

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Church Health & You

Speaker:

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Date:

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Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 12:11–21

Theme: Our church's health depends on your gospel grasp.

Introduction: Paul continues to defend his apostolic ministry and fight for the souls in Corinth. A shallow reading may conclude that Paul is selfishly arguing to save his own reputation, but Paul is genuinely concerned for their salvation. Paul is giving his all to save this church, and he has faith that this very thing will happen. As we understand what is happening in Corinth, we can understand the true dangers that we face in this world.

Second Corinthians 12:11–21 highlights three points of application that are critical to church health:

1. Rightly Identify Falsehood (11–13)

- Paul avoided the system of patronage that the Corinthians were used to, and his avoidance came across as disrespect.
- The gospel demands an awareness of the systems we are in and how they affect our thinking (ex.: misplaced compassion is a huge problem today).
- The super apostles use questions and subtle observations to undermine Paul and feed malcontent.
 - If a church has mature members who don't make room for such disruptions, false teachers recognize that there is no place for them.

2. Accurately Interpret Faithfulness (14–18)

- Paul's language in these verses is parental, much like a parent teaching a teenager why what they are doing is loving.
- Paul answers the accusation that he has only supported himself to deceive the Corinthians with evidence to the contrary—he and Titus (and others) have poured themselves out a number of times for them.
- The key to accurately interpreting faithfulness is looking for consistency in gospel work, gospel teaching, and gospel care.
- Paul's language in verses 14–15 is not only parental, but also contains powerful gospel allusions.

3. Welcome Necessary Upbuilding (19–21)

- Paul is making his case not before the Corinthians or super-apostles, but before God, the Judge of all.
- Paul writes that everything he has done has been for the Corinthians' upbuilding.
- Sexual sin—and the other sins listed—are why the Corinthians need upbuilding.

Questions:

1. What social pressures are being laid on American churches, and what are the falsehoods that lay beneath them?
2. What would it look like for you to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and Paul, spending yourself for the gospel?
3. Where do you need to be built up in your faith for the sake of our church's health?