

2 Corinthians 13 - The Importance and Danger of Self-Examination

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2 Corinthians 13. I'm going to read it through; I'm reading from the ESV.

¹ This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ² I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them— ³ since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. ⁴ For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.

⁵ Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! ⁶ I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test. ⁷ But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. ⁸ For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. ⁹ For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for. ¹⁰ For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building you up and not for tearing down.

¹¹ Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, 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.” (ESV)

Let's pray.

Thank You, Father, for giving us Your Word. Thank You for this time that we can dig into it. Open our hearts, we pray to the ministry of truth through Jesus Christ our Savior, amen.

Hard to believe here we are at the last chapter of 2 Corinthians coming to the end of this study. Paul starts off this chapter by reminding them that this will be the third visit that he's going to make to them in Corinth. He spent more time with the Corinthians than anyone else, as far as the collective amount of time.

And he says to them or reminds them, “¹...(that) *every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.*” That was just a rule of law in the Old Testament, and he's reminding them of that. And I think loosely using it to refer to his third visit as a third witness. In other words, this is the third time I'll be coming to you, let every matter be established by at least three witnesses. He speaks of his trip there as a further witness of what the Lord was doing among them, and what they were doing in terms of their own sin, and so forth.

And he says in verse 2, and these are strong words. He says, “*I warned those who sinned before* (and he says), *and all the others* (and now I'm repeating it while I'm away)....” He says, while I come when I get there, I'm not going to spare those—in other words, who haven't repented. That's what he's saying here: When I get there, I'm really hoping that the situations we talked about last time have been dealt with so that when I get there I don't have to be as severe as I'm thinking that I might have to be if people there haven't repented.

And he's using some strong wording here to say, times up—there's a period of time where we give people grace, we give them time to respond, we give them time to repent, but there comes a time where if someone just refuses and drags their feet, there are times when some disciplinary action is necessary. We don't like to think about it. We don't like to talk about it. But sometimes it is just the fact of the matter. And he says in verse 3, you want to see proof that Christ is working through me? Well, just if these guys are still walking in their unrepentant sin when I get there, believe me, you're going to get a chance to see it.

And he doesn't say exactly what he's going to do. I always wish he would. But he doesn't. I mean, we know elsewhere he talks about handing people over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that their soul might be saved and so forth, maybe that's what he's talking about here. I don't know specifically, but he's saying, I mean business and it's time. And sometimes we need to hear that, don't we? It's time. It's time to deal with this. I've had the Lord say that to me on

a few occasions, Paul, it's time. You've been dragging your feet. It's time. Or you've been ignoring this or neglecting this. It's time.

And then he reminds them something about Jesus in verse 4, he says, *“For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God...”* In other words, that means if anybody would have been walking by Jerusalem or the area of the hill they called the skull, and they would have seen Jesus up on that cross, they very well might have looked at that as a sign of weakness. But of course, Paul is saying, but that power, the power that was manifest on the third day when he raised himself from the dead proves that there wasn't weakness there. But he's making the connection, we too, he says, we also as apostles, we are weak in him. But let me tell you right now, we are not weak when it comes to dealing with sin, and it will be dealt with.

Paul says this now, I want you to notice this in verse 5 because this is going to be the center of where we emphasize here this morning. He says in verse 5, *“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves...”* How many of you liked getting tests in school? Now don't raise your hand, because I don't want to know. Because some of you probably did, and we hated you in high school, actually. But, because I didn't. I hated tests. Yeah, to this day, ugh, I hated tests. Most dreaded words are close your books, put them down, take out a piece of paper and a pencil. I mean, I just get the shakes hearing that.

But Paul says to the believers in Corinth, test yourselves. Why? He says to see if you're in the faith, to see if you're a believer. That's something we don't often do. Well, I take that back. We do it to others. In fact, I found a quote. Let me show you this. David Guzik, great Bible teacher, he says,

We're often ready to examine and test others, but first – and always first – we must examine and test ourselves. — David Guzik
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We're often ready to examine and test others, but first – and always first – we must examine and test ourselves.

But it's just not something, we very naturally do. I'll put the light of scrutiny on your life pretty easily, I don't know if she's really a believer. But when do we actually point that light toward ourselves and ask the question, am I in the faith? Wow. And that is something that Paul is challenging the Corinthians, and I think by way of the Word of God, you and I to do. And amidst that challenge, you'll notice at the end of verse 5, he poses a question to the Corinthians.

Look with me there, it's at the very end of verse 5, he says, “...do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?...” And what, and I'll tell you what or why Paul is saying this in just a moment. First, I want to tell you what he's saying. What he's reiterating is very simply the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

What that means is when you and I come to Christ, and when we confess our sins, and receive him as Savior, the Bible says we receive the Holy Spirit, and we receive Christ. It's the Spirit of Christ. We can literally say, Christ lives in me, even though it's through the agency of the Holy Spirit. It's the Spirit of Christ. Okay?

The Holy Spirit and this is what he's underscoring, the Holy Spirit lives within you. In fact, in his first letter to them, he said this, in 1 Corinthians chapter 6,

1 Corinthians 6:19 (ESV)

...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

“...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? (And he says), you are not your own (because of that)...”

When did the indwelling of the Spirit first take place? Have people always been indwelled by the Spirit when they believed? Nope, not in the Old Testament. People were not indwelled by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The Spirit came with them. The Spirit came upon them to empower. The Spirit did some pretty amazing things, but He did not come to indwell under the Old Covenant because Jesus had not yet paid the final price for our sin. When did it happen? It's in the book of John chapter 20. It says,

John 20:19-22 (ESV)

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them. “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

On the evening of that day (what day? Resurrection Day), the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them. "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." (Look at this, with— excuse me) And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Wouldn't that have been cool to be in that room the very first time and have God the Son breathe on you? To receive the Holy Spirit.

But you know what? Every person who comes to faith in Jesus Christ puts their faith in Him for the forgiveness of sins, is breathed upon by the Son, and they receive the indwelling presence of God's Spirit. And that's a wonderful reminder. We receive God, literally living in us.

Now, what's the point? Why does Paul say this when he talks in relationship to them testing themselves to see if they're in the faith? Why does he bring up the Holy Spirit? Why does he say to them, or don't you realize that the Holy Spirit lives in you? Why does he say that? Why even pose it as a question? Here's the point: When the God of the universe, the God who created all things, who is all-powerful, comes to live inside a person, literally making his dwelling inside a person, things change. It is impossible to stay the same. It is impossible to be the same person.

I mean, it's not like you're going to be a different person in the sense that you're not you anymore. I am still the same dope head person that I was before I knew Jesus. I'm just saved. But there is a work that He is doing in me and in you to transform our lives more into His image, to become more like him. And what Paul is saying is about this testing of yourselves when he says, don't you realize the Holy Spirit lives in you? He's saying, don't you realize it?

This is how you do the test, because you see, it's impossible to receive Jesus Christ as Savior, to have him indwell your life, and have you go on and just be completely unchanged. It's impossible. And there will be certain real-life manifestations of His life in you and I, right?

And so, Paul is challenging us to look for that evidence that Jesus has been here. Because when Jesus walks into a room, well, I tell you, things change. When he comes to live inside a person, it's the same thing. Things change. And he's... Paul is calling us to do a spiritual examination. So, what should we look for? Perfection? Forget it. Listen, let's not even go there, right? We're not looking for

perfection. We're to aim for perfection. The Bible does say that, but as far as reaching it, that's not going to happen this side of the veil. You and I are going to continue to struggle with the sinful nature that is also in us, and that will have its way from time to time, and we will stumble and we will fall. That doesn't mean you're not saved. That means you're human.

And that means that there are two opposing forces inside of you. Paul even talked about it elsewhere and said that this sinful nature is at odds with the nature of Christ, which also dwells in you. And he says they're constantly butting heads. They're opposed to one another. And there's this tug of war going on inside of all of us. Can you relate? I sure hope you can, or you're not firing on all cylinders. We all struggle, every one of us, to live the life of Christ, and the reason we do is because sin is always there.

But there are certain things that we should be seeing in our lives, and I'm going to give you just a few of them. And this is not meant to be an exhaustive list by any stretch of the imagination, okay? You'll think of probably some others all on your own, no sweat, great. But let me put some up on the screen for you, as bullet points here. First of all,

- Love for God

Love for God.

You might be thinking, wait a minute. How can I know that I love God? You know, people say that all the time, hey, he loves God, she loves God. Do you love God? We love God. Hey, God, we love you. How do we know? How do we know we love God? Jesus answered the question. John 14:23, He said,

John 14:23 (ESV)

Jesus answered him, "if anyone loves me, he will keep my word..."

Jesus answered him, "if anyone loves me, he will keep my word..."

Yeah, there's going to be a desire; there's going to be a passion that's going to go along with that love for God, to be obedient to His word. It's one of the ways we know. I remember when I got serious about walking with Jesus at about age 25, and I was talking to the pastor, and I just said to him as we were just chatting, man, I just want to be obedient to God.

And he looked at me right in the eye and he goes, that's proof that you're saved. And I knew nothing about nothing at that point in my life, but I remember thinking, sweet! It's one of those proofs. Because that's not something before you know Christ. When you're living in the world, going your own way and doing your own thing, you don't see unbelievers just walking up to you and going, I just really want to obey God. It just doesn't happen.

But when somebody gets saved and the Spirit takes up residence there, we begin to have this desire and so forth. And again, I want to repeat: we're not going to do this perfectly. We're not going to do it without issues and so forth. And even after I said what I said to my pastor back, way back then, I went on to experience some pretty colossal failures in my life, and I continue to mess up.

Some of the things that I did, even after saying, "I want to obey God," were pretty serious in terms of the level of failure. But that doesn't change the fact that there was a passion and a desire to do what was right out of a love for God. What else should we see when we're testing ourselves? How about this?

- An ability and willingness to hear truth

An ability and willingness to hear truth

John 10:27, check this out.

John 10:27 (ESV)

My sheep hear my voice, and...they follow me.

Jesus said, "*My sheep hear my voice and...they follow me.*"

John 18:37 (ESV)

"Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

And then in chapter 18, He said to Pilate, actually, "*Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.*"

That's just one of the—and again, there's going to be times we're going to stumble over God's truth. There's even going to be times when we're going to resist God's truth. That's possible for a believer to do, but ultimately, we're going to be able to say, yeah, that's true. I've seen that even though there might be that resistance for a period of time, because some of us are stubborn and

hardheaded and so forth. Ultimately, we come to a place of saying, that's true. That's true.

And it really is quite amazing when you get a bunch of believers together who don't even know each other. But they're all believers in there. I don't care how big of a room packet is with as many people as you can, you're going to find a unity of agreement among them as it relates to knowing truth, hearing the voice of Jesus. They know when they hear truth, they know it. That's the voice of the savior because they're his sheep, right? And even though we disagree on some of these peripheral issues that make up whole denominational structures, who cares? It's the significant things. We hear the voice of the shepherd. Here's another test.

- The ability to understand spiritual realities

The ability to understand spiritual realities.

Check this out from 1st Corinthians chapter 2 verse 14. Paul writes,

1 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV)

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they spiritually discerned.

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them (why?), because they spiritually discerned.

Now, this is a negative example, or a negative statement. He says that the man who doesn't have the Spirit of God cannot understand, does not accept, right? Why? Because things are foolishness to him. But what about you? If the Spirit of God is living within you, you can accept the things of the Spirit—truths of the Spirit—and you will recognize them as wisdom, not foolishness.

Now, the world will call them foolishness, as Paul says here, and that's where you might be tempted at times to back away and maybe even compromise what you believe because people are going to go, you really believe that nonsense? That is the stupidest thing I've ever heard in my life. That's to a man without the Spirit. He can't understand it. It can't be anything but foolishness to him, right? Because he doesn't have the Spirit for it to make sense. It is the work of God's Spirit by which those things make sense, right? I got to tell you something: in this day and age of internet communication where we talk to people about

everything and anything going on in our Christian life, I have to say that I cringe when I see or hear or read Christians making comments about things.

And I cringe because they say things that their audience has absolutely 100 percent no ability to understand, because they have not the Spirit. And they're in a public forum that's filled with unbelievers, and they're going, well, don't you realize, da, da, da? And no, they don't! They don't get it, and they never will, apart from the Spirit, right?

And Christians, we forget, we're just it to us. It's just like, well, yeah. I mean, the Spirit is making us aware, and we're like, yeah, yeah, well, of course. And we just assume other people are supposed to get this too. And we forget that Paul says the man without the Spirit cannot accept it. He can't understand it, and it will be nothing but foolishness. Anyway, end of rant. All right, next point. What should we also be seeing in our lives? How about this?

- The witness of the Spirit

The witness of the Spirit. Let me give you a verse that goes along with that.

Romans 8:16 (ESV)

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Please understand, Christians; this is not a burning in the bosom; this is something far more significant. It is the witness of the Spirit. The Spirit is a person. Did you notice that the passage says the Spirit himself? Himself is a personal pronoun, and as a person, He witnesses or speaks to the individual, right? And says, you belong to God, you're His. Okay?

And it's a wonderful thing. And it's very, very difficult to explain to people who don't have the witness of the Spirit in their lives. You can tell them how to be saved, but you can't explain. It's like the Holy Spirit speaks to me and just says, I belong to God, right? It's what He does. That's what Paul says here.

These are some tests, and I didn't—again, this wasn't exhaustive. I didn't bring up anything about love for one another. The ladies just finished 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John. What was the major emphasis of that Bible study, ladies, in your Women of the Word study group? Loving your brother, right? Loving people in the body of Christ. John even came right out and just said, it's a mark of those

who are born again; they will love one another (John 13:34-35). Isn't that a scary thought? Especially when people are getting up in your business and stuff like that. I could have talked about that; I could have talked about several other things.

But for the sake of giving a little bit of understanding of this situation, I need to also say something that Paul didn't say in this passage. I believe that this self-evaluation that he's talking about— and make no mistake about it, that's what it is— he's telling you to self-evaluate, see if you're in the faith. There is a resident danger here, and the danger comes from individuals who struggle in this area of their assurance in Jesus Christ. You may be one of those individuals. And what I'm talking about are people who doubt, and they are brought to a place of doubt on a fairly regular basis as to whether or not they are genuinely born again.

And one of the things that makes it so difficult for these people is that there's this enemy we've got who loves to bring up that sort of thing and get you to doubt. Let me show you a passage from the book of Revelation. Chapter 12, it says,

Revelation 12:10 (ESV)

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren had been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night."

Then I heard (a voice, in fact) a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren (note that) had been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night." Notice what Satan is called in this passage, the accuser of our brethren.

In this passage it says that Satan is constantly before the throne of God accusing you and me to God, okay? In other words, he's saying, did you see what she did? Seriously? She's your daughter? Or, look at here what Bozo Brain pulled off today. Did you see that? Just like Satan accused Job to God.

But Satan doesn't stop there; he accuses us to one another and he accuses you to yourself. In other words, he loves to bring up a reminder to you of all of your mistakes, all of your failures, so that you will parade them through that marquee in your mind, and focus on them, and become so focused that it will produce in you doubt—doubt of your salvation.

Now let me just say something, and this is very important: The reason that Satan is able to get this foothold in some people's lives — I'm just going to call it what it is — it's because their faith is weak. Sure, Satan can attack anybody at any time, but understand this: Satan is not going to attack you where your faith is strong.

He's not an unlimited being, and he doesn't have time to waste. And if there's an area that you have dialed in and you're really — there's a strength in your life — he's not going to throw that situation in front of you as a stumbling hazard. He is going to seek to get in where he can do the most harm with the least amount of effort, and that is the area where you are the weakest. And if you are weak in your faith as it relates to your salvation, he's going to hit right there, and he will be able to do some damage because of that.

Now, listen: a strong faith—when someone's faith has been made strong in this area—that person understands that my failures, my blunders, have nothing to do with my salvation. You with me? I am just like you are, and I make as many mistakes as you make. But one thing the Lord has just allowed me to hold on to for all of my Christian life is the understanding that, Paul, I saved you not because of anything you ever did or didn't do.

I saved you because of what my Son did. What He did was he died for you, and He was successful, and He paid it all, so now your salvation is stable because of Him. And you can't make it unstable. You with me? By your own actions. Yes, you're going to sin, but that's not going to change your salvation.

And for some reason or another, I'm just dumb enough to believe it. Well, not dumb. You know what I mean. Simple enough, I accept it. I do. I accept 100 percent that God loves me, and there's nothing that I can do to threaten my own salvation with my acts of dumbness and sin and stuff like that. I've never questioned my salvation

But you know what? There's a lot of people who do. And I know that because I've talked to a lot of them. And for those individuals, self-examination like this could be a very dangerous place to go without help. I would strongly encourage those of you who are just—your faith is still growing. Maybe you have occasional bouts with doubt, or maybe you're riddled with doubt on a fairly regular basis.

What I am talking to you about today is something you need to be very careful about because I know you guys, and you'll flunk yourselves every time. And because I've watched you do it, I've sat and talked with you, and I've talked to

you about your salvation, and you give yourself an F every time, and you end up doubting your salvation. And I say this as gently as I can: it is because your faith is weak, but it can be made strong. You can get beyond this.

When you sit down to do self-evaluation, do it with someone you trust; do it with someone who is mature in the Lord, who knows the scripture, and who is willing to take you back to the beginning to say, all right, let's go back and let's revisit: How is a person saved? Right?

That's what I have to do with people when they come at me with questions like, if I do this such and such, would I go to hell? Okay, let's go back, and let's talk about how is a person saved. Is it by doing good things? No. Well, then how can you lose it by doing bad things? Oh, yeah.

And it takes a while, but eventually, people will start to, and then their faith becomes strong. Wait a minute; it's all about Jesus. It's all about Jesus. It's not about me; it's about Him. It's about what He did. Jesus died for me on the cross. I believe it. I accept it. Right? And that doesn't make me careless with my personal failures. It doesn't make me have this casual attitude about, oh, yeah, hey, sin today. No big deal. I'm forgiven.

No, no, no, that's exactly the criticism the apostle Paul got when he preached the Gospel of Grace. People told him, you can't tell people they're just forgiven. They're going to go off and take advantage of it (Romans 6:1-2). And some people probably will.

But the fact of the matter is, when you are genuinely saved and when you understand what God has done for you, there comes such a great work of appreciation that you just want to live for Him. Remember we talked about that desire to obey, that desire to love and obey? That's a work of the Spirit that keeps you and me from becoming casual about our sinful behavior. And when you're truly and genuinely born again, there's going to be a genuineness to our sorrow over our sin as well.

I mean, if I ran into somebody who claimed to be a Christian, who laughed off their sin and didn't, I would question their salvation, I guess. I would question the genuineness of their conversion because when the Spirit of God gets a hold of a person's heart, there's a transformation, there's a whole different attitude about sin now. And there begins to grow in us—you and I—this desire.

I don't want to grieve my Savior. Look what He did for me, right? Look what He did for me. I am so undeserving of His love. I am so undeserving of His

forgiveness. How could I just spit in His face and casually do that and say, I don't care? I guess God's in the forgiving business. I've heard that one. Yeah, that's like, okay, let me back away or just in case a lightning bolt. No, I'm just kidding.

When we understand that our salvation is because of what Jesus did and not about what we do – and again, I'm not excusing you, I'm not giving you a license to sin – that's why Paul talks in the New Testament about not allowing grace to become a license for sin. It's for that very reason because some people probably will take advantage of that.

So, him whose faith is weak, be careful when you do the test. Be careful that you don't provide the enemy a greater foothold to jump on your back and make you miserable. Get with somebody who you trust, who knows the Word of God, and is willing to look the situation over with you in an understanding, gentle, and compassionate way, but is also true to the Word of God.

And don't be afraid of what the test might show. I think there's a lot of people who are really afraid. They're like, I don't want to take a test like that. What if I, what if it comes out bad? Well, there's still time. You don't want to figure this out on judgment day or when you die — or that's not when you want to figure this thing out. And go, oh, wait a minute, I thought I was saved, right? You want to know now. This is a great suggestion from the standpoint of, hey, listen, if there are any issues, you have time to get it taken care of.

Paul goes on, he says in verse 6, *“I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test.”* It's almost like he's anticipating the question being thrown back at him, are you a Christian, Paul? He says, *“⁷ But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed.”*

And that's really what all those accusations about Paul that we've been looking at over the course of this study have concluded. I don't know, this apostle Paul guy, maybe he isn't one of us. But that's because they were using worldly standards to judge him.

Paul says in verse 8, *“For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.”⁹ For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong* (we want your faith to be strong, even though our lives may show great weakness). (And he says at the end of verse 9 or yeah 9) *your restoration is what we pray for.”* That word means, your completion. We're constantly praying that you would be brought to completion in Christ.

He uses that word again here a little bit later in the letter; in fact, a couple of verses away. And then he reiterates in verse 10 the why he's writing these things and being as strong in his statements as he is. He wants to make sure that when he comes, he can enjoy the fellowship and not have to be constantly correcting.

Verse 11: “*Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration...*” That’s the word, that word in the NIV; they translated it 'perfection. And he says, aim for perfection. And that’s literally what he’s saying. He isn’t saying in that sense, be perfect, or you better be perfect or you’re not going to get into heaven. He says, aim, aim for perfection, aim for the best you can be in Christ.

That's what we're to shoot for, right? He says, “... *comfort one another* (instead of being critical and backbiting and so forth, bring comfort to one another), *agree with one another, live in peace* (with one another, these are signs that we’ve been saved)...”

Verse 12: “*Greet one another with a holy kiss.*” I want to, this is for you people that don't like, that feel uncomfortable whenever we say, take a minute and greet one another. What if we said, turn to the person next to you and give them a holy kiss? I just wanted you to know, it could be worse. And we're not going there, don't worry.

Verse 13: “*All the saints greet you.*” Oh really? The saints? Who are the saints? I mean, yeah, it's a football team, but what is he talking about? Who are the saints? Roman Catholicism, for those of you that have been raised in it, would teach you to believe that saints are individuals who the church chooses, who have met certain markers of the miraculous and works of whatever.

And they then say to them, they get together and have a holy convocation and say, boom, he or she is a saint. And then we call them Saint so-and-so from that time onward. Is that who Paul's talking about here when he says, “...*the saints greet you.*”?

The word means holy ones or sanctified ones. Paul uses it to describe believers, all believers. That means you. You can – you have permission to change your license plate to Saint Dave or whatever. The Bible says you are a saint. In the sense, that doesn't mean, again, perfection, it means you've been set apart. You are a set-apart one for God.

You have been set apart to know God, to love God, to serve God. You are set apart. You are a saint. All that other stuff that the church gets together to do? That's tradition, and it has nothing to do with the Bible. The Bible knows

nothing of the church getting together and calling people saints beyond the biblical definition. They're welcome to do that if they want to; they just don't have any biblical grounds on which to do it, okay?

Paul closes here in verse 14 by saying, *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”* And I hope you noticed the Trinity. And we sang it this morning, didn't we? God in three persons, Blessed Trinity. Paul says, may the grace of the Lord Jesus, may the love of God the Father, may the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

I've heard people say to me in the past, I don't believe in the Trinity because the word, Trinity isn't in the Bible. Can I just tell you that's really dumb to say? Because the idea of the Trinity is clearly in the Word of God right here: God the Son, God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, 1 God, 3 persons. Don't ask me to explain it. It is the triune unity of God, which He has revealed in the Word, which you and I can know but never understand.