

2 Corinthians 12:11-13:14

Five Marks of Paul's Heart and Method of Ministry

I am holding in my hand a precious commodity.

A) It is something that every 16yr old living in the State of California Longs for.

B) It is something that has to be earned – Takes some time and work to get –

1) Once you get it – Power / bragging rights/ friends

Guy – girls - What is it?

C) Drivers License: I got mine the day I turned 16 – I've had it for 41 yrs -

Several years ago received that Dreaded notification from the DMV – I had to go and actually take a written exam to renew my license. R U Serious

A) After 40 yrs no wrecks only a couple of tickets – don't they know that I got this down.

B) I am one of the better drivers on the Rd – although my wife would disagree with that

1) Now I have to go and take a test- again?

C) Good to evaluate your knowledge of things/ new laws etc

Well as we close out this letter to the Corinthian Church today –

A) Paul says something to this Church – in Ch. 13 that I find to be really interesting V.5

There in V. 5 He says, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?"

A) Test yourself to see if you are really a Christian

B)..... to see if you really are a follower of Christ.

C) At first glance that seems sort of weird – why would there be any doubt right? Wrong?

Jesus said the same thing in the Sermon on the Mt. Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in

Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Lord I taught Sunday school for 15 yrs – I consistently tithed – I led worship – He will say: **Depart from me I never knew you.**

Guy's that is heavy, that is sobering

A) There might be people in our midst who are religious/ played at church – participated in ministry

B) But have never really known Jesus.

C) Test yourselves: We can fool others – we can even fool ourselves – but we can't fool JESUS

D) You will know them by their fruits

We have noted that Paul's apostleship was under fire

A) These men nicknamed the "super apostles" were questioning Paul's authority

B) If they could get the people to doubt Paul's authority

1) then they could get them to doubt Paul's message

C) Paul puts himself to the test – and he shares here the results of his examination with the Corinthians

1) He passed with flying colors

D) Paul points to 5 marks of his heart and method of ministry to illustrate that he is indeed the real deal

E) What he shares here is super insightful to any of us who want to be used by God!

#1 His ministry was evidenced by signs and wonders and mighty deeds 11 I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, (sarcasm) though I am nothing.

A) Paul knew that apart from Jesus and the grace of God he was nothing –

B) I am what I am by the grace of God.

C) And the FACT that God's hand and grace were upon Paul was evident for all to see

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

Signs wonders and mighty deeds point to noticeable demonstrations of God's working and power

A) They make people's eyes open up.

B) It is evident that only God could do them. Man cannot act in this realm.

C) God uses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise –

1) He works through human weakness to illustrate his power and strength

Now we don't have any examples recorded of the miraculous ways that God worked through Paul in Corinth

A) But the implication here is that those in Corinth knew – and what Paul is saying here wasn't refuted

B) True ministry will be evidenced by a divine working of God's power and presence.

#2 The 2nd thing that Paul points to in reference to his ministry – is how he supported himself so as to not be a burden to them. V.13

13 For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong! Sarcasm

A) Speaking in contrast to the "super apostles" who demanded compensation for their service.

B) Paul says I went the extra mile to not be a burden to you in anyway.

1) Noted in a previous study the reason that Paul did that was he didn't want there to be anything that would hinder his preaching of the gospel

C) Want to be in ministry – realize the way you live can either be a blessing or a hinderance to the ministry of the gospel –

1) How you live is important – No hinderances

D) If you want to represent Jesus to others you have to take that seriously

#3 Paul points to his Motivation – He wanted to give to people not take from them

14 Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; **for I do not seek yours, but you.**

I wasn't seeking anything from you – yours – your stuff – I was seeking you.

A) Pour into you.

B) True ministry is always about pouring into people to build them up.

C) A lot of false ministry seeks to use people in order to build their program or agenda.

D) Paul says I wasn't seeking anything from you – just you. –

Parental analogy For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

A) I think all of us who are parents have thought a time or two –

B) I hope my kids makes it big so they can take care of me in my old age.

1) But I think most of us know that reality is probably not going to happen.

C) As parents we are laying up for our kids – hoping to have something to leave behind to them.

D) Because the heart of a parent is to give and to build up NOT TO TAKE.

E) Paul was a spiritual father to the church in Corinth - he took that role seriously

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

A) This is often a reality in parenting as well as in ministry

B) Parenting and ministry is about being poured out for your kids

1) Gladly spend – and loving being spent

C) Great feeling at the end of a day of ministry – or helping someone – Spent in a good way

1) Sunday prayer – fill us up and pour us out

D) Equally great feeling when as a parent knowing that you did something that really blessed ... kids

But Paul shares an often glaring reality about ministry and parenting - the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved

A) Not appreciated – don't serve for pats on the back

B) Especially today as this consumeristic mentality has infiltrated the church

1) People are more apt to share what they don't like than what they are blessed by.

C) However I will say that – Covid did change that to a significant degree

1) As more and more people have been appreciative of Churches being open – far less critical

#4 Paul could point to a proven track record a consistency in him and those connected to him

16 But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning!

17 Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you?

¹⁶ Some of you admit I was not a burden to you. But others still think I was sneaky and took advantage of you by trickery. ¹⁷ But how? Did any of the men I sent to you take advantage of you? NLT

A) Name one time where I or anyone associated with me took advantage of you? – Didn't happen

18 I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?

B) Friend with Cancer – DNA is the key

C) DNA of Calvary Vista – Jesus focused – Servant minded – heart for people – Love the body

1) Willing to wear multiple hats

D) Reason some people have attended this church for over 30 yrs – Proven track record

E) Reason our staff and ministry team has never had a high turnover rate.

1) Reason – a lot of volunteers – Staff is small but we are modeling that servant heart

Question - What is your track record?

A) What have you consistently modeled in your life?

B) What have you modeled in your ministry?

C) Recently talked with a guy from another church

1) He was complaining to me about not getting an opportunity in ministry at his church that he felt like he deserved.

D) I was asking him questions - The longer I talked to him and heard his story –

1) It became apparent that he had run ins with the leadership of every church and ministry he had been involved with

E) Their reluctance to lay hands on him was because of his lack of proven track record.

Jesus taught faithful in the little things – exalted with much!

A) Is your life marked by a consistency in the little things?

B) Consistency of modeling the heart of Jesus?

C) 4 Marks of a person's calling.

1) The man points to himself Desire – 1 Timothy 3:1

Good thing

Holy Spirit points to a man – Fruits/ character of Jesus

A) The Sheep point – The sheep know the voice of the shepherd

B) The body should never be surprised – that guy

1) New leaders for our leadership team – names

C) The Leadership – Don't lay hands on anyone suddenly

D) Those are all Characteristics of someone who has a proven track record.

#5 Paul points to the reality that everything he did was for their edification V.19

19 Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.

Goal Ephesians 4 the body

¹¹ And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

What does that look like? Maturity – growing into Jesus ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

Stability-

¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

Usability

¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:11-16

Similar thing in Colossians

²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. **Colossians 1:28-29**

That is Paul's goal for the Churches he pastored and planted.

A)But Paul's concern for Corinth is this: He is concerned that rather than being built up they are being torn down -

20 For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

B)Paul is burdened by the Carnality he is hearing of

²¹ lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

C)The Humbling that Paul is referring to is his brokenness of heart over their sin.

Here is what Paul understood – sin never lies dormant. Like leaven it grows and it spreads

A)Like a root in the ground it grows and produces a tree that produces fruit.

B)A root of Bitterness – causes many to become defiled.

C)The very attitude that the Church had adopted of Paul was sinful and would just increase and spread to greater sin – greater problems

D)For Paul to have to come and discipline this Church that he had planted and nurtured would be a very humbling and grieving thing.

E)But Paul will do what He has to out of his love for them.

Chapter 13 – Final Warning, Final exhortation, Final prayer and a Final Salutation or good bye

A)Final Warning – Have to warn – If a Pastor only feeds the sheep doesn't warn fattening up....Kill

¹³ This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." ² I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare

Paul is saying I have already warned those who had been sinning when I was there on my second visit.

A)Now I again warn them and all others, just as I did before, that next time I will not spare them.

B)Wait until your father comes home!

**C)Paul took his role as a spiritual father seriously
1)Spiritual discipline is necessary part of that.**

D)Whom the Lord loves he chastens -

3 since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. 4 For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.

This is really an interesting play on words here:

A)Paul compares his coming to them to Christ death and Resurrection.

B)When Jesus was crucified, they thought He was weak, but three days later, He rose again in Power

C)“So, too,” Paul says, “you look at us as weak, but the Power of Christ flows through us

1)and when we come back, you’ll see His power flowing through us.”

D)Perhaps in a different way than before.

So Paul gives a final warning – followed by a final exhortation

5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified. 6 But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

Test yourselves to see if you are really in the faith!

A)Two things that Paul is wanting them to consider – Are they believing right – are they really in the faith.

B)Are they behaving right- Is Christ in you.

C)Christianity begins when a person embraces the truth about Christ and the gospel. –

1)Being in the faith – is Believing right about Christ – He is God in the flesh come to save man.

D)Dead in our sins - Lost without Him

1)Embrace Christ as their redeemer and Savior

E)Become a part of the family of God sins forgiven Righteous in God’s eyes

And When a person embraces Christ – Christ comes to live in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. –

A)Indwells them – begins to transform them from the inside out.

B)Over time that change should be evident to those around them that they know the Lord

C)They resemble Jesus in their conduct – love – their behavior.

D)Christ begins to change their hearts – perspectives – values – priorities

So It was right for Paul to give this exhortation – Examine yourselves

A) because – there was a lot going on in Corinth led by these false teachers that didn’t resemble Christ at all.

B)YOU will know them by their fruits

C)Examine yourselves – is there any fruit in your life

So Final Warning – Final exhortation – Final Prayer

A)When others in the church reject you or criticize you,

B)The natural thing is to stop praying for them and devote your prayers to the vindication of yourself.

1)Paul does the opposite here – V.7

7 Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified.

A)We pray to God that you will not do what is wrong by refusing our correction

B)Do the right thing before we come—

1)even if that makes it look like we have failed to demonstrate our authority.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we cannot oppose the truth, but must always stand for the truth

9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong.

C) If the Corinthians are “strong” due to their repentance and embrace of Paul’s authority, 1) then he will appear “weak” because he will not have to enforce his authority with powerful acts.

And this also we pray, that you may be made complete. We pray that you will become mature.

10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

D) Reminder my motive in writing these things is not to destroy you but to build you up.

Final Salutation: 2 Cor 13:11

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Lit rejoice

Rejoice: Being a part of the family of God is something to be excited about

A) Dysfunctional family – yes – but still the best family around.

B) Rejoicing indicates that I am going to lift my head off of the problems and focus them on Jesus.

Become complete: Be perfect!

A) Don’t settle for anything less than God’s standard in your relationships.

Be of good Comfort: the word comfort carries the idea of supporting one another, standing by one another, holding on to one another and encouraging one another.

Be of one mind: The exhortation to be of one mind is a command for “unity.”

A) Unity is essential for the church - Unity is What Our Lord and Savior prayed for in the garden

B) Let them be one! Major emphasis in NT
Ephesians 4:3 “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

C) Endeavoring – make every effort keep it

Just to make sure they get it -

Live in Peace: Colossians 3:15

A) “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...”

Romans 12:18

“If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

B) The result - and the God of love and peace will be with you

C) God’s blessings will be on you and your church

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

A) Interesting the idea of greeting with a kiss didn’t originate with the Italians – Spanish – the Church.

B) In Roman culture to call another person “brother” was a breach of Roman protocol,

1) as it was unlawful to call people brothers or sisters who were not of one’s family.

C) Thus the everyday language of Christianity asserted that Christians were family in spiritual relationship.

Second, the kiss was an expression of affection among family members

A) A token of deepest relationship and unity.

B) To greet each other with a holy kiss was to in a sense **daily celebrate** their love, affection and unity.

C) Today: Hug – Chest bump – fist -

13 All the saints greet you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

That is what we need: Grace of Jesus – the Love of the father – the communion of the Holy Spirit.

A) Rely on his Grace

B) Show His Love

C) Walk in His Spirit