

Examine, Test and Know Ourselves

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[0 : 00] that you are saying to us in a particular and personal way. We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Now, it would be enormously helpful to you and if you could turn to page 176 to that passage which was read as the epistle today and is chapter 13 of the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians beginning at the fifth verse.

2 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 5 page 176 in the Blue Pew Bible. And there it says, examine yourselves.

Now, this is a lovely verse to have to preach about. Lovely for me anyway. I hope you may not come off so well.

Because Paul had suffered considerably at the hands of the Corinthians who since he had gone there and preached to them the gospel and they had responded by putting their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, since that time, other men had come into the church in Corinth and said what a basically unacceptable fellow Paul was.

[1 : 41] And they had a number of criticisms to deliver to him. They didn't like the way he preached, not much dynamic to it. They didn't think that he was as strong as he might be, that he was as really in touch with what it was all about.

And so they spent their time criticizing St. Paul. By and large, his ministry has stood up very well. But in the first generation of Christians, they had some very real doubts about it.

And so in this passage, Paul says, all right, if you have finished examining me and all my faults, might I recommend to you now that you, and in verse 5 of chapter 13 of 2 Corinthians, that you examine yourselves.

You might find it more rewarding than going on examining me. Examine yourselves, he says. He says three things about yourselves.

He said you're to examine yourselves. You are to test yourselves. And he says thirdly, you yourselves are Christ Jesus is in you.

[3 : 05] You yourselves. So he, in a sense, puts the responsibility onto them and says, you examine yourselves.

You test yourselves. You know about yourselves that Christ is in you. Now, when he says that third one, it is suggested that he's speaking with some irony.

Because they are totally convinced that Christ is in them. It's only Paul they worry about as to whether he really understands the gospel.

And so he says, you will no doubt find that Christ is in you yourselves, that you have it all together, even if you doubt me. Well, Paul goes on from there to point out to them in a wonderful way that his chief concern is not whether he meets their standards or not.

But the validity of their faith is the proof of his ministry. If they are in Christ, it's because Paul has done his job.

[4 : 24] And that's all he wants. He said, I don't care whether you think I'm weak or whether you think I'm strong, whether you think I pass the test or whether I don't. If you are in Christ, that's all that matters to me.

And I won't ask for anything more from you. But now let's go back to this business of examining yourself. I've been at a conference all week where the chief agenda of the conference was to persuade people like me to examine themselves and to test themselves.

Where are you? And it's been a very helpful week. It's to examine whether you are in the Christian faith or whether you aren't.

whether you are a believer in Jesus Christ or whether you aren't. That's what it asked us to do. And it's very refreshing and very renewing to be given the grace and the opportunity and the time and the stimulus to really do a job of that.

And I could pray that in these few moments that we have together this morning that we might examine ourselves, test ourselves, know of ourselves that Christ is in us.

[5 : 48] those three things. I don't really care whether you are a lawyer or an engineer or a doctor, whether you are unemployed, whether you have faced some recent disaster, whether you play the stock market, whether you're a gambler, whether you're an alcoholic, or whatever you may be.

The wonderful thing about this admonition is that we can all take part. You have all the ingredients with you right now to examine yourselves.

And when you examine yourselves, what is it that you're going to look for? What is it that you're going to search for? And I think what Paul is suggesting is that you look deep in your heart.

Now, mostly, if you ask people, are you a genuine Christian? They will say, well, I go to church, I take communion regularly, I sing in the choir, I teach Sunday school, I'm on the church committee, and I have done several other things for which my whole congregation is in my debt.

And Paul is not asking you to review those things. He's asking you to examine in your hearts what is happening there.

[7 : 05] Where are you? There. And I was very much helped by, I get a lot of help out of having to preach sermons.

It's helpful to me. I'm never sure how helpful they are to others, but it's a great help to me. And last Sunday night, I came across this verse, which I had never seen in quite the same way before, which says of those around Jesus Christ that they hated him without a cause.

They didn't have any reason to, but the reality of their hate was very real. It might be misdirected. Undoubtedly, it is misdirected in some way.

But that's what they found out. And Jesus, in a sense, opened up their hearts and said, as he quoted from the Psalms, they have hated me without a cause.

And you can't rehearse the stories of Christ's life, his arrest, his trial, his scourging, and his crucifixion without being overwhelmed by the reality of the fact that there was pure hatred for this good man.

[8 : 31] Militant, aggressive, violent hatred. And I think that that's part of the examination. When you get down into the examining of yourselves, the thing you're going to find is either a basic trust in and love for the person of Jesus Christ, or you're going to find a hatred for him.

It may be hatred, which in a sophisticated way you can cloak with apparent indifference. But underneath that indifference, I think Jesus is right.

And certainly the story of his life indicates that he's right, that there is hatred. And so when you examine yourselves, do you find Christ in you?

Is that the bottom line? Or is there an antipathy towards him? A hatred towards him? A sense that he has no right to know, that he has no proper place, that you are sufficiently self-centered, that there's no place in the center of your life, for anyone but you yourself.

You're to examine yourself. And the reason I say doctors, lawyers, engineers, and all the rest need to do this, because I don't think you can be doing anything.

[10 : 13] If you're serious about the money market, and you ask what kind of free enterprise promotes the free stimulation of the market so that great wealth is made, where does that wealth come from?

What are the things that move people towards it? Are there lies and deception? Is there truth and business acumen?

Always you're forced to ask the ultimate questions, and the ultimate question always reaches out to your heart and says, what do you really believe? If you were a lawyer dealing with a case, you have to, I mean, unless you deliberately avoid doing it, you have to face the ultimate questions that are there.

You've got to see what these questions mean. Who is this person? Why are they saying this? What caused this? What brought this to happen?

Why is this misunderstanding here? Why was this behavior exhibited? And you have to ask ultimate questions. And the reason I tell you this is because there was a very famous scientist whom I read about and whom I've told you about in times past, I know, because it deeply impressed me.

[11 : 44] And he was the man who was in charge of the radio telescope, or whatever wonderful piece of machinery it was, at Jodrell Bank, when one evening they were watching the night sky, and he saw the first Russian Sputnik sputtering, I guess, across the sky, and became famous for having done it.

And that scientist, who led this great team of scientists, he also played the organ in the local Anglican church, in addition to running this highly technical piece of equipment.

And he said that his research led him to the same fundamental questions as theology dealt with, even though he was a scientist.

And I am sure that if you examine things like your relationship to your business, your relationship to the society you're in, your relationship to your wife and family, your relationship to your neighbors, your relationship to yourself, you will be led to answer some profound questions, as Paul led the Corinthians to, when he said, examine yourselves and test yourself.

And that word test, that he says, that means convince yourself by exposing yourself to this, whether you are real or whether you are a counterfeit.

[13 : 23] We now live in a world where silk roses are more beautiful than the real thing, almost. And the difficulty is we now live in a world where good people are often more beautiful than Christians.

But in terms of the ultimate reality of life, they are counterfeits. And the difficulty, you see, is that having tried the test, they have failed it.

And the test is that Christ is in you. The test is that at the bottom of your heart, there is not a faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

I read the most amazing story this week. And that wasn't a story, it was a squib in a magazine article. And it said that theology ought to be done not by theologians in ivory towers, but it ought to be done by an Indian woman in Calcutta whose child whose child has just died in her arms from hunger.

What do you believe? Because she would speak from the heart. And you have to find yourself in that situation, and you may have to try and imagine what it might be, where you would speak what it is you really believe.

[15 : 15] The reason this conference was a help to me this week is because it reminded me of things I really believe. I believe the Holy Spirit is here right now and able to meet with you and me in the situation in which we are right now.

He doesn't belong to the future or to the past, but is here right now, and I am living in His presence. And by that Holy Spirit, I am standing in the presence of Jesus Christ.

I believe that about me and about you. That's where you are right now. You may just think you're in church. Church doesn't have a lot to do with it.

That's just what appears to be. That's where you are right now. And I was helped by that. And I was helped by a wonderful awareness that the ministry of the Christian faith is not essentially something that I, standing up here, give to you sitting down there, but that you give it to one another.

Whatever there is, when you have examined your heart and tested yourself, whatever is there is something the person next to you needs to know.

[16 : 33] And you need to be able to share it with them. And that's what God the Holy Spirit allows you to do right now. And that's where this church is going to go. It's not going to go except in terms of all of us being willing to examine our hearts and know what's there to test and see that we are in Christ and to share what it is that we have.

A text you all know, and with this I end. You all know it by heart. You all might say it with me to demonstrate that if you like.

And it's the last verse of the epistle to the second epistle to the Corinthians, and it says, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.

Amen. That grace is Jesus born witness to by the Gospels, his teaching, his life, his trial, his death, his resurrection.

You have seen it. testify to page after page through the Gospels in the New Testament. You have seen the demonstration of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as he stood before Pilate, as he was scourged by the soldiers, as he stood before Herod, as he was nailed to the cross, as he hung and thirsted, as he prayed for the man who was on the cross beside him, as he was concerned for his

mother.

[18 : 17] This is the demonstration which is spoken of in that statement which you have just said. It's the demonstration of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And you're to look at that because behind that grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that you can see as you read the scriptures, there is another profound reality reality which can change your life because behind that is the love of God.

That's what the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is all about, to demonstrate the love of God. It doesn't stand by itself as a peculiar anomaly of Palestinian history 2,000 years ago.

It stands as a demonstration before every culture and every language and every person of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And it demonstrates the love of God. And having seen the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and come to understand that that is the demonstration of the love of God for you, then you enter into as the only possible meaning for your life the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

[19 : 52] How could anybody who has seen the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ understand it as the demonstration of the love of God want to do anything but to participate in the community of the Holy Spirit?

To live by that Holy Spirit? To work with God's Holy Spirit? To be led by the Holy Spirit? How could you want anything else?

That's what our life is all about. And that's what Paul concludes for his his letter to the church in Corinth.

That they might know that grace understand that love and participate in the Spirit. That's what the examining of yourselves and the testing of yourselves must come to.

And that's why we pray for those families and those children that have been brought here to be baptized this morning. That they might in the reading of the scriptures and in the service see the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[21 : 04] That they might understand that in obeying the ordinance of Jesus Christ to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit they might see that as the outward sign of the reality of God's love and that those children from this time forth will be brought up in the fellowship and in participation in the community of the Holy Spirit.

that's what we've done and that my friends best beloved is where you belong to.

All of us that's who we are in relationship to one another. Those who have witnessed the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ understood that in it was demonstrated the love of God and entered in to the fellowship participation of the life of and work of God's Holy Spirit.

Amen. Our offertory hymn is 346 346.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[22 : 30] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Father, take back. Father, take back.

Father, take back.

Father, take back.

[24 : 55] Father, take back. Father, take back. Father, take back. Father, take back.

Father, take back. Father, take back. Father, take back.

Father, take back. Father, take back.

Father, take back. Father, take will you. Father, take away. Father, take will you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[26 : 43] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen.

[28 : 49] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Ralph, you for your holy Catholic Church, and especially for the Church in this place, our parish of St. John's.

Fill us with all truth, and in all truth with all peace.

Where we are corrupt, purify us. Where we are in error, direct us.

Where anything is amiss, reform us. Where we are right, strengthen and confirm us. Where we are in want, furnish us. Where we are divided and rent asunder.

[30 : 14] And we are in want, furnish us whole again. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. And we pray also for the extension of the Church.

O God, who has made of one blood all nations of men. For to dwell on the face of the earth. And did send your blessed Son, Jesus Christ, to preach peace to them that are far off.

And also to them that are right here in Vancouver.

So make us faithful soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ. To seek and find the dispersed and lost sheep.

That they may be saved forever. And grant that all people of the world may feel after thee and find you.

[31 : 27] And hasten, O Lord, the fulfillment of your promise to pour out your Spirit upon all flesh. Through the same, our Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen. And so this morning let us pray for the followers of the religions of the East.

Because we have many people who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists. Who live in this city of Vancouver and the area. So God, O God who wills all men should come to the knowledge of truth. And has not left yourself without witness anywhere in the world. We pray for Hindus and Buddhists and all others who are seeking after you.

Through the good that is known to them. We beseech you to illuminate their hearts and minds in the knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

[32 : 42] That henceforth they may walk in your light and in your love. Through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. We have many concerns in the parish.

We have people who are in need of healing. Physically and spiritually.

So, O God of all mercy and love. We bring before you all in need of your help today.

Those in sickness and pain. The dying. The lonely. The sad. The joy. The joy. The holy.

The holy. The holy. The holy. The holy. The holy. The holy. And let us in a brief couple of minutes bring before the Lord. People who are known to us. Who are in need of Jesus Christ.

[34 : 00] Christ by naming them out amongst our family here. I'll begin by naming Shirley Noble and Dennis Hunter and Joan Anderson.

So grant that they may all look up to you to receive that strength which shall make them more than conquerors through him who loves us all, even Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Amen. And in this province we are in a state of flux in terms of industrial relations, so I have been asked to bring that before the Lord.

O God, who has ordained that people should live and work together as brethren, we beseech you to bless the industries of this land and this province.

That there be no strife among those who are engaged in the various tasks of industry and commerce. Grant that all, seeking only what is right, may ever continue in brotherly union and concord to their own well-being and the good of their fellow men.

[35 : 58] Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. And so we should give thanks to God for all the blessings that indeed we do receive.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants to give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us and to all people.

We bless thee for all the blessings of this life. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life. But above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.

To whom with thee and the Holy Spirit be all honor and glory. World without end. Amen.

Amen. And so, let us also close by saying the grace again thoughtfully as a prayer of thanksgiving.

[37 : 16] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.

Amen. Please be seated for the announcements. Good morning, everyone, and a very warm welcome to St. John's, particularly to the newly baptized, their mothers, grandparents, and I think in some cases great-grandparents, and godparents, and all the friends who are here.

We hope that all visitors to St. John's enjoyed worshiping with us today. A special thank you also to Wyndham Thiessen, who played the cello so beautifully this morning.

I don't know where he now is, but we did enjoy that. And a special thank you, too, for Carol Marks and her committee who arranged such a marvelous picnic last Sunday. She certainly had the right wavelength.

We had the most beautiful weather that we could have ever expected, and it was a great success. Today, yes, thank you. Today, Archie Fell is leading a parish conference at St. Matthias, and that is why he is not with us.

[38 : 43] There is a meeting immediately after the service of the parish unit on aging in Ernie's office at 12 noon. All of you are welcome. And as to the future, David Jones has asked me to tell you that this is of a special interest to those in the 25 to 40 age group, that the Koinonia group is holding a retreat at Whistler on July 3rd.

The details are in the bulletin. The importance today is that the registration forms are available and may be obtained at the information desk in the Trendle Lounge. Next Sunday is Food Bank Sunday as well as Father's Day.

Maybe if you could try and link those two ideas in your mind, it will help you to remember to bring something for the food bank next week. A welcome to Coffee Hour. We hope that everyone who can will come, have a cup of coffee, and meet someone new.

Whether you are new or whether you have been here many years, please try and find someone you don't know and chat to them today. Thank you. Our recessional hymn, 85.

Choir singing.

[40 : 03] Choir singing, chap 22, Neither wegen you are not sacred. Maybe your way has been here any day for the hope of God, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[42 : 59] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. And will you kneel? Again, from the end of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Finally, brethren, farewell, rejoice.

Mend your ways. Heed my appeal, Paul writes. We are free with one another. Live in peace.

And the God of love and peace be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. Amen.

All the saints greet you. The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always. Amen. Kaz.

[44 : 00] The Jesus. Stain. The Son. The Son. Amen. The Son. Man. Third.

The Son. Amen. Thank you. Exactly. Wijili do on the ■■■. Now. Soon as we inhabit the glory. Have you dressed this day. Sure. You have shaped his face.

July's night.