

2 Corinthians 13

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby's sermon on 2 Corinthians 13 emphasizes the necessity of self-examination and reliance on Christ's power for spiritual growth and authenticity.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 13:5

Topics: "Power of Christ", "Self-Examination"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the importance of self-examination in the Christian faith, as Paul instructs the Corinthians to assess their spiritual state and the authenticity of their faith. He contrasts the power of Christ that enables believers to overcome sin with the dangers of reprobation, urging the congregation to recognize their reliance on Christ rather than their own merits. Darby highlights that true peace comes from faith in Jesus, not from self-assessment, and encourages believers to seek completeness in their spiritual journey. He also notes the significance of the titles used for Jesus and the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers.

Transcript

If we take chapter 12 as a whole, we have the third heavens at the beginning, and the grossest, vilest sins a Christian can fall into at the end; but between those two, we have where the real power is to avoid the sins, and that is to have the flesh put down, and the power of Christ resting on him. Then Paul refers to the persons who had sinned - "I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again I will not spare." He was afraid, lest there were debates, envyings, and strifes, and so on among them, and he would not spare them.

Then follow some verses in chapter 13. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves." Most are familiar with what the real truth of it is; that the beginning of verse 3 is connected with verse 4: "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, examine yourselves," and so on. The last part of verse 3 with verse 4 is a parenthesis. The apostle had already shewn that these false teachers had been calling him in question; he had been giving the proofs of his ministry, and at last he says if you are looking for proof of Christ speaking in me, examine yourselves, as much as to say, "You foolish people, you are calling me in question; look then at yourselves." He adds, "Except ye be reprobates." A reprobate is one cast out as good for nothing; a figure from reprobate silver. He means, "If you are Christians, Christ has spoken by me, and it is by my means you are Christians."

366 "We shall live with him by the power of God toward you" (v. 4) is, I take it, like saying life works in you, the power of God manifested towards them; but Paul was dead as a man; yet, by the power of God that wrought in him, he lived with Christ. That helps to introduce "examine yourselves," because he did not doubt they were living. He says in one place, "I protest by your rejoicing I die daily." But if dead here, he had life in Christ which is much more solid, I am sure. This examination could not be to pacify themselves. It is not my examination of my spiritual state which gives me peace, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I ought not to get peace in looking at myself, though I trust there are signs of grace there; but really, unless a man has the Spirit of Christ, he is not competent to examine himself; and if he has the Spirit of Christ, there is no sense in doing it. One was insisting on this examination, and I asked, Are you competent to judge without the Spirit? It is a blessed thing when souls are brought to find out that there is no good in themselves, that is, in their flesh; and then they do not look for any; they find that Christ appears in the presence of God for them, and then all is settled. Nobody ever gets clear about it until he knows there is no good in him, and then he looks at Christ.

"Though we be as reprobates" (v. 7), is as though he said, "you may consider me good for nothing, but I hope you will be all right." It is a kind of taunting speech, not bitter, but yet taunting in a way - "what are you all about?" "Wish your perfection" (v. 9) is, he wishes everything complete in them; not so much looking at them as full-grown men, but with everything complete.

In the benediction "Lord Jesus" is title; Jesus is a name. We are accustomed to take Jesus Christ as a name, which it is not. The communion of the Holy Ghost is the power of the Holy Ghost in us.

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