

The second letter of Paul to the Corinthians

^{1:1}Paul, a sent one of the Anointed One, Jesus, through the will of God and Timothy our brother, to the gathering of the ones called out by God which is at Corinth, *together* with all those set apart for God in the whole of Achaia: ^{1:2}Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus the Anointed One.

^{1:3}Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus the Anointed One, the Father of compassion and God of all comfort, ^{1:4}who comforts us in all our suffering so that we may be able – through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God – to comfort others who are experiencing any suffering *themselves*. ^{1:5}For as the sufferings of the Anointed One are abundant in our lives, our comfort is also abundant in the same measure through the Anointed One.

^{1:6}Now if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation, or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort *also*, enabling you to endure the same sufferings which we also suffer. ^{1:7}And our hope for you is firm, *because we* know that as you are participants in the sufferings so also you will be partakers of the comfort.

^{1:8}For we don't want you to be unaware, brethren, of the suffering which we experienced in Asia. *There* we were under extreme pressure, far beyond our strength to withstand, *so much so* that we despaired even of life itself.

^{1:9}But on our part, we already have had the sentence of death *pronounced* upon ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead. ^{1:10}It is he who delivers us out of so great a death, will deliver us, and on whom we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us.

^{1:11}You also are cooperating *in this deliverance* through your prayers for us. The result is that because of the gift of *deliverance* provided to us through *the prayers of many*, many people will also give thanks for our sakes.

^{1:12}Our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves *in the simplicity and sincerity of God* in the world and even more so towards you. This *conduct* was not the result of fleshly wisdom but of the grace of God.

^{1:13}For we are not writing to you anything new or different than what you have already read and accepted and I hope that you will accept it to the end.

^{1:14}*Furthermore* – as you have at least partially understood from us – we are your *motive* for rejoicing just as you also will be ours in the day of our Lord Jesus. ^{1:15}And due to this confidence, I had decided to come to *visit* you first so that you might have a second benefit. ^{1:16}Then, leaving you, *I planned* to go on to Macedonia and after Macedonia come back to you. *Then*, from there, you could send me on my way to Judea.

^{1:17}Therefore, when I made this plan, did I show instability? Or the things that I plan, do I plan according to the natural man so that I would say “yes” or “no” *but not carry through with it?* ^{1:18}But as God is faithful, our word toward you is not yes or no {without certainty}.

^{1:19}For the Son of God, Jesus the Anointed One, who was proclaimed among you by us – even by me, Silvanus and Timothy – was not yes or no {something uncertain}, but in him is yes! ^{1:20}For with as many of the promises of God as there are: in him is the “Yes!” And *also* through him is the “Amen!” which *resounds* through us to the glory of God.

^{1:21}Now he, who establishes us with you in the Anointed One and has anointed us, is God, ^{1:22}who also sealed us and gave us the guarantee which is the Spirit in our hearts. ^{1:23}But I call God as a witness concerning my soul that it was to spare you that I put off coming to Corinth. ^{1:24}Not that we have *any* dominion over your faith, but we are helpers of your joy. For you stand by faith *yourselves*.

CHAPTER 2

^{2:1}But I determined this in myself: that I would not come again to bring you sorrow. ^{2:2}For if I make you sorry, who then is he who makes me glad but he who is made sorry by me? ^{2:3}And I wrote *to you* about this very thing unless perhaps when I came I would be distressed by those with whom I ought to rejoice. *But* I had confidence in you all that you would all share my joy.

^{2:4}For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears, not that you would be made sorrowful but that you might know the abundance of love which I have for you.

^{2:5}But if anyone has caused sorrow, he hasn't grieved me so much as all of you (not to press the point too much). ^{2:6}The punishment of such a one by the majority is sufficient. ^{2:7}Therefore, *taking the other side*, now you should instead forgive him and comfort him, unless by any means, such a one would be consumed with too much grief.

^{2:8}Therefore, I appeal to you to confirm your love for him. ^{2:9}For I also wrote for this purpose: so that I might test you *to see* whether or not you are obedient *to God* in all things. ^{2:10}But to whom you forgive anything, I forgive also. For what I have forgiven (if I have forgiven anything), I have forgiven it in the presence of the Anointed One for your sakes ^{2:11}so that Satan might not gain any advantage over us. For we are not ignorant of his strategies.

^{2:12}Now when I came to Troas on behalf of the good news concerning the Anointed One, a door was opened to me by the Lord, ^{2:13}but I had no peace in my spirit because I didn't find Titus my brother. So, saying my goodbyes to them, I went on to Macedonia.

^{2:14}But thanks be to God, who always leads us in a triumphal *procession* in the Anointed One and makes manifest through us the sweet aroma of his knowledge in every place.

^{2:15}For through the Anointed One we are a sweet aroma of God, both to those who are being saved and to

those who are perishing. ^{2:16}To the one the aroma* is coming from our death with the Anointed One, pointing to their death. To the other it is an aroma which comes from more and more of God's own life in us. And who is adequate for such wonderful things?

^{2:17}For we are not like so many others, turning the word of God into a money-making business. But instead, having no ulterior motives, we speak from God in the Anointed One – God himself being our witness.

CHAPTER 3

^{3:1}Are we again needing to show our credentials? Or do we need, as some others do, letters of recommendation to you or from you? ^{3:2}You are our "letter," written on your hearts, being understood and read by all men. ^{3:3}It is evident that you are a letter of the Anointed One ministered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets that are hearts of flesh.

^{3:4}We have this confidence through the Anointed One before God. ^{3:5}Not that we are competent in and of ourselves to say that anything came from ourselves. But our competence is from God ^{3:6}who also made us qualified dispensers of a new covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit – for the letter of the scriptures kills but the Spirit imparts the life of God.

^{3:7}But if the ministry of condemnation, which was written by engraving on stones, came with glory – so that the children of Israel could not look at Moses' face without turning away because of the glory of his face which was fading – ^{3:8}how much more glorious will the ministry of the Spirit be?

*The three wise men who visited Jesus as a child brought three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold, the only metal which does not oxidize, represents the incorruptible nature of God. Frankincense is a sweet incense whose smoke rises upward, symbolizing the Anointed One's resurrection. Myrrh was a spice used in embalming dead bodies, giving a sweet smell to overpower the natural one. It seems possible that Paul may have been referring to frankincense and myrrh when he speaks about the "sweet aroma" which applies to two different situations, life and death. Although the "aroma" related to death could possibly be the stench of decay which, in fact, a few translations do use, this does not harmonize well with the "sweet aroma to God" of verse 15.

^{3:9}For although the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness greatly exceeds it in glory. ^{3:10}For truly that which had been made glorious is not so glorious in this respect because of the glory which far surpasses it. ^{3:11}For if that which is being discarded had glory, that which remains is much more glorious. ^{3:12}Having, therefore, such a hope, we are very bold.

^{3:13}*This is* not like Moses, who put a veil on his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at *something* which in the end is being discarded.

^{3:14}But their minds were hardened, for until this present day at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil remains *since it is* not being revealed to them that *the old covenant* is discarded in the Anointed One. ^{3:15}But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts. ^{3:16}But whenever a heart turns to the Lord the veil is taken away.

^{3:17}Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ^{3:18}But we all, with *our* faces unveiled, *through seeing and then* reflecting the glory of the Lord are being transformed into that same image from glory to glory. *This work is being done* by the Lord, *the Spirit*.

CHAPTER 4

^{4:1}Therefore, seeing we have this service since we have obtained mercy, we don't become discouraged. ^{4:2}But we have renounced the hidden, shameful things *and* do not walk in dishonest conduct or use the word of God to snare *followers*, but by straightforwardly living the truth, we submit ourselves to *examination by* every man's conscience in the sight of God.

^{4:3}But even if our good news message is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing, ^{4:4}in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that the light of the good news of the glory of the Anointed One – who is the image of God – would not shine into them.

^{4:5}For we don't proclaim ourselves but the Anointed One, Jesus as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

^{4:6}It is the *very same* God who said, "Light, shine out of darkness," who has shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus the Anointed One. ^{4:7}But we have this treasure in vessels made from the earth (Gen 2:7) so that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.

^{4:8}We are afflicted in every way, yet not restricted *in our work*; in difficulties, yet not despairing; ^{4:9}being persecuted, yet not forsaken; thrown down, yet not destroyed; ^{4:10}always experiencing *while* in the body the dying of Jesus in order that the life of Jesus may also be being revealed through our *physical* bodies.

^{4:11}For we who live are constantly delivered to death for Jesus' sake so that the life of Jesus may also be being manifested in our mortal bodies. ^{4:12}So then *the death of Jesus* is working in us just as the *life of God* is working in you.

^{4:13}But having the same spirit of faith, according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe and, therefore, we also speak, ^{4:14}knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus and will present us *to himself together* with you. ^{4:15}For all things are for your sakes so that grace, being super abundant in many, would overflow in thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

^{4:16}Therefore, we do not give up even though our outward man is decaying, yet our inner *spiritual* man is being renewed every day. ^{4:17}For the light affliction of this present time secures for us an extremely abundant, eternal weight of glory, ^{4:18}*which we understand* while contemplating the things which are unseen and not the things which are visible. For the things which are visible are just for a season, but the things which are unseen are eternal.

CHAPTER 5

^{5:1}For we know that if our earthly tent-dwelling is destroyed [our physical body], we have a building from God, an eternal "house" in the heavens *which is* not made by human hands [our glorified body]. ^{5:2}For we truly groan for this, greatly desiring to put on *as a garment* our habita-

tion which is coming from heaven ^{5:3}so that, being so clothed, we will not be found naked.

^{5:4}For truly we who are in this *earthly* "tent" groan, being burdened, not simply wanting to put something off, but to put on *our immortal body* so that that which is mortal might be swallowed up by the *eternal life of God*.*

^{5:5}Now he who works this very *thing* out for us is God, who gave the Spirit to us as the guarantee.

^{5:6}Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the *physical* body, we are absent from the Lord. ^{5:7}(For our walk is by faith, not by sight).

^{5:8}The reason for our confidence is that we consider it a good thing to be absent from this body and to come home to the Lord. ^{5:9}Therefore, we also strive earnestly toward one goal: to be completely pleasing to him, whether at home or absent.

^{5:10}For all of us will be transparently exposed before the judgment seat of the Anointed One so that each one may receive a *just recompense* for the things he has done while in the *earthly* body, corresponding to what he has practiced, whether it is good or bad.

^{5:11}Knowing, therefore, the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. But we, *on our part*, have already been made transparent before God and I hope that we have been made transparent to your consciences also.

^{5:12}It is not that we are commending ourselves to you again, but we say this to give you a reason to be proud of us so that you may have an answer for those who pride themselves in appearances but not in character. ^{5:13}For if we appear to have lost our minds, it is to God, or whether we are behaving rationally, it is to you, ^{5:14}for the love of the Anointed One is what motivates us.

We understand things in this way: that since One died on behalf of all *men*, then all have died *too*. ^{5:15}And, since he died for everyone, those who are alive should no longer *live* by their own *life*, but *by the life* of the One who died and rose again for us.

*In this passage Paul reveals the truth about the "mansion" which Jesus is preparing for us (Jn 14:2). It is not a physical house or mansion at all, but a new, glorified body in which we will live for eternity.

^{5:16}Therefore, from now on we view no one simply as a natural man even though, *in the past*, we knew the Anointed One as a natural man but now we no longer think of him in that way. ^{5:17}This is because when anyone is in Anointed One, there is a new creation *inside of him*. The original *man* has been superseded {passed by, Gk}, look, a completely new *being* has been generated [the new spiritual man].

^{5:18}And all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through the Anointed One and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation ^{5:19}which is this: that God was in the Anointed One reconciling the world to himself, not taking into account the sins they have done. This is the message of reconciliation which he has given us.

^{5:20}We, therefore, are ambassadors for the Anointed One as though God were appealing *to you* through us. We plead with you on behalf of the Anointed One: be reconciled to God! ^{5:21}He who knew no sin, *the Father* made to be sin for us so that we would become *an exhibition of the righteousness of God* through him.

CHAPTER 6

^{6:1}And working together with him, we plead with you also not to receive the grace of God without results, ^{6:2}for he says, "At an acceptable time I listened to you and in *the day of salvation* I helped you" (Is 49:8). Look here! Right now is the acceptable time! Pay attention! Now *is the day of salvation!*

^{6:3}*We are careful* to give no cause for offense in anything so that our service is not discredited. ^{6:4}But in everything we conduct ourselves as servants of God: in much patience; in afflictions; in necessities; in difficulties; ^{6:5}in beatings; in imprisonments; in facing angry mobs; in hard work; in sleepless nights; in fastings; ^{6:6}in purity; in knowledge; in longsuffering; in kindness; in the Holy Spirit; in sincere love; ^{6:7}by the word of truth; by the power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; ^{6:8}through honor and infamy; amid slander and praise; *amid* being considered deceivers while teaching the truth;

^{6:9}as unknown and yet well known; as dying and *yet* look, we *are* alive (*with God's life*); as being disciplined *by God* and yet not killed; ^{6:10}as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many *spiritually* rich; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

^{6:11}We are speaking freely to you, oh Corinthians; our heart is wide open. ^{6:12}You are not being restricted by us but you are restricted by your own *natural* passions. ^{6:13}Now respond in the same way (I speak to you as my children). You, too, open your hearts *to what I am about to say*.

^{6:14}Don't be unequally joined with unbelievers. For what fellowship does righteousness have with sin? What communion does light have with darkness? ^{6:15}And what agreement does the Anointed One have with Belial? What portion does a believer have with an unbeliever? ^{6:16}And what agreement does a temple of God have with idols?

For each of us is a temple of the living God, just as God said, "I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they will be my people" (Lev 26:12).

^{6:17}Therefore: "Come out from among them and be separate," says the Lord, "and don't touch anything unclean" (Is 52:11). "And I will receive you ^{6:18}and will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty.

CHAPTER 7

^{7:1}Therefore, having these promises beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from everything which contaminates *our* flesh and spirit, making *our* holiness complete in the fear of God. ^{7:2}Open up to us. We have wronged no one. We have corrupted no one. We have taken advantage of no one.

^{7:3}I don't say this to condemn you, for as I have said before, you are in our hearts so much that neither life or death can change it. ^{7:4}I realize that I am being very bold toward you and I also have a lot to boast about you. I am filled with comfort; I overflow with joy in all our affliction.

^{7:5}For when we had come to Macedonia our flesh had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side. On the outside were battles and on the inside were fears. ^{7:6}Neverthe-

less, he who comforts the lowly, even God, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ^{7:7}and not by his coming only, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you when he told us of your longing *for us*, your mourning, *and* your zeal for me. Therefore, I rejoiced even more.

^{7:8}Even though I made you sorry with my letter, I don't regret it though I did regret it (for I *now* see that that letter made you sorry, but only for a while). ^{7:9}Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry but that you were made sorry to repentance. For you were made sorrowful in a godly way so that you might experience no damage because of us.

^{7:10}For godly sorrow produces repentance which results in irrevocable salvation. But the sorrow which the world experiences produces death.

^{7:11}Look here, this is how this very thing worked *in your case*. You were made sorry in a godly way. What seriousness it produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation *against sin*, what *reverent* fear, what longing *for holiness*, what zeal! How you righted the wrong! In everything you showed yourselves to be clear in this matter.

^{7:12}So, although I wrote to you, I didn't write for his sake who did the wrong, nor for his sake who was wronged, but so that our earnest care for you might be shown to you in the sight of God.

^{7:13}Therefore, we have been comforted. And in our comfort, we rejoiced abundantly more for the joy which Titus had because his spirit had been refreshed by you all.

^{7:14}For if I have boasted to him about you concerning anything, I was not embarrassed, but as we spoke everything to you in truth, so the boasting which I did to Titus was also found to be truth. ^{7:15}And he feels great affection for you when he remembers your obedience *to the Lord*, how well you received him with fear and trembling. ^{7:16}I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you.

CHAPTER 8

^{8:1}Furthermore, brethren, we want to tell you about the grace of God which has been given to the gatherings of the called-out ones of Macedonia, ^{8:2}how that in their trials of

affliction they had an abundance of joy and in their deep poverty they abounded in the richness of their generosity.

^{8:3}For according to their ability, (I am a witness), yes, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own free will, ^{8:4}begging us *and* requesting to participate in this grace and fellowship of ministering to those who have been set apart for God. ^{8:5}And they did this not *only* as we had hoped, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us through the will of God.

^{8:6}*This was such a blessing* that we exhorted Titus that as he had already begun, so he would complete this grace in you also. ^{8:7}But as you abound in everything: in faith, in expression of *that faith*, in knowledge, in all diligence and in your love for us, see that you abound in this grace also.

^{8:8}I don't say this as a commandment but to test the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. ^{8:9}For you know that this is why our Lord Jesus the Anointed One, even though he was rich, became poor for your sakes so that you, through his poverty, might become *spiritually* rich. ^{8:10}And in my opinion, it would be good for you who were ready and willing a year ago ^{8:11}to now complete the doing also so that as there was the readiness of will, so there may be the completion of *it* also according to your ability.

^{8:12}For if the willingness is there, your offering is accepted according to what you have and not according to what you don't have. ^{8:13}For I don't say this so that others may be eased and you end up in hardship ^{8:14}but in the interest of equality. Your abundance can be a supply to their lack at this present time and, *at another time*, their abundance may become a supply for your lack so that there may be equality. ^{8:15}As it is written, "He who gathered much had nothing left over and he that gathered little had no lack" (Ex 16:18).

^{8:16}But thanks be to God who put the same earnest care for you in Titus' heart. ^{8:17}For he not only accepted our appeal, but being very diligent *himself*, he went to you of his own free will. ^{8:18}And we have sent with him the brother whose praise with respect to the good news is spread through all the gatherings of the called-out ones.

^{8:19}Furthermore, he was also appointed by the gatherings of the called-out ones to travel with us to participate in this blessing, which is being served by us for the glory of the Lord. *He was appointed* also because of our eagerness ^{8:20}to avoid the possibility that anyone could accuse us of anything about the way in which we administer this large gift. ^{8:21}For we are careful for everything to be done honestly and equitably, not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men.

^{8:22}And we have also sent with them *one of our brothers* who has been tested many times and in many ways and has shown himself to be diligent, causing us to have great confidence in his faithfulness.

^{8:23}If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my associate and my fellow worker. Or *if anyone asks about our brethren*, they are sent ones of the gatherings of the called-out ones. They are the glory of the Anointed One.

^{8:24}Therefore, give them a demonstration of your love, showing them why we boast about you in all the gatherings of the called-out ones.

CHAPTER 9

^{9:1}Concerning this *financial* service to those who are set apart for God, it is unnecessary for me to write to you ^{9:2}since I see your eagerness, which I boasted about to those in Macedonia *by* saying that Achaia has been prepared for a year already. And your zeal has stirred up many of them.

^{9:3}But I have sent the brethren so that our boasting about you in this regard may not be found empty and also so that – even as I already said – you might be prepared. ^{9:4}This is so that if anyone comes with me from Macedonia and finds you unprepared, we (not to mention you) would be embarrassed because of our confidence.

^{9:5}Therefore, I thought it necessary to press the brethren to go before *us* and receive the gift which you promised ahead of time so that in this way it would be a blessing and not a result of pressure we put on you. ^{9:6}But I say this: He who sows meagerly will *accordingly* reap little and he who sows liberally will *consequently* reap abundantly.

dantly. ^{9:7}Let each man do according to what he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or because of obligation, for God loves a cheerful giver.

^{9:8}And God is able to make all grace abound to you so that always, in all things, you may have enough to abundantly participate in every good work. ^{9:9}As it is written: "He has scattered abroad; he has given to the poor; his righteousness remains forever" (Ps 112:9).

^{9:10}And he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed and increase the fruits of your righteousness. ^{9:11}*In this way*, you will be enriched in everything by *your* generosity which causes us to give thanks to God.

^{9:12}For this ministry of service not only takes care of the needs of those set apart for God but also results in many thanking God. ^{9:13}They glorify God for the way you are living out your confession of the good news concerning the Anointed One, seeing the proof of this in your openhearted sharing with them and, in fact, with all. ^{9:14}They also pray for you and long to be with you because of the transcendent grace of God which is upon you. ^{9:15}Thank God for his inexpressible gift!

CHAPTER 10

^{10:1}Now I Paul appeal to you through the meekness and mercy of the Anointed One – I who in your presence am humble among you but *now that I am* absent am bold toward you – ^{10:2}yes, I plead with you that when I am present I will not have to be bold with the confidence with which I plan to be bold against some who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

^{10:3}For though we walk in bodies of flesh, we don't fight according to the flesh. ^{10:4}For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but mighty in God to cast down strongholds, ^{10:5}overthrowing *human* reasonings and all "superior" *arguments* which rise up to oppose the knowledge of God, taking every *wrong* concept captive to the obedience of the Anointed One. ^{10:6}And *we are* prepared to correct all unwillingness to hear once your obedience *to God* is perfected.

^{10:7}This is the way you can think about the situation. If anyone thinks that he the Anointed One's, let him also consider this: that even as he is the Anointed One's, so are we. ^{10:8}For even if I boast quite a lot concerning our capacity (which the Lord gave for building you up and not for casting you down), I will not be ashamed. ^{10:9}In no way did I intend to frighten you with my letters.

^{10:10}*My critics* say: "His letters are weighty and forceful, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech is unimpressive." ^{10:11}Let such a person understand this: that what we are in words in our letters when we are absent, we will also be in actions when we are present. ^{10:12}For we do not presume to classify ourselves or to compare ourselves with certain of those who endorse themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves with themselves, lack understanding.

^{10:13}Yet we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, which extends even to you. ^{10:14}For by including you in our sphere, we aren't overreaching ourselves since we came even as far as you with the message of good news about the Anointed One.

^{10:15}We are not boasting beyond our measure – that is, in what other men have done – but have hope that, as your faith grows, our sphere will be enlarged even more abundantly by you ^{10:16}so that we can proclaim the good news even to the regions beyond you. We have no interest in boasting in someone else's work. ^{10:17}But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord. ^{10:18}For it is not he who endorses himself who is approved but whom the Lord endorses.

CHAPTER 11

^{11:1}I wish that you could put up with me in a little foolishness, but you really do put up with me. ^{11:2}For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I pledged you in marriage to one husband so that I might present you as a pure virgin to the Anointed One. ^{11:3}But I fear that in some way, just as the serpent deceived Eve by his cleverness, your minds would be seduced from the simplicity and the

purity that is in the Anointed One. ^{11:4}For if someone comes announcing another Jesus whom we did not announce, or *promoting* another spirit which you did not already receive, or *proclaiming* a different good news message which you did not accept *through us*, I fear you might put up with him.

^{11:5}For I conclude that I am not a bit inferior to the “great” sent ones. ^{11:6}But though I am unskilled in public speaking, yet I am not *inferior* in knowledge. In every way we made this evident to you in all things. ^{11:7}Or did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted because I proclaimed the good news of God to you free of charge?

^{11:8}I “robbed” other gatherings of the called-out ones, receiving financial support from them so that I could serve you. ^{11:9}When I was present with you and was in need, I wasn’t a burden on anyone, for when the brethren came from Macedonia, they supplied my needs. In everything I kept myself from being a *financial* burden to you and I will continue to do so. ^{11:10}As the truth of the Anointed One is in me, no one will stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. ^{11:11}Why? Because I don’t love you? God knows.

^{11:12}But what I do, I will continue to do, so that I may cut off the opportunity of those whose purpose is to get resources {raise money} *for their “ministries,”* boasting that they are supported in the same way we are.

^{11:13}For such men [those who seek money from men] are false sent ones who work deceitfully, transforming themselves into sent ones of the Anointed One.* ^{11:14}And it is no wonder, for even Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. ^{11:15}It is no great thing, therefore, if his servants also transform themselves into “ministers of righteousness” whose end will be according to their works.

^{11:16}I say again, let no one think of me as foolish. But if you do, yet receive me as a fool so that I also may boast a

*It is true that believers are taught to financially support those who do God’s work. However, such workers must NEVER look to men for their needs but only to God. If and when such men begin to urge, pressure, and beg other men to support them, they have left the will of God. They have begun to walk in the flesh using earthly techniques. When God sends someone, he supplies all their needs from his abundant riches. When men send themselves to “work for God,” being led by their own pride, ambition, etc., then they must manipulate others for their support. Paul’s assesment of such “workers” is very harsh yet true. Such fleshly, human efforts are, at their roots, Satanic.

little. ^{11:17}That which I am about to say I don't say according to the Lord. Instead, this confident boasting of mine is really foolishness.

^{11:18}Seeing that many boast in their natural advantages, I will boast also. ^{11:19}Being "wise" yourselves, you put up with the foolish gladly. ^{11:20}For you put up with someone if he brings you into bondage *to himself*, if he takes *your money*, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, or *even* if he strikes you on the face!

^{11:21}I say this in disgust as though we had been weak. Yet in whatever way anyone else is bold (I speak foolishly), I am bold also. ^{11:22}Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. ^{11:23}Are they servants of the Anointed One? (I speak as someone who has lost their mind) I am more: in work more abundantly *and* in prisons more frequently, being beaten excessively *and* often facing death.

^{11:24}Five times I received forty stripes minus one from the Jews. ^{11:25}Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I suffered shipwreck. I have been in the deep sea a night and a day; ^{11:26}in frequent journeys; in danger on rivers; in danger from robbers; in danger from my countrymen; in danger from the Gentiles; in danger in the city; in danger in the wilderness; in danger on the sea; in danger among false brethren; ^{11:27}in labor and exertion; in sleeplessness often; in hunger and thirst; in frequent fastings; in coldness and nakedness.

^{11:28}Besides these things that affect the physical body, there is something which presses upon me daily, *i.e.* the care for all the gatherings of the called-out ones. ^{11:29}Who is weak and I don't feel weak also? Who is caused to stumble and I don't burn *with anger*? ^{11:30}If I must boast, I will boast about the things that concern my weakness.

^{11:31}The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed forever, knows that I don't lie. ^{11:32}In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes in order to arrest me. ^{11:33}But I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped from his hands.

CHAPTER 12

^{12:1}Although it is not appropriate for me to boast, I will arrive at *the subject of* visions and revelations of the Lord. ^{12:2}I know a man in the Anointed One *who* fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I don't know, or whether out of the body, I don't know, only God knows), was caught up *all the way* to the third heaven. ^{12:3}And I know that this man (whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know, only God knows) ^{12:4}was caught up into Paradise and *there* understood words communicated without speech which man is not permitted to speak.

^{12:5}On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in my weaknesses. ^{12:6}Yet if I wanted to boast, I would not be foolish because I would speak the truth. But I refrain so that no one would think of me above that which he sees me to be or hears from me.

^{12:7}And because of the exceeding greatness of the revelations so that I would not think too highly of myself, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to afflict me so that I would not become proud.

^{12:8}Concerning this thing I sought the Lord three times so that it might be taken away from me. ^{12:9}Yet he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in *human* weakness." Therefore, I will gladly boast instead in my weaknesses so that the power of the Anointed One may rest upon me. ^{12:10}For this reason I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in difficulties for the Anointed One's sake. For when I am weak, then I am powerful.

^{12:11}*By saying all this*, I have become foolish. You drove me to it. For I ought to have been commended by you, for I was in no way inferior to the "super sent ones" though I am nothing. ^{12:12}Truly the signs of a sent one were done among you in all patience by signs and wonders and mighty works. ^{12:13}For what is it that made you feel inferior to the rest of the gatherings of the called-out ones except that I myself was not a *financial* burden to you? Forgive me this "wrong."

12:14Look, this is the third time I am ready to come to you and still I will not be a *financial* burden to you, for I don't seek what you have, but you. For the children should not have to save up for the parents but the parents for the children. 12:15I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If, *in this way*, I love you more abundantly, am I loved less *because of it*? 12:16But let it be that way. I myself was not a *financial* burden to you. But, being crafty, I caught you by cleverness.

12:17Did I take *monetary* advantage of you by any one of those whom I have sent to you? 12:18I summoned Titus and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you in any way? Didn't we walk in the same spirit? Didn't we walk in the same steps? 12:19Do you think all this time that we are defending ourselves to you? We speak in the Anointed One in the sight of God. Dear brothers, all these things are for the purpose of building you up.

12:20But I am afraid that when I come, I will find you in a condition of which I don't approve and you also will find me acting in a way that you will not like. If by some chance there is arguing, jealousy, outbursts of anger, exclusion of others, backbiting, slander, arrogance, disagreements...

12:21I am afraid that on this next visit my God will humble me along with you and I will mourn for many who have been living in sin and have not repented of their impure relationships: of engaging in sex outside of marriage and of the unholy sexual behavior which they have been practicing.

CHAPTER 13

13:1This is the third time I am coming to you so that "By the mouth of 'two or three witnesses' every word will be established" (Deut 19:15). 13:2I gave you a warning when I was with you the second time which, being absent, I now repeat: On my return I will not be lenient to those who have sinned previously or to anyone else.

I will not spare *my words* 13:3since you seek proof that the Anointed One, who is not weak towards you but is powerful among you, speaks through me. 13:4For he was

crucified in weakness, yet he lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we, together with him, will live through the power of God toward you.

^{13:5}Test yourselves, whether you are in the faith *or not!* Examine your own lives! Or don't you realize that Jesus the Anointed One is in you unless you are counterfeits? ^{13:6}But I hope that you realize that we are not counterfeits.

^{13:7}Now we pray to God that you practice nothing evil, not in order that we may appear approved, but so that you may do that which is right (even if we *might be thought of as* deceivers). ^{13:8}For we can't do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. ^{13:9}For we rejoice whenever we are weak but you are strong.

This is what we pray for: your being made perfect. ^{13:10}For this reason I write these things while absent so that I may not have to deal sharply with you when present, according to the ability which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

^{13:11}Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected; be comforted; be of the same opinion; live in peace and the God of love and peace will be with you. ^{13:12}Greet one another with a holy kiss. ^{13:13}All those who are set apart for God greet you. ^{13:14}May the grace of the Lord Jesus the Anointed One, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Words in this translation found in *italics* are words which are implied by the Greek text but do not represent actual words in the Greek text. This practice is common in almost all modern translations. Occasionally, this translator has added words to the translation which represent his own ideas and opinions which, although they are based on his own biblical understanding, are not part of the actual Greek text. Such words are enclosed in brackets like this []. The reader should understand these words as being the opinion of the translator. In contrast to this, the words in these braces { } indicate legitimate, alternative translations or explanations. Words within parentheses () are part of the original Greek text. Such parentheses are often used in other New Testament translations also.