

# THE MOST IMPORTANT TEST

2 Corinthians 13:1-5



## SYNOPSIS

This past Sunday, our guest speaker, Dr. Ryun Chang, shared from 2 Corinthians about the Apostle Paul's concern over the church in Corinth. Paul cared deeply for the Corinthian church where he had to point out all of the sin issues and problems that arose within the church. In his second letter, he tells them that he plans on visiting them a third time and the need for him to correct and severely admonish those that remained unrepentant. From a pastoral angle, this was so necessary *because* of his love for the church.

In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul tells them to examine themselves to see if they are in the faith. In the Greek, the word means to examine whether there be any wickedness within them, and the same can apply to us today. How often do we examine ourselves to look for these spiritual "cancerous lumps" within us? Three questions that we should consider from this Sunday's sermon.

First, how do we know if we pass the test whether Christ is in us? Simply put, though we are saved by grace through faith, a faith that produces no change in us is not a faith that saves. We need to regularly ask ourselves, has our lives changed qualitatively since we've come to know Jesus?

Second, why did Paul need to raise this question? Because there were some within the Corinthian church that did not have any visible changes in becoming more like Jesus, he had to bring the fact up that some of them had not changed in bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

Finally, where will those who fail the test end up? Paul is clear in 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 - whether we believe in a literal or metaphorical hell - that there is a reality of a place of eternal torment and punishment for those not found in Jesus. May the gravity and seriousness of that reality draw us to a place of serious reflection.



## OUTLINE

### 1 HOW DO YOU PASS THE TEST (CHRIST IN YOU)?

Faith that does not produce change is not a faith that saves. Though we are saved by grace through faith - the transformation and body of work validates the faith that we have of Jesus as Lord and Savior.

### 2 WHY DID PAUL NEED TO BRING UP THIS QUESTION?

There were those in the Corinthian church that professed Jesus as Savior but there were no visible changes in their lives and their attitude towards their sin. Similarly, we are instructed to continually self-examine to see if there is fruit of repentance in our lives.

### 3 WHERE WILL THOSE WHO FAIL THE TEST END UP?

We have a difficulty talking about hell and we are sometimes embarrassed of the theology of hell. There has been a shift from evacuation theology (only caring about the afterlife) to caring about both the present "hell" and the eternal "hell" to now caring only about the present "hell" that we see all around us. Whether we believe in a literal or analogical hell, we need to take serious heed of Paul's words of those who "do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." (1 Thess 1:8-9)



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

When was the last time you examined your faith?

2

How do we know who needs more time and patience vs who needs a serious examination of their faith? Should we treat them differently?

3

Do you think it's important that you are truly known by others in the community so that they can give an accurate assessment of your sanctification/transformation process?

4

How can we grow in becoming more known so that people can speak into our lives?

5

Are you embarrassed about believing in hell? Why? What is the most difficult thing to believe about hell? What is offensive about hell?

6

How can we examine our faith and live it out daily? What does it look like to have a faith that is "not alone" and "proven with action"?



## BIG IDEA

Paul loves the church in Corinth and his concern for them, especially after hearing about the continual hardness of hearts and unrepentant attitudes that they carry brings him great grief. He instructs them (as he does us) to continually self-examine to see whether we are truly in the faith. As we examine ourselves, may we find true fruit of the spirit and fruit of repentance in our lives.