



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Corinthians 13: 1-14

Fall 2025

"Finally Brethren, Grow Up!"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Mark, and good morning to all of you. We are finishing our study this morning, and so I'm going to take the entire chapter of 2 Corinthians 13, read it and expound it.

I'm sure I'll miss something. We could probably divide this up and do it in three lessons, but I think I can cover it all adequately in one. And then next week we'll begin a new series.

And so it goes at Believers Chapel. We're always going through books of the Bible. And well, I thank you for your kind words, Mark, but this is a great book from the apostle. And you can't read it without being impressed with it, for it covers so many of the issues that we deal with and brings glory to God through it all—and we certainly see that here in this last chapter. So, 2 Corinthians 13, beginning with verse 1;

13 This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. ² I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest *as well*, that if I come again I will not spare *anyone*, ³ since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. ⁴ For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God.

For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God *directed* toward you.

⁵ Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test? ⁶ But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test. ⁷ Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved. ⁸ For we can do nothing against the truth, but *only* for the truth. ⁹ For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete. ¹⁰ For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I *need* not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

¹¹ Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³ All the saints greet you.

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

2 Corinthians 13: 1-14

May the LORD bless the reading of this Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's pray for God's blessing and instruction to us.

Father, we do pray for that. We pray that You would bless us as we spend the hour considering this great closing chapter of this great book of 2 Corinthians, as Paul sums things up and brings it to a conclusion. And we pray that You would help us to

understand the things that he says—and maybe galvanized in our own life and live a life that's pleasing to You, a life of obedience. We need to pray about that continually; we need to study the Scriptures in order for that to be the case.

So LORD, bless us, teach us, build us up in the faith, strengthen us. We are debtors to Your mercy and we receive it at all times, Your mercy and Your grace. And so we seek that now, just in this hour, that we would gain a deeper understanding of the things that Paul has written here.

We pray for the camp, the retreat, that's going on right now. And as it will come to a conclusion soon, we pray that You'd bless Mike as he teaches, and You'd bless all of those that attend, that the things they've heard would resonate well with them, that they would reflect deeply on them—and that You would apply that all to those that are there. And bring them home safely, and bless their time together.

And we pray that for ourselves, that You'd bless this hour and the hour to come, that You would be honored and glorified in the way that we attend to this text in this time.—But we pray also that the Spirit of God would teach us and build us up in the faith.

We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) What parent hasn't looked through a family album at his or her children and thought how wonderful it was when we did that when she was 3, or when we threw the ball to him when he was 5. —And it was wonderful. And you wish you could go back to that time, maybe for a day, or just an hour. But wouldn't it be awful if 30 or 40 years later they hadn't grown past the age of 3 or 5?

It's happened. General Tom Thumb was a star in P. T. Barnum's circus. He stopped growing as a child, never reached 3 feet. He was a celebrity; but what a tragedy. Fortunately in natural life, that is unusual.

Unfortunately it is not unusual in the church, when spiritual development is arrested, (which often happens), and saints don't grow to maturity. That was happening

in Corinth. There were some, not a few, who were rebellious—enamored of false teachers and opposed to Paul and his instruction.

So, as he comes to the end of his letter, his fourth letter to the Corinthians,(the second letter in our Bibles), he wraps things up with a warning...and a greeting. He touches on a number of points; assurance of salvation, prayer, the doctrine of the Trinity; but in all of this he expresses his chief desire, which is their growth—maturity in the faith, and unity.

That occurs through sound teaching, (and Paul gives that in this last chapter). But it also happens with discipline, correction, sometimes severe discipline. And Paul begins the chapter with a warning of that when he abruptly announces that he was, 'coming to them again for a third time.' (vs1).

His first visit was joyful. It is recorded in Acts chapter 18, it was when he brought the Gospel to Corinth. It was a very successful visit to that city, he was there for a year and a half, the church was established, it flourished.

His second visit was not pleasant, it was painful. It involved discipline. It's not recorded in the Book of Acts, but he referred to it back in chapter 2, verse 1, when he spoke of having, 'come to them in sorrow.'

He hoped to avoid that this third time. He hoped that they would clear up the problems in the church that he's exposed, (and that they knew about), and clear them up before he arrived. But, he was coming, and if they did not clear up those issues...he would with discipline of the guilty, if necessary.

So he quoted Deuteronomy 17, verse 6, "Every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses." (vs1). So what he's saying there is, 'He would deal with them fairly, he would deal with them justly, but he would deal with these issues decisively.'

He promised in verse 2 that he would not spare anyone. "...I will not spare *anyone*, since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you." (vs2c-3).

They had wanted proof that Christ really spoke through him, that he was truly an apostle—which is amazing in view of all that he had done among them and what he had done for them!

But the false teachers had made them doubt that, made them doubt him. They wanted proof, now, that he was a genuine apostle; they wanted, 'a show of power'. In the past he had been meek with them, he had been gentle with them, he had been patient with them; but they mistook his meekness for weakness.

What the Corinthians failed to realize is, 'meekness was the evidence of Christ living in and speaking in him'. As he explains in verse 4, Christ had come in weakness; "For indeed He was crucified because of weakness...", or what men considered, perceived to be, 'weakness'.

Actually, Christ crucified, "is the power of God for salvation." (Rom 1:16). By means of the cross, Christ conquered sin, and Satan, and death. He won our salvation through His sacrifice, through His death on the cross. The proof that the cross saves is the resurrection...God raised Him from the dead. There's no greater demonstration of power than the power that conquers death.

So Paul says, "He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God." (vs4). And because Paul is united to Christ, he is not only united to His death and the benefits of His death, he's also united to Christ in His life...and that life is resurrection life. That's the power of the life that Paul had within him—and that every believer has within them. We live 'resurrection life', and that's a great blessing.

Well, when Paul arrived he would use that resurrection power to prove his apostolic authority and correct them. So, if his previous visits were marked by meekness, or weakness, (as they saw it), then this next visit would be marked by power, discipline.

But before he arrived he 'took them to court', so to speak...he told them to test themselves. The Corinthians had questioned Paul and asked for proof that Christ speaks in him. Now, in verse 5, he tells them they've been examining the wrong person...they needed to examine themselves. "Test yourselves..." he said, "...to see if you are in the

faith; examine yourselves!" (5a). And if their self-examination proved that they are in the Christian faith, then that is the irrefutable proof that Christ speaks in Paul, because they received the Gospel and this new life through his ministry.

Paul believed they would pass the test; he was confident that they were genuine believers. In 1 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 2, he expressed that...he called them, "the seal" of his apostleship. He had this very high regard for them. He loved the Corinthians and saw them, and the great change that had taken place in their lives, (which you can see as he describes it in 1 Corinthians, chapter 6), that that was the proof of the power of the Gospel...and the vitality of his ministry. So, he didn't have doubts about them.

But some of them might...might fail the test. Not everyone in the local church is born again. Not everyone really believed in Christ. Sometimes self-examination is called for, but it's worth noting that Paul doesn't say, 'Test one another', but "Test yourselves." (vs4). And, 'the reflexive pronoun', "*yourselves*", is in 'the emphatic position': "Yourselves test!" So, this is a personal examination.

You and I can't determine if someone is or is not a believer. In fact, genuine believers may even have doubts about their own salvation. (In fact, that's not at all uncommon.) Genuine believers can lack the assurance of salvation.

Now that doesn't mean they lack faith. Assurance and lack of assurance is not the same as 'faith' and '*lack of saving faith*'.

Saints, young saints are often disturbed with their inner conflicts and doubts. There are various reasons for that. Interestingly, John Calvin covered that in *The Institutes*, and he covered it because it's a very common experience. Believers need to have assurance. There can be no joy in the Christian life, there can be no progress in the faith, apart from assurance.... it's very important.

But 'assurance' and 'faith', as I say, are not the same thing. Doubts occur in Christian hearts for various reasons—sometimes due to sin, sometimes due to false

teaching, sometimes due to 'the fiery darts of the devil', the evil one, (he can frustrate our faith by raising doubts).

But *false teaching* was the problem here in Corinth, and a person who comes under that influence, the influence of false doctrines, (which denies, for example, the efficacy, the efficiency, the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, that which denies it's all dependent on Him, not on us, that He accomplished it all-together on the cross, and made that declaration when He said, "It is finished.")...when we lack an understanding of that, and come under the sense of, 'It's dependent upon me in some way, dependent upon my works...and we don't understand the grace of God', then we may have doubts. They may worry young believers, or believers that aren't well trained may worry that they've lost their salvation...or they never had it.

Scriptures are clear that, 'Losing one's salvation' is impossible. But if a person neglects the Scriptures, then they're going to have that problem of falling into doubt. Christians can fall into terrible sin, and even persist in it for a time; they can be overcome with spiritual lethargy, indifference; they experience a sense of spiritual dryness. Even the Puritans, who were an amazing group of people, and you read in their writings that they will sometimes talk about, 'a sense of dryness', and plead with the Lord to restore the vitality in their life. We have that, those experiences.

And again, sin is part of the problem as well. Peter was a saved man when he denied the Lord three times. It was a terrible sin, and at the end of John's Gospel, the Lord made a special point of reassuring him, reinstating him.

And the Holy Spirit does that for His people, He does that for doubters. And He does that through the Word of God. He does that by the 'examination' that we are to put ourselves through at times—an examination, that we put ourselves through, in light of Scripture. It's the *touchstone*, it's the *authority*.

And what does it say? What do we read in the Word of God? I could spend the whole hour, and more, on this very subject and the various texts of Scripture...but just

take one, John 3:16. It is very clear. "...whoever believes in *Christ* shall not perish but have eternal life." We enter into eternal life through faith, and faith alone. In Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 & 9, Paul is clear that, 'Salvation is all of grace through faith alone, apart from works.'

Well, that is God's Word, (and I could multiply the verses). And so the question would be, 'Do you believe that? Do you believe that's true? Have you believed in Jesus Christ?' That is the standard by which we examine ourselves and overcome the doubts.

Doubt is, as I said, one of Satan's fiery darts. And he lays Christians low with it. Bunyan picked up on that, he put *Christian* and *Hopeful* in *Doubting Castle*. They despaired as they were there...until *Christian* remembered that he had the key, the key that unlocked the doors to Doubting Castle and the dungeon they were in. It was, '*The Key Of Promise*', and so with that key, they opened the doors and they left that castle, and that dungeon. And that is how we go free from this trial that we often go through of doubting.

God has given many, and great, promises. He promises that, 'salvation is a free gift for all who simply believe in Christ.' (Rom 6:23). He promises that, 'He will never cast us off, He will never leave us, He will never forsake us', (Heb 13:5). "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.", Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2, verse 13.

However, if in examining oneself a person realized that he or she has not actually believed in Christ, at least, 'not believed in the Jesus of the Bible', or that 'they're relying on their works', then he or she must change...which means 'repent and believe'. There are probably, (and I'm not sure I'm qualified to make this statement) ... but probably, or possibly, many in evangelical circles today who need to do that, who need to test themselves; because people who are nominal in their beliefs, but show no real interest in spiritual things, are not uncommon—and that's not a healthy condition, that's an alarming condition. They don't read their Bibles, they don't study, don't pray, don't

fellowship with the saints. Their Christianity is casual, 'easy-going evangelicalism'. They should test themselves, because the saved, those who believe—behave...bear fruit.

The Corinthians were confused doctrinally...and some were very fleshly, worldly. Nevertheless, Paul was confident about the reality of their faith. That's the reason he challenged them to test themselves. Their self-examination would not only confirm the genuineness of their relationship to Christ but, (and I think this is the real point that Paul is getting after here), it would also prove Paul's authority as their apostle, the one who brought them the true Gospel. If they are in the faith, why is that? —Because the Gospel he preached was correct, and he is a genuine apostle.

He stated that with confidence about them in verse 6, "But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test." Or, 'You understand the truth of the Gospel and that you have it, and you remember that we are the ones that brought that to you; that will confirm things.'

Paul was confident in the Corinthians, but still he prayed for them in verse 7. His prayer was simple. "...we pray to God that you do no wrong..." It's a basic prayer, but reveals two things. First, it shows that Paul's concern was for them, not himself. This wasn't a kind of self-defense he was making by saying 'He's praying for them', (he has indicated that throughout the letter). He indicates it here, again, in the second half of the verse; 'This is not about me...', he's saying, '...it's about you.' He wrote, "...not that we ourselves may appear approved...", (vs7b). In other words, 'He wasn't recording his prayer to sound good and to win their favor in any way. He was genuinely concerned for them.' This is what all of this is about—their good.

Now it's very important to him that he establish the authority of an apostle with them, because it's the nature of the Gospel. The integrity of the Gospel was at stake so he was praying for that; he was seeking to establish that.

But mainly his concern ... and this is his point ... it's for them, for their good. So he wasn't praying for his vindication as an apostle, he was praying for them, 'that

they would do no wrong, and would do what is right', as he said, (vs7), (which is for their own good).

So first his prayer revealed his selfless attitude; it's one of the things that impressed me as I have gone through this book and thought about the apostle. He was not self-defensive. The defense he would make for himself was for the integrity of the Gospel and for their good. But he set aside all of his concerns for himself personally; whether he was wounded or not, he was concerned about them above all things.

And *second*, it reveals what is really, really important, and what we should pray for ourselves and for others—and that is, 'That we do no wrong'. A simple, very basic prayer.

The Corinthians were involved with error. They were involved in false teaching. They were struggling with moral issues, the temptation of the flesh. So Paul prayed that they be kept from all of that. Matthew Henry wrote, "This is the most desirable thing that we can ask God, both for ourselves, and for our friends...that we, (and they), may do no evil. We need to do that often...", he said, "...because apart from God's grace we cannot keep ourselves."

I was thinking of that when Mark was teaching in Luke 22, in verse 46, where Jesus tells the disciples before He goes into the garden, 'to pray, and pray earnestly', He said, 'Pray, keep praying', "...that you do not enter into temptation." (ibid.).

Prayer is vitally important for our growth and our development to prevent us from getting into temptation and succumbing to it. And we are to be praying, "without ceasing", as Paul said. (1Th 5:17).

We can't put enough emphasis on the importance of prayer. It's one of God's *means* of blessing us, it's our *means* of connecting with Him and speaking to Him. And we cannot neglect it—we do so only at our own peril. And you see the consequence of that from the disciples who fell asleep and didn't guard as they were told to do...and they weren't praying. We need to be men and women of prayer. And that was what Paul was.

And then Matthew Henry added, "We are more concerned to pray that we may not do evil than that we may not suffer evil." And that is so true, at least that should be our concern, ideally it is, that we 'not do evil'. That should be our great concern; but the truth is, so often what our concern is that, 'We not suffer evil, that nothing bad happens to us.'

Matthew Henry was once robbed by a highwayman. And he didn't ask God, 'Why!? Why did You allow this to happen?' Instead, he thanked God for a number of things that did *not* happen, like "He took my money, but didn't take my life."

He had a whole list of these that he gave thanks for. But maybe the most important thanksgiving that he gave is that, "He was robbed...and not the one who robbed." His concern was that, 'He do no wrong'.

Now, having said that, it is legitimate to pray for our safety. I do that frequently when I get out on the highway around here. It's getting more and more 'less safe', and more and more dangerous. It's quite amazing the way people drive on the highways or on the streets. I pray every Sunday morning, " LORD, bring us all here safely, and bring us home safely." We should be praying for that. There's nothing wrong with that...that's right...that's good.

But the reality is, the worst thing that can happen to us is to fall into sin and dishonor Christ, and dishonor His church. The Corinthians were in a position of doing that; we all are; we are all in a very tenuous position, (at least humanly speaking). We need God's grace constantly, or else we will certainly stumble, and stumble badly. "...the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mat 26:41b). We need spiritual growth.

So Paul prayed for the Corinthians...and he was coming to Corinth to correct some problems. He was prepared to use his apostolic power to do that, but he hoped that would not be necessary. In verse 9(b), he told them his prayer was that they, "be made complete." In verse 10(b), he wrote, so that 'he could use his authority,' "for building up and not for tearing down."

[Now, he had the power as an apostle to tear down. He could come to Corinth and deliver the disobedient over to Satan, “for the destruction of the flesh”...he had done that, (we read that in 1 Corinthians 5, verse 5); this man who was in sin, he ‘delivered him over to Satan’. Paul speaks of Hymenaeus and Alexander in 1 Timothy chapter 1, verse 20. He'd done that to them...he ‘delivered them over to Satan’.]

But he wanted to avoid that. That's not what he desired to do, he didn't want to use any of that kind of power. He wanted them ‘built up’, not torn down; and he hoped that they would see that the problem was not with him—but with them, and correct it so discipline would not be necessary.

Paul was the Corinthians ‘father in the faith’, their ‘spiritual father’. Nothing pleases a parent more than to see a son or daughter grow strong, grow up, be independent and not need correction. And that was Paul's attitude here; that was his thinking. He was hoping and praying, (for those in Corinth), for their spiritual health, their maturity, that they would grow up and not be ‘Tom Thumbs’.

Now he ends the letter with what Philip Hughes calls, “a succession of staccato injunctions.” A series of abrupt, detached commands...‘Boom, boom, boom!’ That's the sense of it.

The general idea, here in verses 11 through 14, is, ‘Be united in mind, and deed... and in heart and action; Be mature!’. Verse 11;

"Finally, brethren,
rejoice,
be made complete,
be comforted,
be like-minded,
live in peace;
and the God of love and peace will be with you."

Paul wants the Corinthians to have joy in life that they can only have, 'by being made complete.' There would be no joy in their life if they're not "made complete", (ibid.), which means, 'become mature, become whole'. This is the same word that's used back in verse 9, and there, it was his prayer for them. Here it is his instruction, his exhortation, that they 'grow up!'...that they be 'mature in the faith'. There's no reason to stay in a state of immaturity, and so he prays for that.

And that happens, this maturity in the church, happens through unity in the church—by being of one mind with fellow believers and being at peace with them. We cannot grow in Christ if we are a divided body, if we are a divided church, if we are divided against each other. But we can do that only through being united in the truth; and the essential truth is Christ.

In Romans 15, verse 5b, Paul gives much the same exhortation. He says, "...be of the same mind with one another...", (but then qualifies it with), "...according to Christ Jesus." So what do I mean by that...that the uniting factor is Christ? And what does Paul mean, "according to Christ Jesus?"

Well, there's no spiritual unity with those outside of Christ. We can have friendships on a certain level...and that should be encouraged; it's an opportunity to give the Gospel. And we can have good friendships outside of Christ; but we can never be of 'one mind' with them. We are two different people, completely different from unbelievers.

But with those who are believers in Christ, as God's eternal Son, the God-man, the only Savior of men—with them we are to be united. We are united, and so we're to confirm that, and we're to act upon that, and we are to cultivate that unity We're to have love for them and we are to be at peace with them.

And the promise Paul gave here is that when we live in that way, "the God of love and peace" will be with us. (vs11b). He will not bless us if we're divided against each other; that's certainly the corollary to what he's saying...that's the implication. If we are united with one another, "the God of love and peace" will be with us. If we're being

obedient, He'll bless that. He won't bless us if we're outside of that, so this is a plea for unity as well as maturity.

And it is carried on in the final verses. In verse 12 Paul wrote, "Greet one another with a holy kiss." It was customary in the ancient world to greet people with a kiss; and it's still done today in some parts of the world. [I've been on the receiving end of that... I prefer, 'a holy handshake!' *[Laughter]*] But, the kiss is biblical. It's to be "holy", meaning it's to be *sincere*, not *hypocritical*. And as I think about that I wonder, 'Is he thinking about Judas and the kiss he gave to our Lord, which was not anything but hypocritical and treacherous?' The idea it carries over...'We can smile and act happy with one another when really we're bearing a grudge, and we don't feel that way at all.'

The idea of a kiss or handshake is to express mutual confidence in one another, mutual love for one another—and it should be genuine. So it's an expression of unity...we are joined together and should have confidence in one another, be at peace with one another, know that we are for one another. There'll be no growth in us if we're not, if we're at odds with one another. It's hard to concentrate on the things of God and the love of the Lord if we're in an adversarial relationship among the body of Christ.

In verse 13, Christian unity is expressed in the greetings that others sent to the Corinthians; "All the saints greet you.", he said. Now these are the saints of Macedonia. He had written this letter from 'up north', so these are the Macedonian saints from the churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea...churches that the Corinthians probably had never visited. They'd never met these saints, but they were united with them. These groups had no personal contact, but the Macedonians were very interested in the Corinthians and what was going on there...and they 'greeted them with love'—and that would indicate they certainly prayed for them.

There is, I think, an important truth in that. There is real unity across this world that transcends all of the differences that we may have, that bridges all divides, that joins and knits people together. You get a real sense of that when you meet someone of

a different race, ethnicity, language, country, all the kind of things that do separate us in many ways—and in spite of those differences, there is a real union that exists, and you sense that when you begin to speak about spiritual things.

I've had that experience. And the sense I got from that was, 'This is a supernatural life we have. I've never met this person before. They're from the other side of the world, and here I am in their church, and I'm hearing the same things that I believe and they believe, and we have this unity.' That is, to me, a testimony to the reality of the Christian life and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Our outlook is to be far and wide. We should know of 'the church universal'. God is doing a worldwide work, and we are "one new man", as Paul put it in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 15. Now he's not speaking there of us as individuals...as, 'we are one new man', and 'we are new creatures'; that's true, but we are joined as new creatures in Christ. We, as a whole, 'the church universal', is "one new man", (ibid.), Jew and Gentile together, in one spiritual body.

So our interests should be the development of that 'new man'...of 'the church universal.' That's the work of God. That's the work God's doing in this world; He is gathering His elect into the church, into the one body of Christ. That should interest us; that should galvanize a participation in that. That is the work of the Godhead; that is the work of the Trinity...(that is united).

And Paul ends this great epistle on a benediction that is Trinitarian in form...and suggests the unity that we should have. God is united. He cannot be disunited, cannot be against One another; and that should be an encouragement to us to do that as well.

Verse 14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

Christianity is monotheistic. Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 4, is not only the great creed of Judaism, it is ours as well; "Hear, O Israel! The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

There is only one God. "He is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." (The shorter catechism.) That is a great definition of God. I think someone said, "No one outside the Bible has given a better definition of God than the Westminster divines in the shorter catechism."

But the One God exists in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Three Persons, but One in essence. That was not explicitly revealed in the Old Testament—but there are hints all through the Old Testament, as the Hebrew word, "God", itself suggests...it's "Elohim", which is a plural form of God. It doesn't mean 'gods'. It can mean that, but not in Deuteronomy 6:4. It's One God, but suggests *plurality* in God. (At least it doesn't exclude that...and there are other texts.)

But it's not until the New Testament that, 'the doctrine of the Trinity' is developed. It's not developed systematically, but we have statements that can only be understood in that way. The word, 'Trinity', of course I'm sure you know, doesn't appear in the Bible. It wouldn't because it's from a Latin term, (the New Testament is written in Greek, and the Old Testament is written in Hebrew and Aramaic), but we see that doctrine here, in our text.

Just as we see it in Matthew 28, verse 19, where Jesus commands us to 'go and make disciples', "...baptizing them in **the name** of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." The definite article, ("*the*"), is not with all of those *titles in the original writings*, ("*the* Father, *the* Son, *the* Holy Spirit"), rather it is, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit".

However, "**the name**", does have the article, and "the name" is singular... "the name" binds all those together, so there are three Persons but one "name". 'The name' of, 'the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' ...so 'Three in One'.

And we see the same formula here in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 14—but with a significant change...the order is reversed. Christ is listed before God the Father,

suggesting equality in them. It's also appropriate because God's grace was obtained for us through Christ's sacrifice for us. He brought us into a relationship with the Father, and He baptized us into the fellowship of the Spirit...baptized us into the church. But all three Persons of the Godhead work together in perfect harmony to achieve that.

Now that's a glorious lesson in and of itself of how all three work together to achieve this great, glorious experience and condition of salvation:

Christ's sacrifice was an act of grace. It was an unmerited, undeserved gift that we have received through faith alone.

It was due to God's love for us, the Father's love for us...and because of that love He sent the Son into the world to do that.

Christ came gladly, willingly to obtain those that the Father had given to Him,
And the ministry of the Holy Spirit draws us to the Gospel, draws us into that body, draws us into this single, one, fellowship.

The Persons of the Godhead are united in their love and purpose of saving the elect. There's no disharmony among them.

And that's the model for us. We are to be united so that we will be *complete*, so that we will be *mature*. That was Paul's desire for the Corinthians and was the reason he wrote to them.

Did the Corinthians respond to Paul's letter and his appeal? Well, we're not told... but we have a good idea, I think, that they did. Paul made his third visit to Corinth, and from Corinth he wrote the Book of Romans. So he was there long enough to do that, which suggests that he was there in a peaceful relationship with them. He stayed with them, he wrote that letter, (and it would take some time to do that).

But...the more important question to ask is: 'Have *you* responded?'

It's only as we do respond to the things that Paul has written here that we *grow* and we *mature* in Christ...and in *unity* with one another. Now that's the goal that we should strive for; I think that's one of the main lessons we should take away from this 13th chapter.

But if you are here without Christ, our hope is that you will believe in Him, for you're lost without Him.

He came to die for sinners. All who believe in Him receive His sacrifice as a free gift...and are saved. So, may God help you to consider that; may God help you to believe that. Come to Christ. Trust in Him.

(Closing prayer) LORD, what a blessing it is to know that:

'The day is coming when we will dwell on high with Thee.'*

That is all Your grace, and we give You praise and thanks for that. Thank You for the union that we have with one another. We pray that we would cultivate that and grow in that.

Now,

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God,

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

Be with you all.

(2Cor 13:14)

In Christ's name, Amen.

* *The Church's One Foundation, (vs 4)*