, you see, a life, that is just, one of constant, non-activity, and ease, is a life, that will stagnate, just like, if your body, sits, 24 hours a day, either in an armchair, or in bed, the whole time, your muscles, will atrophy, they will just literally, wither, if they're not used, but if, say, you're getting up, and going about, active life, whether you're in the gym, whether you're out, and across the hill, or the sea, or whatever it happens to be, all your body, is being used, it's being exercised, it's being strengthened, there'll be pain, yes, or the strain, that it's put under, but it will become, fitter, healthier, stronger, because, of the tension, the strain, to which it is exposed, same, likewise, with the Christian life, we go through, suffering, yes, we go through, difficulties, and problems,

God does not, promise us, that when we believe, in his son, there'll be no problems, what he does promise, is that when we pass, through the fire, he will be with us, and through the waters, they will not, overflow us, I know, believe you me, you can feel sometimes, like you're drowning, in life's pressures, you can feel as though, you're going under, for the third time, God doesn't promise, that the waters, won't close over your head, he says, they won't overflow you, he says, you won't drown in them, now, if the waters, close over your head, that's not necessarily, a disaster, what is the disaster, it's when you can't breathe, now you can breathe, underwater, if you've got a snorkel, or you can breathe, even deep underwater, if you've got gas tanks, full of oxygen, on your back, and a pipe to it, whatever the circumstances, God will make it, in such a way, that if you have, to be submerged, if you have, to go through, floods, that'll close, over your head, or over difficulties, he will make, a supply, of what you need, and a means, to escape, it's not a problem, being underwater, if you've got gas tanks, full of oxygen, it's not a problem, if your head's just below the waves, if you've got a snorkel, it's not a problem, being down in the deep, as long as you can breathe,

God will enable you, to be able to breathe, in the midst of your struggle, in the midst of your difficulty, whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation, and salvation, which is effectual, in the enduring, of the same suffering, and whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation, and salvation, in other words, whatever it is, whether it's positive, or negative, whether it's for good times, or bad, it is all to the glory of God, and to the benefit, of his people, and our hope for you, is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers, of the sufferings, so shall ye be also, of the consolation, for we would not, brethren, have you ignorant, of our trouble, which came to us in Asia, and we were pressed, out of measure, above strength, insomuch, that we despaired, even of life, but we had the sentence, of death, in ourselves, now whether he's referring, to the time, when he got stoned there, and Lystra, or whether it's other occasions, he's referring to, the fact is, we despaired, even of life, but we had the sentence, of death, in ourselves, that we should not, trust in ourselves, and this is very true, you know, if our hope, is built, in this world, this body, this type, we'll die, we're going to die anyway, whether we get died, by some violent execution, like Paul was, almost subjected to, or whether we die, peacefully, in our beds, we die, this body, can't sustain us, forever, but we had the sentence, of death, in ourselves, that we should not, trust in ourselves, but in God, which raises the dead, and here we go, at this verse 10, which is such a, wonderful verse here, who delivered us, from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver us, notice what you've got there, past tense, present tense, future tense, all in terms of deliverance,

God in the past, he has delivered you, you know that he's delivered, you wouldn't be here today, if he hadn't delivered you, who delivered us, from so great a death, it is because, we are redeemed, by Christ, that we are spared, to continue to serve him, until this hour, and doth deliver, even now, even today, God was the same, yesterday, today, and forever, he continues, he keeps on doing, that same deliverance, in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver us, and will continue, to do so, and you see, in this one verse, there is such consolation, either for Christians, or for those, who are yet, seeking the Lord, because there is, hope for each of us, because if we're feeling, oh no, this is a bad time, I thought I was a believer, but if I really, was a Christian, I wouldn't be going through, what I'm going through now, I wouldn't be suffering, the way I'm suffering now, but he delivered us, from so great a death, it's because of God, you've got thus far, he helped you, what the Lord helped us, and doth deliver, he keeps on delivering you, even today, you're not dead yet, in trespasses and sins, you've maybe were once, but he delivered you, in the past, and doth deliver, in the present, and you might be thinking, well that's all very well, but you know what,

[32 : 54] I haven't got that faith yet, I haven't got that confidence yet, I don't yet know Christ, as my personal saviour, in which case we have, in whom we trust, that he will yet, deliver us, if it is not yet, then we trust, that he shall, yet deliver us, because God cannot fail, so if there is failure yet, it must be on our part, that we are not yet, receiving, accepting, reaching out for that, which the Lord, doth freely offer, all that the Father, giveth me, Jesus said, shall come unto me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise, cast out, you see we might be, like a rich young ruler, that turns around, and goes sadly away, and we might be like those, who knew the truth, but couldn't bring themselves, to come out to Christ, but it will never be God's fault, if we walk away, it will never be, lack of invitation, on Christ's part, if we turn around, and say, oh well let me first, go and bury my father, or let me just go, and bid farewell to them, or let me do this, let me do that, let me always put, something else first, no,

Christ must come first, the Lord must come first, and while in the light, for Paul, he is the centre, and soul of our being, he is that, which drives, our every activity, and our every speech, and aspect of life, then all the other things, that we wanted to do first, they will be done, they will be done, in their due order, and place, and consideration, but they will be, after Christ, less than Christ, in their due place, but they will be done, because having Christ, as the centre, and soul, of your being, and of your heart, means that you will be, more diligent, in the business, and affairs, and concerns, of this world, in so far, as they serve them, and in so far, as they serve, those around you, who deliver us, from so great a death, past tense, and doth deliver, present tense, in whom we trust, that he will yet, deliver us, future tense,

God is eternal, past, present, and future, all there, in the palm of his hand, and there is none, who can pluck us, out of his hand, it was yet, we have not, laid hold upon Christ, he is a verse, of such encouragement, that we must, be compelled, to do so, ye also, helping together, by prayer for us, that for the gift, he stowed upon us, by the means, of many persons, thanks may be given, by many on our behalf, he brings them, into the spiritual warfare, for our rejoicing, is this, the testimony, of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation, this means speech, he means conduct, our behaviour, in the world, and more abundantly, to your word, if anybody knows this, if the world doesn't know, the truth of this, you Corinthian Christians, you know this, you know how we have behaved, we're not big men, in terms of the world,

Paul says, and Christians, who follow Christ, in this world, they won't be the rich, and the powerful, and the big movers, and shakers, of society, and business, for the most part, because as he wrote, in the first time, you know, look at your calling, not many high, not many mighty, not many princes, not many rich men, are called amongst you, but God has chosen, the weak things of this world, the ordinary, the insignificant, but non-spectacular, to bring to naught, the things that are, that no flesh, should glory in his presence, if you consider yourself, small and insignificant, this is not a matter, for despair, it is a matter, for rejoicing, because it means, that God, will have all the glory, when he does, such a work of grace, in our lives, who delivered us, from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust, that he will yet, deliver us, but our rejoicing, is this, this clear conscience, this simplicity, this no fuss, just all Christ, his be the glory, his the deliverance, his the work, in calling, in Paul's life, in their lives, his the work, in self-being, in our lives, and in our day, if it please the Lord, let us pray.