

## A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You II Corinthians

Thank you for joining me once again for "It's a Good Life." Today, we're going to continue our study in the New Testament, "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You." Now, these are the books of the New Testament that we've been studying, and we're going to get a bird's-eye view. My intention here is not to have an in-depth study at this time, but to give us an overview of the books of the New Testament.

Last week we looked at the book of I Corinthians, and let me remind you of something here, about some of the applications of I Corinthians before we get into II Corinthians today in our bird's-eye view of the New Testament.

If we glory in men, in ourselves or others, then we have lost the purpose of the Gospel to those who glory in the Lord. First, do not glory in man's actions, only in the Lord's. Secondly, do not glory in man's words, only in the Lord's, and third, do not glory in man's position, only in the Lord's. And we have a right position as we come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. We are in the Lord.

And secondly, love is the answer to any of the struggles the church has as a group or each individual Christian's struggles. And this is taught throughout the book of I Corinthians. First of all, struggles over differences are seen in chapter 8. Struggles over rights are seen in chapter 9. Struggles over idolatry in chapter 10, struggles over oneness or unity in chapter 11, and then we see struggles over body life and individual roles in chapter 12. And then love is the answer according to chapter 13 of I Corinthians.

So we see that Paul the apostle was the writer of this book, and we thank the Lord that God chose him to pen down these words and to have the help that he needed as a Christian as the apostle to write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Well, today, we're going to look in II Corinthians. We're going to see

somewhat of a bird's-eye view of the background, the purpose, and so forth.

But let me remind you that you can receive an outline or a transcript of this program by going to our website, [www.LRWM.org](http://www.LRWM.org). You can download a transcript there or send us an email and request that we pray for you and with you about any request that you might have. You can also write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. If you'll write me, I'll be glad to send you a transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life."

Second Corinthians, and, of course, we understand that Paul was writing to the Corinthian believers at Corinth just as he had in I Corinthians. Keep in mind that the city of Corinth was a very wicked place and not much unlike our world today when we see all types and all manner of sin in and around us. We understand that there is none righteous, no, not one. That means that without Christ nobody is going to go to Heaven. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, but, thank the Lord, that He sent His Son to die for us that we could be made righteous.

And in II Corinthians, once again, we see that Paul the apostle and possibly Timothy were the writers or the authors of this book. Now, God is the eternal author of this book. He is the One. He, of course, is using Paul, using a man and possibly Timothy here, to pen down the words that He would have us to hear in this book of II Corinthians.

Second Corinthians 1:1 says, *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother...* This would include Timothy as having a part in penning down these words. And he says that... *unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all of Achaia.* And I remind you that, back in I Corinthians, we saw how

that it was not only written to the church at Corinth, but it was written to those people who would be saved later on, to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior. And so we see that these books are written for our admonition.

Well, the date of the writing of this book, II Corinthians, was approximately 57 A.D. It was written within a few months of the first book, I Corinthians. The setting here is that Paul writes so quickly after the first letter...that's I Corinthians...because of the Christian's response to his previous message, I Corinthians. Paul's plans had changed concerning visiting them, so he sent this letter, II Corinthians, and there had been certain teachers in Corinth who had brought accusations against Paul.

Now, the key verses here, I believe, are II Corinthians chapter 6, verses 11-18. Let's look at those. <sup>11</sup>*O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.* <sup>12</sup>*Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.* <sup>13</sup>*Now for a recompence in the same, I speak as unto my children, be ye also enlarged.*

Let me stop here for just a moment before we continue reading verse 14. Paul looked upon these Corinthian believers as his own children, and I believe that, as we go out and witness for the Lord as saved people, those people who get saved, we need to recognize them as our children. We need to take them under our wing and we need to lead and guide them to help them become strong in the Lord.

In verse 14, it says, <sup>14</sup>*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? <sup>16</sup>And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>17</sup>Wherefore*

*come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, <sup>18</sup>And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

Keep in mind that these people in that area sacrificed to gods who were not gods, and what Paul is trying to say there is this: "There's some among you who are still worshiping these things who are not saved, and these people you need to stay away from, not to the point of expelling them away from you to the point of not being able to witness to them, but don't be like them. Don't be offering sacrifices to gods who are not gods." And we see that Paul, once again, treated these people as his own children.

Well, what about the purpose of the book? Paul seeks to give the Corinthians who have shown a desire to follow Christ sincerely... he wanted to give them insights into a genuine walk with Jesus, and they have only seen the outward workings of Paul. Now, there's a view of the inward working of God through Paul. And Paul's letter is based on their maturity in Christ. They had not matured very much. They had not grown beyond. As we read in I Corinthians, he had to feed them with milk. He couldn't give them the strong meat of the Word of God or what he had for them through the inspiration of God, but he had to baby them along, and he was continuing that in II Corinthians.

Well, Paul's specific message to the Corinthian Christians here is, he had a genuine concern for them. Now, he does not change his attitude or actions towards the Corinthian believers, according to II Corinthians chapter 1, verses 15-22. He still understood and believed that they had trusted Jesus, well, some of them at least. Let me add here that, just because you're a member of a church does not make you a Christian. Just because we have the attitude that we're born in the United States that we are Christian because of a Christian country. Well, the only way you become a Christian is to ask Christ to come into your heart. And just as in this

Corinthian church, there were unbelievers, there are unbelievers today who are members of churches, but they've never been saved. And if that is you today, you need to call upon the name of the Lord and receive Him as your Lord and Savior. And if that offends you, that's another indication that you have never been born again. If you've never asked Jesus into your heart, you need to do so right now.

"Lord, come into my heart. I receive you as my Lord and Savior."

And so we see in II Corinthians that Paul is writing to both the saved and the unsaved here. He goes through the plan of salvation and helps them to understand they need to receive Christ as Savior. And then for those who are saved, he wants them to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wants the Corinthian Christians to experience joy, not sorrow, according to chapter 1, verses 23 and 24.

And we go on and we look at Paul and others have become servants, even to the point of death for the sake of the Corinthian believers for the glory of God. Now, we look at someone today who becomes a martyr and a lot of times they want to be recognized as such. Paul didn't want to be recognized as a martyr. He wanted people to know that he loved God and he was suffering for the Lord, not for himself, not for the glory of himself, but for the glory of God.

In II Corinthians chapter 6, verses 11-13, Paul reveals his heart unto these people. He loved them, and he wanted the best for them.

And there are so many things we could discuss in this book of II Corinthians, and we need to understand that God wrote this not only for the Corinthian believers but for those believers who are here today, you and I who have named the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. On and on Paul talks about their growing in admonition in the Lord. He wants to admonish them to live for the Lord.

Now, the application here is this. Our work for the Lord can be powerful. When we use genuine open methods that are not deceitful, God can bless those efforts that we put forth when it's not in our own flesh, II Corinthians chapter 4, verses 1-4, talks about this. When we proclaim Jesus, we need to submit to the Lordship of Christ and realize we are to be servants to others, according to I Corinthians 4 and verse 5.

And then, we need to understand that having a spiritual view of our ministry of reconciliation, you have a ministry today if you've named Jesus as your Savior. This involves knowing that Christ died for all. Second Corinthians 5:14 says, *For the love of Christ constraineth us because we thus judge that if one died for all then we are all dead.* It also involves living for Christ who died for us according to II Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 15. It says there, *In that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again.*

God wants to use you today in His ministry, in the ministry that He's given you. First of all, Paul says in II Corinthians 8:5, he says, *And this they did....* Talking about other people now.... *not as we hoped but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God.* We need to give ourselves first to the Lord. Don't worry about the money. People get hung up on the money part of this thing, but God wants you. He doesn't want your money, because it's His already. Do you know Christ as your Savior today? Ask Him to come into your heart.

"Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive you as my Lord and Savior."

If you'll do that, God will save you, and if you are saved, you need to be living for him right now.

Until this same time next week, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.