

## 2 Corinthians Teaching Day

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 12 September 2015

Preacher: Canon David Short

[ 0 : 0 0 ] We're here for 2 Corinthians, and I want to say what a brilliant book 2 Corinthians is. Here are some treasures from 2 Corinthians. This is one of our favourite books, right? Here are some verses.

For all the promises of God find their yes in Him. I hope you can all see this. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, the new has come.

For our sake he made him to be sin, the new no sin, that in him we might become the righteousness of God. For the love of Christ controls us, knowing that he who raised Jesus from the dead, for we are the aroma of Christ to God, among those who are being saved, and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.

Look at these verses. We with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

And there are lists in 2 Corinthians. Lists of weakness and suffering and pain. As servants of God, we commend ourselves in every way by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger, by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, and the Holy Spirit, genuine love, by truthful speech and the power of God, with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left, through honour and dishonour, through slander and praise, we are treated as impostors and yet are true, as unknown yet well known, as dying, and behold, we live as punished and yet not killed, as sorrowful yet rejoicing, as poor yet making many riches, having nothing yet possessing everything.

[ 1 : 5 1 ] It's the Christian life. It's a paradox. We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. Aren't these great verses? We're afflicted in every way, but not crushed.

Perplexed, but not driven to despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken. Verse 11. Now let's go 10.

Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies.

For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. That's like the key. The cross means that we die and God lives through us. Here's another list. You remember this list from chapter 11? You can read it yourselves.

39 lashes, beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, danger. Verse 28. With a slight reference to the Corinthians themselves.

[ 2 : 5 6 ] He says, apart from other things, there's a daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. My grace is sufficient for you.

My power is made perfect in weakness. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus. I mean, this is full of quotable quotes, isn't it? Okay. Okay.

Well now, the reason we have these Saturday mornings at the beginning of term has to do with our small groups, our community groups throughout St. John's.

And the teaching day was really started and is geared to you if you're in a group and if you're helping to lead a group. We, of course, as Christians believe that we are more than a product of our own individual choices where we come to St. John's and we engage more deeply in community in our small groups.

In fact, there are lots of people who come to St. John's and enjoy St. John's and feel better for going to St. John's. But over time, we're not really changed. I don't think you can honour one another or confess your sins to one another or forgive each other or admonish each other in the large

gathering.

[ 4 : 16 ] You can be fake in the large gathering. But the bearing of burdens and the pastoral care and the outreach through relationships really happens through small group communities.

And it's our vision at St. John's that the small groups, the small life groups, really become the key and core part of our ministry. So this is kind of our vision for small groups.

Each, I should point here, shouldn't I? The computer's over here. Each small group community has a life within itself. And at the heart of the life of a small group is the Word of God.

And different groups do have a different time and relationship with the Word of God. But it's out of reading God's Word comes all sorts of other things. Care for each other, outreach and mission.

They're fundamentally small group based. And Jan Hobbes, who's been looking after our small groups, is gradually moving toward retirement.

[ 5 : 18 ] And our, I said that nicely. And our vision for small groups is that they become the primary place for pastoral care and outreach in the congregation.

And that means that you as leaders need to be supported and encouraged and equipped to do that. And so gradually, as Jan phases out, and we are very glad that Lynn Unger is going to come on staff.

She actually, I think you've started already, haven't you, Lynn? And helping out leading small groups. I think you'll call the community group leader. And I just wanted to get Lynn out the front and ask her two questions.

Why is this important? And how are you going to do what your job is telling you to do? Thank you, David.

I'm very glad to be here today. But also to be glad to be back at St. John's. I've been an assistant youth minister in the past at St. John's.

[ 6 : 21 ] And I love being in a small group, both before I came to St. John's as well as during my time here. I have found they have been invaluable to me as a Christian to be able to study scripture with people that I love, other Christians, to be able to pray together about the joys and the sorrows of our lives, and to be able to have a place that we can, together, reach out into the community and learn how to do that better.

So that's why I think that small groups are so important. Secondly, the what of what I'm going to be doing is that I want to be available to you, both as small group leaders but also as small group members, to be able to coordinate and to be able to offer you resources, to be able to offer you support, and to be able to do some teaching about ways that we can work together to build God's kingdom.

So I look really forward to getting to know each of you. Please come and introduce yourself to me if I don't know you, and thank you. Thanks, Leanne.

If you are a small group leader and we don't have your name and address, do you have a list that's going to be passed around? I don't, but I would love for you to come and talk to me. Okay. Thanks, Lynn.

Now we're going to have a small group exercise. It looks more like an idea.

[ 7 : 59 ] It does, doesn't it? Now let's go backwards. Okay, here is a small group exercise. You'll see on your notes that I've got a quote from 2 Corinthians 11 there.

Why did Paul write 2 Corinthians? What I'm going to try and do is I'm going to try and come at this in four layers. So this is just the first layer. And you're going to do the work on this.

So one of the things that's happened is that a group of false teachers have arrived in Corinth who are called the super apostles, which I think is a great name.

I like to be called super pastor. I just think they're so Christian. Anyway, this is what Paul says about them in chapter 11. He says, So what we're going to do is we're going to spend five minutes at each table.

And we've got two lists there. I've listed some accusations against Paul in 2 Corinthians. And I have listed some references where we can learn something about the Corinthians.

[ 9 : 36 ] Okay. So this table on my right here, if you would take the first accusation, 1, 12 to 14. If this table, if you would take 1, 16 to 18. The next table, Ruth's table, if you would take 2, 17 to 3, 1.

The next table, if you would take two passages, 4, 2, and then a 10, 1 to 2, and verse 10, please. This table at the front, if you would take the next box, the last accusation box.

This table here, what did we learn about Corinthians, the Corinthian church, 1, 23 to 24. The next table, 4, 16 to 18, and 5, 6.

What did we learn about the Corinthians? The back table there, 6, 11 to 13, 7, 2 to 4. This table here, 9, 3 to 6. This table, Eretus table, 11, 3 to 6.

This table, 12, 20 to 21. And you guys, I want you to do, I want you to compare this. No, you can decide, whichever one you want to do.

[10:42] Okay, you've got five minutes, go. And then I'll get you to report. Right, let's go. Now, you'll have to flick through, you'll have to flick through 2 Corinthians if you want to keep your eyes on the passages.

Let's start chapter 1, verses 12 to 14. What's the accusation against Paul? This table here. Okay, we're saying the accusations were that he had conducted himself not in a holy way, that he was not sincere, that he was acting according to rule leaders, and he's defending himself on those counts. And probably he's been accused of writing in a non-understandable way, because he makes the statement, we write in an understandable way. Right. Our table was understanding his statements were responses to go back. Exactly.

So he's being accused of being over their heads, not really so relevant. They're suspicious of him. He's being sneaky about something. Okay. Chapter 1, verses 16 to 18.

What's that say? Can the people speaking at their tables speak really loudly? Yeah. So choose a loud person at your table, please. What's the accusation in 1, verses 16 to 18?

[11:50] It deals with his travel plans. Yeah. And they're accusing him of fascinating, specifically. Thank you. That's it. They accuse him of fascinating.

Can't trust him. Yeah, he says one thing means another. While we're in Chapter 1, let's go to the group that does 1, 23 to 24. What do we learn about the Corinthians? Who did that? Chapter 1, 23 to 24.

Yeah. Well, he says that he's sparing them. It's something that we don't know from this verse where he's sparing them from.

Yes. We can only assume he's going there to tell them off about something. Or the last time he went, he told them off.

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Okay. Thank you very much. Okay. Let's go back to Chapter 2, 7 and 3, 1. Who had that one?

[12:55] What accusation is there from that? Peddling the word of God for the prophet, insincere, commending himself, and needing others to know their religion.

Right. He doesn't have letters of recommendation. He's peddling the word of God. Thank you very much. The next one, Chapter 4, Verse 2. What are they accusing him of? Yeah.

Of being disrespectful and underhanded. Being underhanded. Yeah. Thank you. And in Chapter 10, what are they accusing him of? Unimpressive.

Unimpressive. Thank you very much. Oh, dear. Yes. Let's go back to Chapter 4, 16 to 18 and 5, 6. What did we learn about the Corinthians from this section?

Who did that? Don't look at what you can see. Look at the real things, not what you can see physically. Okay. So what do we know about the Corinthians?

[13:57] They're losing heart. They're what? They're losing heart. They were losing heart. Yes. Yes. Let's stick on the sight thing. What do we know about the Corinthians? It's all about how you look.

That's right. They live on the surface. Yes. Okay. What about Chapter 6? What did we learn about the Corinthians? Chapter 6, 11 to 13 and 7, 2 to 4.

Thank you, James. I know you're having a big mouth, but it was out. They're being accused of actually withholding their affections to Paul.

Right. And he says that their hearts are not open, which implicitly means they have closed hearts. Right. They've got closed hearts to him. Thank you. Brilliant.

This is great, guys. Chapter 10, sorry, yeah. Chapter 11, 7 to 9 and 12, 16. Who had that one?

What accusation is there now? Yeah. I think that he's concerned about money in this one.

[15:02] He is. Did he, he said he robbed other churches. I don't know the church. I said he was a clerk in the order of a service. So he's.

What's their accusation against him? He refuses. He refuses to take their money.

It's a big, it's a big insult to them. That's right. It's a big problem. Okay. 11, 3 to 6. What do we learn about the Corinthians?

I'm sorry. Stay with 11. 11, 3 and 6. Yeah. Very easily deceived. Very easily deceived. 9, 3 to 6. They promised to hear. Yes. Yes. But this. But he quotes that sparing verse. They're not very generous about it yet, are they?

[16:07] Yes. 12, 20 to 21. What do they learn about the Corinthians? The living of sin and the black repentance. Right. The old stuff. The normal sin stuff.

Yeah. Okay. Very interesting, isn't it? As you start to think about the church at Corinth and this letter to the Corinthians, is there a major doctrinal issue at stake? What do we know so far?

Yeah? I think it's unity. Unity. Yeah. Unity of understanding, unity of faith, personal unity, not fragmenting, unity between two and Gentiles.

Yeah. Yeah. I'm not sure about that. Well, in the verse 12, 24, 19. Yeah.

Yeah. Being Hebrew. Yeah. Yeah. What else? Is there a big doctrinal issue on the table? Renna? It just seems in our passage that they're entertaining a different gospel. It just abuses a different spirit.

[17:13] Yeah. And why? Why are they doing that? Because it's deep. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think it's more about style. It's very interesting.

It's not like Romans, justification by faith, or Galatians, the free grace of gospel, or Ephesians, the church. I think there's much more to do with the style of ministry and the style that they want.

Okay? Let me see if I can back that up. All right? So let's come at this a slightly different way. I want to move secondly now to Paul and Corinth. That is a photograph of Corinth today.

That's the temple of Apollo looking up to the hill where the temple of Aphrodite was. Firstly, where is Corinth? Yeah.

It's in Greece where there's terrible stuff going on right now, of course. But Corinth is on the isthmus between Achaia and the rest of Greece.

[18:17] And they actually had a channel that ran through there. So they basically control all trade east and west and north and south. Now, Paul went on three missionary journeys from Israel.

Big context. We all know this, don't we? The dates and stuff, they're there. He went on three missionary journeys. And then he was arrested when he got back at the end of the third missionary journey and went to Rome slowly.

Here is the first missionary journey. And I'm going to leave the microphone. No, I'm not because you can't hear me. So Paul sets out from Antioch. He sails to Cyprus.

Then he goes up into Galatia. And you know these towns, Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra. What happened to him at Lystra? He was stoned to death.

Left for dead. That's right. Persecution in all these places. He went back appointing ministers and then arrived back in Antioch. Second missionary journey. He goes up from Jerusalem to Damascus, back to Antioch.

[19:24] That's where they send him out from. He goes across Galatia and into Asia. He goes to Troas. You remember he has ministry in Troas. Then a vision appears to him come across to Europe.

And he does. He lands. He goes from Neapolis to Philippi, to Apollonia, etc. Berea, down to Athens. And then he spends 18 months in Corinth.

So it's the end of his second missionary journey. He first comes to Corinth. And he spends 18 months. That's the longest he's spent anywhere so far in ministry. And establishes a church there.

His third missionary journey. I don't know what happened to his third one. There it is. His third missionary journey. He goes back up across Galatia. And then up the Asian coast.

And he makes his headquarters at Ephesus. Voila. And he stays at Ephesus for three years.

[20:23] As long as he ever stayed anywhere. And from Ephesus, there are some letters that go backwards and forwards between him and the people at Corinth. Which I'll come to in just a moment. Wanting to get to Corinth, he goes, he travels north to Troas, waiting for a report back what's going on in Corinth.

And then he comes down and meets up with Titus in Macedonia. And he comes back to Corinth for a third visit. And then back to Judea. Okay. So, in all, Paul visited Corinth three times and wrote four letters.

He visits in 1552. Plants the church. End of his second missionary journey. He writes a letter which is lost. They then write to him.

And he writes 1 Corinthians in return. Then he makes a painful visit. And writes a stinker of a letter and it's lost as well. Then he writes 2 Corinthians and visits them again.

So, the two letters we have in the scriptures, two of four, he wrote. Can we show you? Let's go through that a little more slowly, shall we? Paul's first visit to Corinth.

[ 21 : 38 ] This is the end of the second missionary journey. Acts 18. 8 to pretty well the end of the chapter. The apostle Paul spends 18 months.

The Jews in the city raise a problem for him. And he has a hearing before Galio. Galio. And we actually, the building, some of the building is still standing where he had that hearing. Galio sides with him. So, he becomes the spiritual father of the church and then heads off back to Ephesus. Sometime in the next two years, we don't know when, the apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians.

Just turn back to 1 Corinthians chapter 5 for a moment. Chapter 5 verse 9.

This is how we know he wrote to them with a letter we don't have. I wrote to you in my letter, not to associate with the sexually immoral people, not meeting the sexually immoral of this world or the great of those in the church.

[ 22 : 43 ] Then they send a letter to him asking more questions. And his response is 1 Corinthians.

Okay. So, he wrote to them. He refers to it here. They wrote back with lots of questions. And then he responds. So, if you look at the beginning of chapter 7 in 1 Corinthians, you can see now concerning.

And the now concerning happens again at chapter 8, now concerning. Also, 7.25, now concerning. That's a familiar way of answering a letter.

There are half a dozen of them. In fact, if you go to 1 Corinthians 16, verse 17, he even names the people from Corinth who brought their letter of questions.

He says, I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, Fortunatus, here's a lucky man, and Achaicus, because they made up their absence. They've refreshed my spirit. So, he sends the letter back with them, 1 Corinthians.

[ 23 : 46 ] Okay. And the letter of 1 Corinthians is terrific. He says in the first chapter, he's been hearing about bickering going on, about how they favor one teacher. There's divisions, lack of unity.

He deals with pride, worldliness, sexual immorality, resurrection. And in chapter 16, you'll have to read this later, he makes a plan. And the plan is that he's going to make a collection for the saints through the poor saints in Jerusalem.

And he's going to go through Macedonia and come and visit them. But he's going to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost. And he sends Timothy to Corinth.

So, if you just have a look at 1 Corinthians 16, verse 10. So, he sends Timothy to Corinth to see how it's all going.

And Acts 19 also tells us. And he's going to report back to Paul. Okay. So, that's the end of 1 Corinthians. Then we have a visit. A second visit.

[ 24 : 51 ] Well, and this is around 55 AD. Timothy comes back to Paul with very bad news. He says, despite the first letter that you sent, false teachers have come into the church.

And the church loves them. And we'll see this in a moment. And the false teachers mock Paul. And all the old problems of immorality have escalated again. So, Paul rushes from Ephesus.

This is during the third missionary journey. It rushes down to Corinth and tries to straighten it out. And his intention is to bring the grace of God. But it's a painful visit.

So, turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 1. Well, let's go straight to 2.1. For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you.

He's explaining why he didn't make a third visit. The reason why he made this visit, if you turn to chapter 11, is because most of the Corinthians sided with the false teachers.

[ 25 : 59 ] So, in verse 4 of 11, you put up with it easily enough. And then verse 20, you bear it. So, there's large-scale rebellion.

Goes and visits the entire congregation. We don't know about that. The vast majority of the congregation sided with the false teachers. And instead of staying, Paul leaves and goes back to Ephesus and writes this stinker of a letter.

This severe letter. I'm sorry, that's what he does next. So, after the painful visit, he then writes a severe letter. And he refers to this in chapter 2 and chapter 7.

Let's go to chapter 7. Verse 8. For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it, for I see that the letter grieved you.

Though only for a while. Now I rejoice. Because you were grieved. But because you were grieved into repenting. So, there's this severe letter that he sends off.

[ 27 : 03 ] And I think it's absolutely wonderful. Paul doesn't attack. He doesn't go in again. He withdraws to give them time for repentance. Extending mercy to them.

Even though the attacks are personally focused on him. He judges it better to write a letter than to give another painful visit. And then he sends Titus off.

Titus was much more robust than Timothy. He sends Titus off to see how the robust letter was received. And poor old Titus. He, so Paul is there in Ephesus.

Titus doesn't come back for a long time. And so Paul goes up to Troas. But he can't rest. So, look at chapter 2 again. 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians. In verse 12.

He said, When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ. Even though a door was open for me in the Lord. My spirit was not at rest. Because I didn't find my brother Titus there. So, I took leave. And he went to Macedonia to find Titus.

[ 28 : 10 ] He finally finds Titus. And there's been a good reception to the severe letter. Okay. And that is when he writes 2 Corinthians. Okay.

There's a summary of this. If those of you doing Bible studies in 2 Corinthians. In the handbook. A summary of these 7 steps. But all it means is that Paul visited 3 times.

Wrote 4 letters. But this last letter. Comes out of the fact. That he's written a severe. That he's had a lot to do with them. False teachers have come in. The church has gone over the false teachers.

He's written a severe letter. And the church. Majority of the church have come back to him. But he's not sure how deep that is. The 2 Corinthians has written to a church. While there are still false teachers there.

But the majority of the congregation. Has had some sort of conversion back to him. Okay. That's why it's difficult to know. Sometimes. There's more than one audience. Okay. All right.

[ 29 : 08 ] Let's keep going. Let's look at ancient Corinth. The internet's a wonderful thing. Why look at Corinth?

Well. The book is a book of marvelous paradoxes. My grace is sufficient. My power is made perfect in weakness. I will boast more gladly in my weaknesses.

So that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Or he says in chapter 4. Death is at work in us. But life in you. So there are a series of paradoxes.

In. In 2 Corinthians. These are paradoxes of Christian life.

And paradoxes of Christian ministry. That God's power. Happens through our weakness. That his glory is shown. In our shame. That he brings comfort.

[ 30 : 05 ] In our suffering. That we have riches. In our poverty. That we have inward renewing. When our outward. Our outward self is wasting away.

So we boast in our humiliation. We have joy in pain. We have life through death. And all those things sound. Bizarre. Absurd. And contradictions.

If you take the cross. And resurrection. Of Jesus Christ. Out of the picture. So Paul has not been. Paul has not been attacked. For his apostleship.

He's being attacked. For his ministry. He's not defending his apostleship. He's defending ministry. The word ministry comes 19 times. Paul only refers to himself once as an apostle.

In verse 1. He's defending ministry. It arises out of the gospel. Of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Which means that all Christian ministry.

[ 31 : 03 ] And all Christian servants are included in this letter. That the style of life. And the style of ministry that we have as Christians.

Rests on the gospel of the crucified Christ. There are paradoxes in our lives. Okay. So the thrust of the book. Is that God works through us.

To others. Through our weakness. Is everyone with me so far? Yep. I have a question. Given the later kind of fragmentation of the church.

Many members of the church. I don't know. Do you think that Poland is ultimately successful in these letters? Or like in the nation's system. Does it ultimately fail?

Well, what we know. We don't know very much. But we do know. There was a church in Corinth in the next century. So it seems that this one worked. Okay.

[ 31 : 58 ] Why look at Corinth? Well. What are the accusations being made against Paul? By the way. That is the Bema. That is the building where Gallio had the hearing.

Where Paul stood. And could have been sentenced to all sorts of things. But he wasn't. And there is the hill with the temple of Aphrodite behind it. I thought that is a very nice picture. There are four basic criticisms against Paul in 2 Corinthians.

The first is boasting. And I think I might have listed them there. He doesn't boast. They are critical of his refusal to boast. They happily accept the false apostles who like to boast.

The second criticism is physical presence. It is just not very impressive. He doesn't bring his force. He doesn't dominate in conversation and in preaching. And preaching is the third thing.

His speech is unskilled and contemptible. I am going to explain what they mean by that. And lastly. As this table pointed out. He won't take their money. When he worked there.

[ 33 : 02 ] He earned his living by making tents. And when he ran short of money. Instead of asking the Corinthians for help.

He received money from poorer churches elsewhere. I just love that. We will come back to that in a moment. What do you notice about those four criticisms? They are about surface things.

They are about surface things. Absolutely. What else? Yeah. They are about style. That's right.

They are not theological. Are they really?

I mean they have theological implications. They don't describe Joel or Steve. They don't describe Joel or Steve. Let's keep moving. What else could you say about them? They are essentially what?

They are essentially secular. These four things reflect the culture of the day.

[ 34 : 04 ] They are all cultural. They come from the way people in antiquity evaluated one another. And they have vast spiritual implications. Paul does not measure up to their social standards.

And they question his ministry. They use their secular prejudices, their social secular prejudices, to deny the legitimacy of Paul.

Isn't that amazing? We are going to come back to this a number of times. So I want to go to look at something of the city of Corinth. Okay? So what are the facts about Corinth?

And I think I have listed seven areas. Firstly, the city of Corinth. Now the city of Corinth was a new city.

Its position there, as I said earlier, meant it controlled all trade from the east and the west, Asia, going across to Italy, and north and south as well.

[ 35 : 08 ] In 146 BC, it was destroyed. And in 44 BC, Julius Caesar established a Roman colony.

It's just this amazing position. And there's no city in the empire that offered more for individual achievement. And from 14 AD to 44 AD, it had a meteoric rise until it became the most dazzling city in Greece.

So this is today. And you can see some of the most beautiful architecture and sculpture and temples. This is the design of one of the outdoor baths, from what we know.

Oh, this is a stoa, one of the main streets. You notice on the right it's got watercourses for gutters.

The south stoa was 500 feet.

It was the longest in Greece. The agora was larger than the one in Rome. It had three theatres. This is one of the theatres in Corinth.

[ 36 : 15 ] It sat 18,000 people. Yeah. Entertainment plus, plus, plus. How many people do our, does the, what's it called downtown? The dome?

BC Place. BC Place. 40, okay. And that's another one in town. It's a smaller one. And there were countless shops and mosaics, all of them dedicated to self.

So, oh yeah, one of the most interesting things is the Erastus dedication. Erastus was the city treasurer, the idealist of Corinth.

And he paid for a pavement, that's what this says, so that he would be elected. So the idea is that you buy your way into political office.

When Paul came, he was converted. And he then travels with Paul and goes back to Corinth again and again. So he was a bigwig, a lot of, very wealthy guy in Corinth. And we just happened to have the street that he gave to buy his way into political office.

[ 37 : 21 ] But there are so many dedications that we have now which say things like, I am the finest, I am the best, I am the greatest. So that's the city. What was the population approximately?

We don't know. We don't know what the population was. But the population came and went because it was such a maritime city and such an event-based city.

I'll come to this under the games in just a moment. I know when the games came, it was very, very big. Corinth had no aristocracy like Rome did.

Corinth had no aristocracy. This is a picture of a couch in a house that's just been excavated. It was mostly freedmen, those who'd been slaves or soldiers or colonists from Rome seeking a lucrative trade.

Slaves in those days were managers. And they'd manage a big portfolio. And when they got their freedom, they'd all head to Corinth where they could use all those skills and create massive wealth.

[ 38 : 25 ] So you remember in 1 Corinthians, Paul says, not many of you are of noble birth. He's not saying you're all scum. He's saying Corinth is a city without an aristocracy. There's no family inherited code.

They're nouveau riche, as it were. And there was a heavy individualism in Corinth. Not exactly the individualism of today, of course. But with the decline of city-states in Greece, there was the rise of the virtue, the Greek word, autarchia, self-sufficiency and autonomy.

And not just in the writings, but in the inscriptions, in the epigraphy, we get a sense of great self-worth and self-appreciation and self-glorification as the reward for doing well.

Thirdly, the economy and wealth. Well, here are some mosaics from houses in Corinth. And here's the thing about Roman society.

Rank was prized above everything else. It determined your rights and your behavior. And there were only two classes. High, low. And it was based on hereditary. You couldn't, you know, if you're born low, you couldn't get up.

[ 39 : 38 ] Except for one way. There was one way you could break out of your class. And it was... Money. That's right. This is more true in Corinth than anywhere else.

They're relatively educated, upwardly mobile. I quote one of the first century authors, they hold their heads high and receive the admiration of all. They're a maritime city trading, which brings massive wealth.

The freedmen. These are just some of the pots that have been recovered from Corinth. The freedmen amass fortunes, rivaling the fortunes of Rome.

Let me go back a second. Juvenal, writing in the first century, said, the people worshipped deity. Quote, no deity held in such great irreverence amongst us as wealth.

Because they had two harbors, it was a boom town. I quote first century sources full of wealth, abounding in luxury. And the elegance of... There are two testimonies to this.

[ 40 : 38 ] The elegance of the buildings that we've discovered and the evidence of the price of the temple prostitutes. They're too expensive for out-of-towners. And poverty was regarded as a great evil.

If you were poor, you were contemptible. You were a disgrace. There were no such thing as charitons. And those who came into Corinth depicted their Corinthians as scoundrels, ungracious, unprincipled and pursuing only profit.

Fourthly, self-display. Competition in the games.

Okay. Corinthians were at pains to display their accomplishments.

Maybe just make a couple of comments on self-display. I'm going to...

[ 41 : 45 ] Sorry, the games is a separate point. It's not enough to have wealth. But you've got to flaunt your wealth. There's evidence in Corinth that wealthy people impoverished themselves by giving massive feasts so that no one would know that they were poor.

So they would spend all their money. And there was an open quest for applause and admiration. Political office could be bought. Which is not so different from today, I guess.

I shouldn't have said that. The inscriptions. Let me quote a series of inscriptions. These are grave inscriptions and also epigraphy on statues. This man was worthy of his own glory and manliness.

I quote. I am great, preeminent above all others. It's the second one. I'm more famous than all. I'm the flower of Achaia. I attained the peak of every excellence. There's six of them.

So one of the ways in which the Corinthians evaluated each other was on the public display of their own glory and beauty. So let's get to competition of the games. This one-upmanship is all over Corinth.

[ 42 : 54 ] The Isthmian Games was a biennial games that were held, obviously, every two years.

And they were second in Greece, only to the Olympics. The crowds flocked to Corinth. So, Gillian, I'm not sure I can answer the question about the numbers because there was a massive influx

every two years.

And what's very interesting... Bull-tossing. Discus throw. Wrestling. In AD 51, the games were there.

And that was in the middle of the time the Apostle Paul was making tents. The Apostle Paul was there for the Isthmian Games. And his tents were making booths and stores and tents for people who travelled on ships.

And it was a great attraction to come and see the athletes compete in Gorman Dice. There was only a gold medal given out, only first prize, second and third and nothing. And then once the athlete won the medal, he'd be expected to go around the city saying, I'm the fastest of all, etc. [ 44 : 04 ] You're the best where you go home. What's interesting is that Nero, the emperor, never visited any other part of Greece. He never visited Athens, Sparta, but he spent a lot of time in Corinth.

He came every time for the games. And Suetonius wrote about Nero that he went to Corinth because he was carried away by a craze for popularity. He attended the games.

He competed in the chariot races. That's not him, but... That's not an actual photo. We do know that one of the games, he sang for the crowd, accompanying himself on the lyre.

And each time he'd go to the games, he'd do something like this. And people would praise him. Of course, what do you do with the emperor? And he just loved it. And people loved it as well.

And then he would heap honours on Corinth. Okay, next. Beauty and pleasure and entertainment. There was a premium on physical appearance and impressive speech.

[ 45 : 10 ] The literature of the day portrayed Corinthians as beautiful people. Athletes competed nude and worked... They worked on their physique in Corinth on the off-season. And there's a lot of evidence that that sort of behaviour came into the town during the off-season.

People valued physical over intellectual. That's very important. Intellectual pursuits have fallen on hard times in Corinth. They were deeply committed to sensuality and pleasure.

That's Aphrodite. Favorinus, in the first century, says that Corinth is a city of aphroditic pleasure beyond all that are or ever have been.

If you sailed into the harbour, it would be crowded with male and female prostitutes offering themselves in flimsy clothing with lots of make-up. And as I said, on the top of the Agra Corinth, at the top of the hill, was the Temple of Aphrodite with 1,000 temple prostitutes, including children. The theatre and entertainment focused on debauchery. Those three theatres that I mentioned. And it became the entertainment capital of Greece. So it's a cuff city for gospel ministry, I reckon.

[ 46 : 36 ] Religion. Sorry, let me go back. Like, that's a public toilet, which is mixed gender. That's a public bath, which was also mixed gender.

Beautiful and luxurious. Steam. Sorry, I'm going the wrong way. Religion.

Let me talk a bit about religion. Very popular. Very tolerant. There were gods from Asia, from the north, from the south, from Egypt.

Temples to Isis and Serapis. From the west. So far, they have found inscriptions and temples to 34 gods in Corinth.

And the pursuit of religion was not an intellectual pursuit. People wanted experience. They wanted contact with the supernatural. They didn't want logic. So there was a great trade in amulets, spells, recipes.

[ 47 : 51 ] That photo, again, does it beautifully, because up there on the hill you can see the temple of Aphrodite. That's the temple of Apollo down there. The city is full of temples. So you know how you buy cookbooks as gifts for people these days.

In those days, they were spells, recipes, curse tablets, enchantments, dreams, astrology. Very superstitious. And it was mainstream. So there's record of the Corinthian city council making decisions based on dreams.

And the temples were the only buildings probably big enough, with dining rooms big enough, to have feasts. And the famous cult feasts had gross amounts of wine and meat.

But the cult, I'm saying all the different religions, that everyone had their own, produced a glue for the social life. And a lot of fine art and music and dancing and pottery.

And it was huge for the economy. So here is some of the gold and silver. Silver and copper from Corinth was wanted all around the world, which brings mythology and religion and debauchery together.

[ 49 : 04 ] Great stuff. And there were lots of shops. When you look down that road, there are lots of stores.

And the stores gathered around the temples, of course. Let me make you a couple of comments about the religion. It was never expected that your religion would change your manner of life. The religion served in Corinth as a warrant for the culture, not a critic of the culture.

It was another way that you exalted yourself as an individual. If you gave to the temple, you would earn a political role. If you served in a political role, you'll also serve in the temple in some way. And it's very interesting.

The salvation language is used in all these religions, but salvation is not eternal life. Very few people believed in life after death.

Popular philosophy denied life after death. It just wasn't an issue. So there's grey stones with that sort of fatalism. I was not, I was, I am not, I don't care. Salvation was all about this life.

[ 50 : 12 ] So the inscriptions have, you know, Diana is my saviour, healed me from disease, saved me from disease, saved me from poverty, saved me protection.

So salvation was about the present benefits of the gods. What mattered was what the gods can give me now, health and wealth, and if your god had any spot of weakness in them, it was a disaster, unthinkable.

You're just wasting time talking about a god who has weakness, right? Do you understand? Okay. Finally, public speaking. I don't know how to say this, but there was a high value in entertainment in public speaking and eloquence, not content.

Because it was an entertainment culture, Corinth did not want refined elitist address. The crowds gathered to hear the sophists and philosophers, and the public speakers would try and draw crowds with tricks and sensational topics of powerful delivery, and the idea was to impose your personality powerfully on your audience, and we have evidence that the sophists, the speakers, would yell at each other and then would get into a fight, fisticuffs, a brawl, and their disciples would move around the crowd brawling with disciples of other people.

So this is how I will portray it to you. Public speaking in Corinth was not like that, it was more like that. It was not like that, it was more like that.

[ 51 : 51 ] Okay. Let's talk about the church at Corinth. How are we going for time, Jan? I think I want to break it, and now I'll be free. Okay.

How long should we break for? 20 minutes. So we'll be back at 5 to 11. And everything's back there.

Thank you. Well now, thank you for those who supplied morning tea.

That was just fantastic. And if you all go to sleep now, I understand completely. We've been circling around Corinth, and I've been establishing these four criticisms from 2 Corinthians, and then we've had a little look at the city itself, culture around about it.

We're now going to, on your summary, look at the church in Corinth, and under the headings of those four criticisms, and then I want to make three comments, and then we're going to do some group exercises.

[ 53 : 14 ] So that's pretty much the work for today. So let me draw your minds back to these four criticisms. We know from the text of 2 Corinthians that they're criticising Paul for not boasting.

That was something, that was part of Corinthian daily life that was of value. You should boast. And we have sneakier ways of doing it in the West, but not quite as open as the Corinthians, but still they criticise Paul for his physical presence, which I'll speak about in detail, his speech and his refusal to take money.

Now, I have made the point already that these are really cultural and social criticisms. They're not religious really at first, but they do have devastating spiritual impact.

So if you turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 6, this is a pretty key verse.

The Apostle says, chapter 6, verse 1, working together with God, then we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

[ 54 : 38 ] There's a number of meanings, but primarily it means don't receive the grace of God without it affecting you, without changing you, without it having an impact.

It also means don't receive the grace of God and allow the grace to stop with you, which we'll come to in a few moments. And again, in chapter 13, the last chapter of 2 Corinthians, verse 5, forces examine yourselves to see whether you're in the faith.

Test yourselves. So, I think, I just think about this with me for a moment. It is possible that our cultural worldview, our commonly assumed social prejudices, can unravel the work of the gospel and the grace of God in us.

In other words, our cultural assumptions and prejudices can endanger the work of the gospel, and they can undermine the impact of the gospel message and our confidence in the message and in the apostle.

And I think this is one of the reasons why 2 Corinthians is difficult to grab a hold of, because it's not one big doctrinal issue, as I said earlier.

[ 56 : 07 ] It's not massive doctrinal deviation. It's something much sneakier. It's something unseen. It's something perhaps more sinister and pernicious. It's leaving our cultural prejudices in place, not challenged by the cross of Jesus Christ.

This is it. The book of Corinthians is about the apostle Paul bringing the cross of Christ to bear on everything in his life and everything in the lives of the Corinthians, particularly their social prejudices.

So at the heart of Christianity is the cross of Jesus Christ, and at the heart of Christianity is the message of the gospel. But here's the thing, the content of our faith has to control the manner, the style in which we live out our lives in our culture.

It has to control the style of our lives and the manner and style of our ministries as well. Otherwise the message will be changed and it will be evacuated of its power.

2 Corinthians is really very much about how the gospel that Christ crucified transforms us. Because only the cross, you see, has the power to overturn our comfortable prejudices.

[ 57 : 46 ] Only the cross can move us out of the center and challenge us at the very core. people. So let's have a look at how Paul does this in the church at Corinth on these four criticisms, shall we?

And in this section you're going to do a lot of flicking. We're going to go backwards and forwards through the text. I hope you're comfortable with that. So, firstly, boasting.

Now let's turn to chapter 11, verse 18. I'll read, I've got lots of text to give you, and if you're a note-taker, you can just jot them down and read them again later.

I'll read them, but if you're sick of my voice, someone else can read if they would like to. Chapter 11, verse 18, I'm going to read three verses here. So this is about boasting.

Paul says, since many boast according to the flesh, the outside, I too will boast. He's being ironic. You gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves.

[ 59 : 00 ] For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you or devours you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or strikes you in the face. To my shame, I must say that we were too weak for that.

But what anyone else dares to boast of, I'm speaking as a fool, I dare also to boast of that. This is hugely important in the Corinthian letters, the whole concept of boasting.

The verb for boasting comes 39 times in 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, or in any other correspondence in the New Testament.

And in verse 30 of chapter 11, Paul says, if I must boast, which was a slogan in Corinth, I must boast. That's how the inscriptions were introduced.

And he uses it again in 12.1, I must go on boasting. What can we say about the opponents? Well, in 11.18, they boast according to the flesh, which means what?

[ 60 : 07 ] Yeah, it's the outside stuff, right? It can be your good looks, or your good athletic standing, or the street that you built, or whatever.

In chapter 11, verse 12, what I will do, I will continue to do in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission, they work on the same terms as we do.

In other words, they boasted of their financial support from the Corinthians. But Paul won't, he refuses. And he says in chapter 10, verse 17, that the one who boasts, boasts in the Lord.

Just turn back to 1 Corinthians for a moment. 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Let me read the last paragraph from verse 26.

So boasting was an issue whenever the gospel came to Corinth. This is the first letter. Verse 26 of chapter 1. Consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards.

[ 61 : 25 ] Not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. You can see

this theme already developing.

God chose what is low in the world, low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being may boast in the presence of God.

And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption as it is written, let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.

So how does Paul deal with this favourite cultural value? How does he deal with it? He turns it completely upside down. See, for a city that, for a people whose real love of boasting is there, with a group of false teachers who come who are outwardly very impressive and wealthy with letters of commendation who also boast.

What does Paul do? He does this, he says, I'm going to boast in my weakness. I'm not going to boast in my achievements, I'm going to boast in my weakness. Let's go back to 2 Corinthians 11.

[ 62 : 50 ] So, I'll pick up at the end of verse 21. I'm speaking as a fool, I also dare to boast of that.

Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. He's speaking about the false teachers, who I think are probably a group from Israel. I don't think, they're not Christians, but they have some sorts of letters of recommendation, we don't know from whom.

Are they servants of Christ? Paul says, I'm a better one. I'm talking like a madman. Now, what's his boasting of? With far greater labours, far more imprisonments, countless, this is all stuff of terrible shame, beatings, often near death.

I mean, what sort of God lets him go through this? Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the 40 lashes, less one. People often died of that. We have one flogging in the book of Acts.

We're only told about one. Three times I was beaten with rods. We don't have any of those. That was almost as lethal as the lashes. Once I was stoned. Three times I shipwrecked a night and a day I was at sea.

[ 64 : 00 ] Here's another one coming. He's trying to commend himself. I'm boasting here. Danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger from the city, danger in the world, danger at sea, danger from false brothers, in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Who's weak and I'm not weak? Who's made to fall and I'm not indignant? A slight to them. If I must boast, I'll boast of the things that show my weakness.

He revels in his humiliation. This is how he changes. This is how he's bringing the gospel to bear on them. Because boasting in his weakness, he's actually speaking about the truth, but he's not boasting of weakness by itself.

This is very important, friends. Some Christians think that weakness is the value. It's not the value. Weakness is not to be admired for its own sake, but weakness in Jesus Christ.

We need to keep going on this. This is the shape of the gospel. Look at chapter 13 verse 4. Jesus was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God.

[ 65 : 25 ] For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you, we will live with him by the power of God. In other words, the dynamic of the crucifixion of Jesus needs to show in Paul's ministry and in their lives.

So this is the way Paul tries to address this whole doasting thing, by showing that the cross of Jesus Christ flips it over. Secondly, what about his physical presence?

Unless anyone wants to ask a question or make a comment there. Let's keep going. Physical presence. chapter 10 verse 10. Speaking of his opponents, they say his letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak.

What they're saying is that his letters, that savage letter, they sure are strong, but he's so gentle in person. Aha, you see he's inconsistent.

If we had a real apostle, we'd have someone who is a bit more dominating in demeanour. And I showed you the picture of people having punch-ups.

[ 66 : 39 ] Look at chapter 11 verse 20. Look at the last phrase of verse 20.

In other words, it was popular for public speakers to whack people in the face physically. Now, I tried it.

I haven't tried it. They wanted an apostle who was more heavy handed. You see, they loved his severe letter. Ah, something we can respond to. But Paul, when he's here in the flesh, he's not

authoritarian enough.

He's not imposing himself on us as we want. back to chapter 10 verse 11. Paul says, let the person understand that what we say by letter when absent, we do when present.

See, the heart of the accusation about his physical presence is he lacks the same boldness indeed when he's there with them. They want a more athletic, competitive, warlike apostle.

[ 67 : 51 ] They say to him, Paul, we live in this athletic, competitive, wealthy culture. How are we going to appeal to our culture? How are we going to attract new people if you're going to be meek and gentle like that?

Chapter 10, verse 2, he says, I beg of you that when I'm present, I may not have to show such boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh.

For though we walk in the flesh, we're not waging war according to the flesh. For our weapons of warfare are not of the flesh, but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

We destroy arguments. Every lofty, arrogant, boastful opinion raised against the knowledge of God take every thought captive to obey Christ. God is to see, how does Paul address this, their need for a dominating physical presence?

Well, he takes them back to Jesus. Chapter 10, verse 1, I entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. I, who am humble when face to face with you, but boldness toward you when you're away.

[ 69 : 08 ] So, how Paul does this is he turns boldness upside down. He says there's a different form of boldness. It's not abusive, it doesn't play well for entertainment, but it's part of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 10, verse 8, any authority that I wield, Paul says, is for building up the void, not tearing it down. He says what we're trying to tear down is arrogance and pride and every lofty thought, everything that exalts itself against God.

In other words, Paul is bringing humility to bear. If the servant of God tries to tear down someone else's pride in a prideful way, it ain't going to work.

It's going to be counterproductive. I've tried it. It's also contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ, of course. You can only engage in spiritual warfare, bringing down lofty thoughts with prayer and humility.

So the physical presence thing, he turns upside down saying it's humility that builds you up, not pride, not the outside big presence. Thirdly, what about his speech?

[ 70 : 23 ] Chapter 10, verse 10, the same verse again, they say, his letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech is literally contemptible.

Chapter 11, verse 6, his speaking is unskilled, unprofessional, it lacks the zing that we have in Corinth to draw a crowd.

Okay? So it's not his words that are the problem. Again, it's his demeanor when speaking. This is very important. I think there's a lot of misconceptions about this. They are not speaking about polished academic classical oratory.

Lots of commentators say this. They're not. what they want is showy, dominating, forceful delivery, the kind that takes a newspaper and whacks people in their faces.

Let's get back to 1 Corinthians again, shall we? 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Okay, now, this is the demeanor and style of speech.

[ 71 : 41 ] Yep? To what extent should we assume that the people who receive the 2 Corinthians would already understand and have one person?

Yeah, the question is, how do we know that the 2 Corinthians people have 1 Corinthians? We don't know if it's exactly the same people, but he is writing to them, sending leaders backwards and forwards, and later on there are other leaders, and he comes for a third visit.

He also addresses them as one church in Corinth at the beginning of the letter, so I think it's likely it's the same group. There are other churches in Achaia, as we see in chapter 1 verse 2. So he wouldn't have to repeat something in 1 Corinthians, they'd already know it.

The assumption is, I think, that they've got it, but do they know it? I mean, do we know it? Yeah. I think he goes back on things over and over, yeah.

Yeah? Yeah? David, verse 17, does Paul ever, in a kind of a theological, dogmatic way, try to show the logic that wisdom and eloquence empty the cross of the power, or is it just a statement and

looking at the cross itself as the evidence for this, or does he see some sort of, I don't know, logic that this is the way it has to be?

[ 73 : 08 ] Yes. I think he argues this here, we'll look at the end of chapter 1, that is the connection between the cross and why the wisdom of the world cannot be the way forward.

And in 2 Corinthians, I want to show more how this works at a practical level. I think 2 Corinthians is much more experiential in a way. So let me read from verse 17.

Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel, not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. Now here's my question. Do you think Paul's eloquent? Boy, I do. He's a brilliant writer, and he uses words forcefully. So he's not talking about the classic rhetoric, right? Verse 18, the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved is the power of God.

For it is written, and then he quotes, right, from Isaiah, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning of the thought. Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe?

[ 74 : 10 ] Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? Where did God do that? Since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the foolishness of what we preach to save those who believe.

Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified. A stumbling block to Jews who want signs, foolishness to Gentiles who want wisdom, but to Jews, but to those who are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, the wisdom of God, for the foolishness of God which is shown through the cross is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Go down to chapter 2 verse 1, And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech of wisdom, that's that proud word, for I decided to know nothing among you except Christ Jesus and him crucified, and I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and power, that your faith may rest in the wisdom not of men, but in the power of God.

So, if the cross is the supreme revelation of God's wisdom and power, Paul says, I don't use words that are plausible. That's not an intellectual word.

That's a persuasion word. I'm not trying to persuade using force of personality. I didn't come to you with lofty speech. My speech was not marked by pride and arrogance.

[ 75 : 49 ] I came to you with weakness, fear and trembling. Commentators, I don't know why they say this, but he's not afraid of the Corinthians for heaven's sake. People say, oh, he was afraid, so he just preached Christ.

Fear and trembling is a quote from the Old Testament. It's the Old Testament attitude of the prophet to the awe-inspiring majesty of God's revelation. So, Paul says, I preached this message of Christ crucified with fear and trembling before the God who reveals himself in this upside-down way.

So, Paul did not come with arrogant, superior attitude and speech, putting others down, using the methods. His manner of speaking was controlled by the message. He rejected the loud, flashy, shouty, showy, eye-catching, impressive, ostentatious speech in humility and trembling before the God of all the earth, who gave himself over to death for us.

He's turning the whole view of their public, their speaking and communicating upside down as well. What Paul is rejecting is not the classical rhetorical style because he uses it, certainly in Romans. He's rejecting the vulgar rhetoric and style of Corinthians. They want him to be more aggressive and assertive. But Paul says, no, I'm choosing this humility because then if you believe, your faith rests not on my wisdom or the wisdom of man but on the power of God.

[ 77 : 24 ] I think this is a great example of how the wisdom of God overturns the wisdom and spirit of the age. Their outlook was showy status, boasting, showy speech.

But the knowledge of God comes through Jesus Christ crucified. And only someone who is walking toward humility can manifest the true knowledge of God.

Alrighty, I'm going to go on to money next. Are there any comments? Yeah. Yeah. So, the passage that talks about, I think, 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 3.

In 2 Corinthians? Yeah. No, 1 Corinthians. I think you need to be as in fear or something. Could those words be changed to honor and respect? The weakness is what he picks up again in 1 Corinthians and this is a theme through 2 Corinthians which we're going to come and see.

But the fear and trembling are a quote from the Greek Old Testament of our attitude when God reveals himself.

[ 78 : 41 ] He is the one who I respect, says God, the one who fears and trembles at my word. Okay. Money? Should we talk about money? Let's talk about money.

Chapter 11, let's go to 2 Corinthians chapter 11. This is weird, this one. I love this one. Chapter 11, verse, this is 2 Corinthians, sorry, not 1 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 7. Verse 7, Did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge?

They're accusing him of sinning because they couldn't give him money. And then verse 8, we just keep reading, I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.

And when I was with you and I was in need, I didn't burden anyone in Corinth. For the brothers who came from Macedonia, who were poor, supplied my need.

[ 79 : 52 ] Now this is very important to the Corinthians because money is the thing by which you show your status. Money is the way you exalt yourself.

But here is this wretched apostle who refuses to take their money. And Paul doesn't do this in other places, very interesting, but he does it in Corinth.

And I think probably because he saw how deeply they were in the grip of money and materialism, and so he made the decision to preach the gospel gratis when he was amongst them. And that massively irritated his new converts.

They accused him of sin. Chapter 12 verse 13. In what way were you less favoured than the rest of the churches except that I didn't burden you?

Forgive me this wrong, Paul says with great irony. And then they said, and I'm not going to look at the verses of this, they said, you know how Paul was taking a collection for the poor in Jerusalem?

[ 80 : 52 ] The false teacher said, ah, see, he's deceiving us. He really wants to fleece us. So there's a lot about the collection which we're not going to cover in the series, unfortunately.

We're going to have to come back to two Corinthians. But this is a very sensitive issue. In fact, there are two chapters, chapters 8 and 9 in this book that are all given over to money and to the collection for the poor.

And if in Corinth your earnings were the basis of boasting and self-confidence, they want an apostle who looks impressive.

They want to make him look like one of them. But Paul earns his living by making tents and rubbing salt into their wounds. When he comes short of money, he takes it from other churches and not from them, poorer churches.

This is a big problem for the Corinthians. Because when the new false teachers came in, they were prosperous. They looked better than Paul did because they worked for a profit.

[ 81 : 54 ] And the Corinthians felt inferior because they couldn't pay for it. I once had a management consultant, a Christian management consultant, say that the first thing a minister needs to look is he needs to look financially well off.

That's never going to happen. This is the great measure used in Corinth. If you were respected in Corinth, it was because you'd made your money and you were spending your money.

In fact, there's no record of anyone being a leader in the temple or in the city who was not wealthy. You never gave a leadership position to the poor.

A poor leader is a contradiction in terms. And besides, the church committee said, if we can't pay Paul, how can we control him? I've heard some church leaders say that they have to keep their clergy poor.

And then I've heard them boasting about how poor they keep their clergy, which is kind of the opposite effect. Paul is working for the humility of the congregation. He's robbing them of their possibility of boasting.

[ 83 : 07 ] He's ensuring their humility. And how does he overturn this materialistic worldview? It's by the idea of the overflow of God's grace.

So just look at chapter 9 verse 8 for a moment. The word abound in that verse is the word overflow. It's used frequently in 2 Corinthians. It's a key concept. God is able to make all grace overflow to you so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may overflow in every good work.

Isn't that great? So the overflow of grace comes from God so that you can give away your money. Now, that's a ridiculous view of the world. We've got to save and hoard our money. Well, actually it's

based on chapter 8 verse 9, isn't it?

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich. Okay.

[ 84 : 15 ] Now, I want to move finally in this section to some gleanings, some conclusions. And I've got three conclusions.

And this is where we start pulling it together. And I'd be very interested if those of you who study 2 Corinthians have others to add to this. So the first gleaning, which is very obvious really, is that 2 Corinthians is written to more than one audience.

So the majority of the congregation had turned back to Paul, you remember, after the severe letter, but the false teachers remained in place. The majority had acted, but wasn't superficial.

They were still marinating in the Corinthian worldview and not able to critique themselves by the cross. And besides, the false teachers look so impressive. So this is an outline of 2 Corinthians.

I have a pointer from the dollar store. So the passage we look at tomorrow is chapter 1 verses 1 to 12.

[ 85 : 40 ] He introduces the main themes of the letter. Then there's a crisis in there, misunderstanding of him, and he addresses some of that. From 2.14 to 7.14, this whole section is the upside-down view of ministry, God's way of ministry.

And that's where he brings the cross to bear, particularly on their lives and on the ministry. And then here, he brings the cross to bear on money, and in the last three chapters, he brings the cross to bear on the opponents.

chapters 1 to 9, all that section, really have the majority of the church in mind, but there's frequent references and frequent, there's an eye to the false teachers and the criticisms.

Chapters 10 to 13 is really addressed to the false teachers, but has an eye to the majority. Do I need to say it again?

Is that all right? So there are several audiences in mind, and no audience is ever out of the picture, but the vast majority of the letter is to the vast majority of the congregations, 10, 11, 12, 13, it's mostly at the false teachers.

[ 87 : 01 ] Yep? Do you think in the modern world, the gospel will be upside down, just as much as much as what? Yes, the question is, in the modern world, will the gospel be upside down for different reasons, absolutely.

I think for, until the Lord comes again, the gospel is always, has to be upside down because God will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cross of Christ is foolishness.

But we're going to see how that works a bit more. Let's move to the second, the second gleaning.

Oh, can I show you this first? this section, which is about ministry and Christian living, at the heart of it, is this long section, which is one of the clearest, most spectacular, I don't know how to describe it, it's the articulation of the gospel.

So it's like, at the centre of two Corinthians is this radioactive gospel, and it just filters out everywhere, overflows everywhere. Okay? Second, my second implication has to do with the cross.

So the four criticisms, you know, were boasting physical presence, speech, and money. And the way the apostle deals with the cultural criticisms is through the central belief, the death and resurrection of the Son of God.

[ 88 : 31 ] So the book of two Corinthians is not so much Paul defending his ministry, as it is a robust application of the cross of Jesus Christ to the Christian life, to his work of ministry, to their relationships, and to culture.

Can we say that again? I've not found one commentator that says that all the commentators say this is Paul defending his ministry. ministry. It's not. That's the secondary issue.

The primary issue is the cross. It's a robust application of the cross of Christ to our life and to our work and to our ministry and to our culture and to our relationships.

That's why the book is full of upside down, full of paradoxes, weakness, strength, glory, humiliation, which continue for us today. Because the same is true for us. And I think it's very difficult for us to see through our cultural prejudices.

But we can see through the cross. We can see to the cross. And I think, I've been thinking about this a lot, the way for us to move forward is not so much to study our cultural prejudices, although I think that's helpful.

[ 89 : 54 ] You can make a full inventory of all your cultural views and critique them. But I think Paul's method in 2 Corinthians is to do the opposite.

It's to go to the cross of Jesus Christ. Always go to the cross of Jesus Christ and see if that applies to whatever we're thinking and believing and doing. To grow in our understanding and to grasp the love of God through Jesus Christ on the cross.

I think that's the way forward. It's good. We must be reflective. But you can't do that without this. Or the reflectiveness becomes an act of pride.

Is that clear? Yeah. We don't have the best chance of that. People coming from a Jewish story or people coming from the Greek side.

I mean, at least the Jews had this notion of Isaiah 53, for example, that there's nothing corresponding to that in the Greek culture. Right. The question is, who has a better chance of doing this?

[ 90 : 56 ] I think the very fact that Paul sets Greeks and Jews saying they want something different from the cross means that whenever we bring the cross to bear, whatever cultural and social prejudice we have, we want something different.

What we need is the cross of Christ. And I think it is the daily task for us as Christians to try and understand more and more what the cross of Jesus Christ means in us, for us, through us.

Let me give you an example. I love this example. Just turn back to Romans 5 for a moment. Romans 5 verse 8.

But God shows his love for us in this, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.

Okay. The question is, when did Christ die? What's the tense of the verb in that verse? When did it happen?

[ 92 : 21 ] Past. That's right. When does God show his love to us? Tense. Presently. How do you know God loves you now?

So as you understand the cross of Christ then. There are a number of other places where all three apostles who write letters say this, that the way we know the love of God now in our hearts on a daily basis, relevantly, is through understanding what God did through the cross of Christ then. Isn't that great? And I think this is how we also critique ourselves as we grow in relying on God and resting on the cross of Christ. If you might want to go back to English, it's all the aspects of the application of the Christ.

I didn't get them all. Yeah. Paul's trying to apply the cross to our daily lives and to our work and our ministry and our relationships and our cultural prejudices.

The culture, well certainly the culture that they're in. Yeah. Any other comments on this?

Questions? Yeah. Yeah. Do you think the Corinthians have actually rejected the cross?

[ 93 : 42 ] Rejected the notion of a weak crucified? This is a great question. Did the Corinthians reject the idea of a weak Messiah, reject the cross? No.

I don't think they did. Because the false teachers were talking about Christ as we saw in chapter 11. No, no, they didn't. They just gradually de-emphasized it. It's an embarrassment in their context to have a weak and crucified God.

And what Paul does is this massive rejoicing and showing how everything comes out of the cross of Jesus Christ. It overturns all their cultural views.

And he says, if I'm going to boast, I'm going to boast in this one thing that you're most embarrassed about. And I think, you know, take the thing about Christianity you're most embarrassed about.

That's probably where God wants you to grow.

Yeah. Someone else had a comment. Sherry. Oh, just that I think that was helpful to me that when you're talking like the application of the cross, I feel like that was a little bit too nebulous for me.

[ 94 : 46 ] And so when you make that concrete with, and I'm just hoping that we can affirm how I'm understanding it is just to be looking at life from the point of grace, that God had grace towards us.

And we're not observing anything. Yeah, no, it's, I think that's one, but it's much more than that. We will see tomorrow, and we're going to look at this passage in a moment, in chapter one, that it completely changes how we deal with suffering.

The cross of Jesus Christ completely changes how I deal with suffering. That's a very practical daily issue. And in chapter two, it shows how we deal with the cross.

In chapter four, it shows how we deal with witness. Chapter five, how we look at each other, whether by the flesh or through Christ crucified.

So it's very practical. James, you're going to say something. Yes, he does.

[ 96 : 13 ] He doesn't use power of gospel, but he talks about the power of God in weakness. That's the, you know, the famous chapter 12 verse of, my grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness.

That's when Paul had a thought in the flesh. Who knows what that was? Paul had received these mighty visions, these trance-like experiences, which he's never talked about anywhere else in the New Testament.

Then he says, lest I become conceited, God gives me a thought in the flesh. And I asked him to take it away three times. But the Lord said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in your weakness.

So the power of God is certainly there, but it's connected to weakness. as I say, more existentially than just the message of the cross. Any other comments?

Just go to the third gleaming. Sorry about this word. One of the key ways that the cross works out in our daily lives is to is in this idea of through us to others.

[ 97 : 44 ] And we have to watch the word through when it comes to you in 2 Corinthians. It's through the cross of Christ that we are reconciled and made new.

through God's grace overflowing to us and through us that God's grace flows to other people as well.

And I think, I'm not sure whether this is as important as the other one, but it's pretty down close. Because you see, in the cross of Jesus Christ, the power of God, the life of God, all the contradictions come to us.

Jesus is killed so that we would live. He is put out so that we would come in. He is made weak so that we would receive the power. So, if our lives are shaped by the cross and if we are living based on the cross, then Christ's death will be at work in us.

And the more Christ's death works in us, the more we are shaped by the cross, the more life and power come to other people through us.

[ 99 : 00 ] That's one of the things we're going to see passage by passage as we go through 2 Corinthians. And this is the key word overflow. This is where the overflow comes in. It's not you who do this. It's God who does it through us.

Okay, let me pause and see if there are any comments. That's the end of the gleanings. That last part was wonderful. To what extent, this is a work of the Spirit, I don't know right, you would say. To what extent is the participation in... We work on our own salvation, but it's God who works in us. How do we sort of deduce the fact that this growing in a cross-shaped life isn't possible that there is some sense of participation in us?

I can't answer that question, but I've been thinking about that. Yeah. No, it's pretty active. It's very active. And the question is, in terms of how this works, what part is there for our participation?

[ 100 : 08 ] Let me talk firstly, let me talk just a little bit about, on this point, through us to others. If you turn to 2 Corinthians 5, sorry, chapter 6, verse 1.

Paul makes his appeal to the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain, but right after articulating, for our sake, verse 21, for our sake, he made him to be sin, and you know sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

One of the most fabulous explications is the gospel anywhere. The next words are working together with God. So it's not I do half and he does half, I do 100%, but he is the one who can do it because even if Paul says the gospel and appeals, unless God does it, it's not going to flow through him to anyone else, which is another reason why I think receiving the grace of God in vain is not just, it's not really about them being Christians, about whether the grace stops with them and doesn't flow through to violence.

Sir? I have a question more about Paul's relationship to the church. So we quote 1 Corinthians 9 a lot, the Jews I became Jews, the week I became we, about to become all things to all people to win some, and we kind of use that to justify becoming like people we're ministering to or like the culture we're with, but it sounds like what you're saying is that Paul actually became unlike the culture in order to win them.

Can you speak some about that? So let me see if I've got the question right. In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul says, I become, when I'm with the Jews I become like a Jew, when I'm with the Gentiles I become like a Gentile, so as to win some.

[102:01] But here he is saying, actually we need to critique the culture and not be like the culture. Does someone want to have a go at answering this?

He's talking about making accommodations to questions of diet, possibly, as he asked.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's right. So let's turn up to 1 Corinthians 9. He's speaking about his rights.

Verse 4 and 5. Do we not have the right to eat and drink? Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles, and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

So obviously Peter traveled with his wife. So he's talking about his right to receive income. Then he quotes the Old Testament.

[103:11] And then in verse 12 he begins the principle halfway through. Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. Do you know those who are employed in the temple, he goes to the Old Testament again.

But 15, I've not made use of any of these rights, these things to secure any such provision. I'd rather die than have anyone deprived me of my ground for boasting.

Verse 19, I'm free from war. I've made myself a servant to war, that I might win the war. To the Jew I became as a Jew in order to win the Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law, that I might win those under the law.

To those outside the law I became as one outside the law. Not being outside the law of God, but under the law of Christ, he says, that I might win those outside the law.

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do this all for the sake of the gospel, and I share the blessings with them. So I think the issue really has to do with whether it puts an obstacle in the way of hearing the gospel.

[104:23] And there's some subjectivity, I think, in figuring that out. There's been a lot of writing about this in the last 150 years, and missiologists talk about major cultural barriers to the gospel in four stages.

Language, language, culture, language, culture, and I think ethnicity. Language, culture, ethnicity is another one. And the gospel always has to go across those four barriers into a fresh culture.

But how it does that, it has to do it in a way that people can understand it and hear it. So it's no good me preaching in Australian here in Vancouver, or another language here in Vancouver.

That's a cultural accommodation. It's not the language of the New Testament. You cannot, we cannot embody the gospel except in a cultural form.

It's impossible to do that. Though everything about the gospel transcends and reaches out of a cultural form and can be expressed in other cultural forms. However, I think what Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians 9, while it touches on the 2 Corinthians stuff, he's not saying I'm going to take on Judaism uncritically, nor am I going to be free of the law uncritically.

[105:47] In fact, I'm still under the law of Christ. So he's saying, if there are things that are clearly an obstacle in the way, then I will do them. But for Paul, when he looks at those four things, boldness, presence, speech, and money, they're an obstacle.

He thinks they get in the way of the gospel, so he's not going to go to the end of those. So I think it's a matter of bringing Christ crucified to things that we do and how we do them. Someone else might want to make a comment on that.

It just seems to me that if he's going to be speaking to Jews and he speaks to them, he articulates the gospel so that they get how it lines up with their context and how it contradicts it.

You know, I feel like it's like you're saying, in Australia, you're going to communicate the gospel in a way that Australians get it. And so if he's talking to the Jews, he does that.

But then he can also identify with people who are under the law because he lived that way. And so he can communicate the truth of the gospel into that situation. So both Titus and Timothy were uncircumcised when they were converted.

[107:02] Timothy, Paul was going to send to places which had large Jewish populaces. So Timothy was circumcised, but Titus wasn't. So I think the principle of all things to all people does have a subjective edge to it, and it just depends.

But the cross of Christ doesn't depend. The cross of Christ means that both Timothy and Titus should be willing to submit to anything for the sake of Christ. Brian.

Excuse me? I'm going to start with a conversation about not telling my wife to him. Right. Right. Yes.

That's very important. Thank you. If you turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 4 for a moment. Paul is speaking to the majority, but he's got the false teachers in mind here.

And he says, let's start with verse 1. I'll just do the first six verses. Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, this ministry of great glory, chapter 3 is all about the glory of the new covenant ministry, way more than God appearing on the mountain to Moses, although it's not visible.

[108:23] having this ministry by the mercy of God. We do not lose heart. We've renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways.

We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word like the new teachers. But by the open statement of the truth, we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. I think that's a cultural thing. He wants to commend himself to conscience. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case, the God of this world has blighted the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the knowledge, the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Skip over verse 5, go down to verse 6. For God, who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

So verse 4, unconverted. Verse 6, converted. Who does the converting? God shines light, right?

Our eyes are veiled without Christ. What's the link?

[109:26] Verse 5, what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord. But why does he add the rest of the sentence? He could stop there, couldn't he?

What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord. Then God shines out of darkness. No, no, he says, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. That the very shape of our lives has to be under Jesus Christ.

That we have to be servants and not just proclaimers. And that's the same thing that he's picked up in 2 Corinthians. Servants were slime in coin. These guys were ex-slaves.

They paid people to do stuff for him. Paul comes in and says, no, actually, Jesus Christ, who was very rich, gave it all away so that you could become rich. Yeah, Jan.

Can you say that's one of the things that the gospel is that we have come through the friends that through them as well?

[110:33] The gospel, we haven't seen the gospel, but it seems to come through all the things that we have to be concerned about.

Yes. Yes. That's the, yes, thank you. I do think that's a thing. It gets back to the through-ness stuff. It's through us, through us, through us. It's not going to happen through us unless we're conforming our life to the shape of the cross. And when it does happen through us, it's God's overflow. Now, David Lay, he spent quite a bit of time on this book.

I wonder, David, if you'd like to add any other comments or bleedings. Not to put someone on the spot. Well, I'm not quite sure who gave the backstory.

Some years before we started absolute jobs, I don't know what's going on. a Bible study, but this was a few years ago.

[111:41] But I think the book that I found really helpful is that the application is so contemporary.

I don't know how many of you remember Michael Green, who was a tremendous guy, tremendous lover of the gospel.

He used to go down, take the region, he was down to Egypt, to get this. He was invited to speak at one of the churches in town, and at the point, was going through a period of revival, renewal, and he came to them, and he preached, and he said, I want to preach to you from Corinthians, because you are the church of Corinth.

And that was not, that was not a law of charity thing, he was saying, they were in Corinth, but they were all Corinth, and gave him a sermon, and said, they were not expecting.

But I think what is very helpful there is that we can see our city as Corinth. It's a city that looks east and white, that's what Corinth does, and it's a city that probably built, diverse, a city that has many jobs, but a city that has abandoned the faith of its gardens, just a lot of applications, superficial, trend-oriented.

[113:30] So, I mean, what I mean, one of the things that you'll see is our second point, that it's the cross-appoint that every day might help you. And I think you can get a lot of progress of our life

and culture, including or you may, sell criticism of the extent that we are happy with that.

Yes. So, that's what it is. is a lot of people. Thank you very much. I think it would be interesting for you, for each of us, to reflect on the four criticisms and to see how, let's go backwards through them.

Are we a materialist culture? are we materialistic? How materialistic are we as Christians? We're thinking about a property and the property committee is looking, looking, looking, and we think to ourselves, how sacrificial will we as a congregation be in our giving to this?

Do we build houses to ourselves or give wings to hospitals and put our names on them as they did in Corinth? Or think about the speechifying and the need for entertainment and the wanting what the world wants in terms of what's showy and impressive and zingy and contemporary.

Or think about his bodily presence or thinking about boasting. Because I think we're a major culture of boasting.

[115:08] But it happens in a different way. But again, as we go through, pray that the Lord would enable us to carry the death of Jesus in our bodies so that the life of Jesus might be effective in others.

Okay. Anybody else want to say something? Let's do half an hour, 25 minutes before lunch. Am I right?

Let's do 25 minutes on one passage, which I think you have in your sheet there. Now you can see these instructions are taken from the Bible study.

Bible study books that have been produced for the Bible studies for this fall term.

And they end at the end of chapter 7. And I'm thinking, Jan has a box of them back there. They're for our small groups, leaders, chapters, and I think we probably should finish it.

[116:31] I don't know how we're going to stop when we get to the end of chapter 7. However, we're going to get to the end of chapter 7 and then we're going to have some Advent thinking and then perhaps in January we'll come back to 2 Corinthians.

we need to get back and finish John sometime. And then we'll do the book of Revelations. So the instructions, I've just copied these from the Bible studies and it's called Read, Mark, Learn, Inwardly, Digest.

It comes from the Collect, which is I think the second or third Sunday in Advent. Which is a great collect. It's an original for Cranmer. This Lord, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such ways hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort, and the word comfort means strength, that by Holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of eternal life which you've given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen. So the studies then say read the passage and pray, then mark up the printed text. So in the Bible studies you will have the printed text just as you do on your notes there.

And it's just every phrase is put under each other, there's no great care given to it, it's just put out phrase by phrase, because we thought everyone would be too lazy to write it out by hand.

[118:08] that was meant to address your pride. And then you mark up the printed text. Here are some suggestions for marking it up. So when we come to the scriptures, actually we're much better at this than we think we are.

And we get a little bit sort of thingy about coming to the Bible, you know, am I going to do this right? It's actually, you know, every time you look at a blog or an email or a newspaper or an atlas or a whatever, a cell phone, you're making sophisticated decisions about certain structure and what's important.

You're doing it all the time. We've got these skills. With the scriptures we need to use the same skills and just think carefully about what we're doing. A lot of two Corinthians is familiar to us.

So here are some things to do. I know this is really kindergarten, stuff, but repeated words. If a word is repeated more than once, probably is important. The phrases that might be repeated.

Contrasts. The Bible's full of contrasts and Paul particularly. Statements of a truth, like Paul just puts it out there. Commands.

[119:24] There are very few commands in Paul's letters. I think I did this when we did the Romans Day. Is anyone alive when we did the Romans Day?

Thank you very much. I had a theory about this. I probably got it on my computer there. Verbs have different moods in Greek.

Command is a mood. Just telling stories is indicative as another. There are basically six moods. commands. I asked the Romans leaders what proportion of verbs in the New Testament, the whole New Testament, are commands.

We came out around 50%, I think. The actual number, I think, was around 11%. In Romans, I think it was six or seven percent.

I know we look at Paul's letters and think it's full of commands. Actually, when the commands come, they're pretty important. And then links. This is very, very important in 2 Corinthians.

[120:36] It's really important everywhere, but it's so important in the letters. Because the little linking words tell you how the two phrases interact with each other.

Okay? And here are some other tools you might use. If you're reading it through and studying it, and marking it up. S, what's really surprising? Q, I don't understand that.

A, this applies. K for KID. You might want to do that as well. And then if you're doing this in a small group, share what you've found with your group. Okay, now, this question, what is Paul saying to the Corinthians?

What is he saying to us? Because we have to figure out what he's saying to Corinth first, don't we? you know? Then inwardly digest what is God saying to me? And here is a suggested method for doing it, and I'm not going to spend time on it.

But that's a treasure for the groups to take one verse and to pray specific prayers of thanks from that verse.

[121:38] It's not thank you for a lovely day. Thank you for, you know, let's take his grace. The Lord said to me, my grace is sufficient for you.

My power is made perfect in weakness. If you prayed a prayer of thanks out of that, it might be, thank you for reminding me of my weakness, that your power is made perfect in my weakness. Very simple.

Praise, thank you that, I praise you that your grace is so flowing, it's more sufficient than I need. To confess, I'd like to confess, gosh, I'd like to confess how often I've forgotten that truth, and how often I've tried to live in my own strength, and how often I feel overwhelmed, and I don't even think to come to you with my weakness.

And then the petition, I can't do today, help me to do today, may your glory, may your grace flow through. You see what I'm saying? You just take one verse and do that. All right, so let's spend a little bit of time, this is going to be class work for ten minutes, I want you to do, mark up the printed text with the repeated words, etc., and you might put S, Q, A, and K, and then we're going to, we're just going to do this very lightly for ten minutes, and then I'm going to have a few minutes of feedback, and I'm going to point out some things as well, and then after lunch we're going to go to 2 Corinthians 5 and do it.

Okay? So let me read the passage, 1 Corinthians 1, 3 to 7, and I am going to give you nine minutes on this.

[123:14] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is right, chapter 1, the Father of all mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation.

If we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you also share in our comfort.