

2 Corinthians: Encouragement in Troubling Times
"Testing Your Salvation" # 29
2 Cor. 13:5-7
12-4-16 Sun AM

This morning I finish the book of 2 Corinthians, or as President elect Donald Trump says, two Corinthians.

Paul calls the Corinthian believers to examine themselves as to whether they are in the faith.

1. Jeremiah called the people to examine themselves and turn back to the Lord (Lam. 3:40-41).
2. Paul taught self-examination at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:27-31).
3. Peter told the believers to "make their calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10).
3. Here Paul challenges the believers to prove themselves. The words "examine" and "prove" are in the present tense which means such examination should be ongoing!

This raises two questions...

1. Why should we examine ourselves?
2. What standard should we use?

I. Why should we examine ourselves (v. 5-7)?

1. v. 5a- To determine whether we are in the faith.

To begin with, Paul told the Corinthians that they should examine their hearts to see if they were really born again and members of the family of God.

Questions we need to ask:

Do you have the witness of the Holy Spirit in your heart? (Rom. 8:9, Rom. 8:16).

Do you love the brethren? (1 John 3:14).

Do you practice righteousness? (1 John 2:29; 3:9)

Have you overcome the world so that you are living a life of godly separation? (1 John 5:4).

Do you abide in his Word? (John 8:31).

Do you keep his commandments? (John 14:21).

Do you bear fruit and give evidence of a transformed life? (John 15:1-8).

Is your mind set on the earthly or the heavenly? (Rom. 8:5).

These are just a few of the tests we can apply to our own lives to be certain that we are the children of God.

2. vs. 5b-7 To determine if Jesus Christ is in you.

No doubt many of the problems in the church at Corinth were caused by people who professed to be saved, but who had never repented and trusted Jesus Christ.

Our churches are filled with such people today. Paul called such people *reprobate*, which means "counterfeit, discredited after a test, unapproved, rejected and worthless."

This word is used eight times in the NT and I note **Romans 1:28**, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Paul used this word again in **2 Cor. 13:6-7**, emphasizing the fact that it is important for a person to know for sure that he is saved and going to heaven.

Romans 8: 9-11, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (10) And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (11) But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

1 John 5:10-13, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. (11) And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (12) He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. (13) These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

II. What standard should we use?

1. Not ourselves.

Our trust solely in what we think may not be true.

For instance, Saul thought persecuting Christians was pleasing to God and was sincerely wrong. He committed his sin in ignorance till he was shown the truth.

There will be many standing before Christ one day thinking they were right with God.

Matt. 7:21-23, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

(22) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

(23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

2. Not others.

They are sinners themselves and fallible.

3. God's Word.

God is the final and correct standard through His Word. God is the ultimate and final judge who knows the hearts of men and knows who are His.

We don't trust feelings but objective truth through His word.