

18. Paul perseveres with his dysfunctional Corinthians

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[0 : 00] Well, we're going to read in the Scriptures now in the New Testament. If you have one of our church Bibles, you'll find that on page 970. It's in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians in chapter 12, very near the end of the letter.

And Edward has been leading us through these chapters in recent weeks, where Paul is remonstrating with the Corinthian church, seeking to persuade them not to be taken in, not to listen to, not to be led astray by these so-called super apostles, teachers who had come in and were deprecating the apostle Paul, putting him down, spreading all kinds of stories about him, and seeking to woo the Corinthians after their own particular brand of ministry, which was very spectacular, very impressive, very outwardly showy, and very keen to magnify itself and promote itself in the eyes of these believers.

And so Paul is having to persuade them and to deal with them, and he speaks in such strange ways, full of irony, constantly, he says, boasting and making a fool of himself, because in order to get the Corinthians to listen to them, he's having to take on the same kinds of speech as they've been receiving from these super apostles.

So Paul talks a lot about having been made to sound like a fool by what he's saying, and you'll see at verse 11 of 2 Corinthians chapter 12, that's how he starts this little section.

I've been a fool. You forced me to hurt, he says, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super apostles, even though I'm nothing.

[1 : 57] The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you.

Forgive me this wrong. He means he didn't require money from them. He was paid for by other churches. Forgive me this wrong, he says. Here for the third time I'm ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours, but you.

For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.

If I love you more, am I to be loved less? But grunting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and got the better of you by deceit.

Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus to go. I sent the brothers with him. Did Titus take advantage of you?

[3 : 11] Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps? Have you been thinking all along that we've been defending ourselves to you?

It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved. For I fear that perhaps when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish, that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.

I fear that when I come again, my God may humble me before you, and that I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, the sexual immorality, and sensuality that they've practiced.

Amen. May God bless to us his word and help us to understand it. Amen. Well, let's turn again to 2 Corinthians chapter 12, which you'll find on page 970 in our church Bibles.

And as you know, we're looking at the second half of this chapter tonight. Under the title, Paul perseveres with his dysfunctional Corinthians.

[4 : 54] And I trust that we'll see something about perseverance with the Lord's people, which will be a real help to us, I trust, over the years. The culture of our modern world is constantly driving us to be individualists.

Each one of us doing his or her own thing, perhaps building a career, building a reputation, which is going to make a unique and individual contribution to society.

Now, that's not all bad, because it is good for us to learn to take responsibility for our own lives. But this modern individualism, which so deeply colors our view of the world, can blind us to the Bible's pervasive view of the Christian church as having a corporate identity, a body of people who are interdependent on each other, not just a collection of individuals who are really independent of each other.

Now, one of the great characteristics of the Apostle Paul is that he assumes this corporate sense of interdependence in all the churches that he's involved with, and he takes the lead.

He sets the example by his own life. He assumes responsibility for others himself, and he expects the Christians that he's writing to to take responsibility for each other's lives as well.

[6 : 14] And in this passage for tonight, we see Paul as the pastor who never gives up. He keeps on taking responsibility. He perseveres with his wayward Corinthians.

And in doing so, he sets a great example for us of how to take the ongoing responsibility for the life of the Lord's church. Now, the Corinthians, not to wrap it up, were really a basket case of a church.

They probably, I think, certainly caused Paul more trouble, more heartache, and indeed tears than all the other churches in his care put together.

But as this long letter draws to a close, we find Paul continuing to press home his message in which he urges these Corinthian Christians to change their ways to sort out the problems they'd allowed to grow up in their church like weeds growing up in a back garden.

taking ongoing responsibility for the life and health of the Lord's people. That's what we see in Paul's life. Now, we'll come back to Paul in just a moment, but let me just look around this room and ask this question.

[7 : 22] Have we, or have you, as an individual, reached a point in your life where you're conscious that you have a responsibility for other people in this very building and for other Christians further afield?

Now, of course, you and I don't have the same level of responsibility as Paul had for the Corinthians. After all, he was an apostle, which you and I are not, and he was a pioneer church planter.

He'd founded the church at Corinth, and that gave him a deep and committed interest in their life and growth. But he often says to his followers, follow my example as I follow Christ's example.

So we may not be apostles or pioneer planters, but there's much in Paul's attitudes and priorities which he expects us to follow. So let's think of ourselves for a moment.

Are we conscious of having responsibility for each other? I know when I first got involved in church, I was the most irresponsible youth between John O'Groats and Land's End.

[8 : 23] Now, I started off as a little boy, and many of you will have gone to church from being children. And when I first went to church as a young boy, I didn't think of myself as belonging to the church. I went to it, but I didn't belong to it.

In fact, for me, the best thing about going to church was that I was able to spend my pocket money at the sweet shop on my way home. But later on, even as a university student, aged perhaps 18 or 20, I went to a church, and it was a good church, where the Bible was taken seriously.

But I don't remember feeling a quarter of an ounce of responsibility towards the congregation. But, you know, we can start taking responsibility, even when we're very young.

So you might be a boy of 10 or 12 years old, for example. But at the end of this service tonight, you might see an elderly lady sitting on her own, looking tired and wrinkly, and you might go up to her, a young boy, and say to her, Hello, Mrs. McKittrick.

I'm Sebastian. Can I talk to you? Now, I tell you, Sebastian, she would be thrilled. It would make her weak. She'd be ringing up all her friends next week, saying, Do you know, young Sebastian came and talked to me in church.

[9 : 37] Or you might be a bright young thing, aged 18 or 20, wearing a fashionable jacket and boots. At the end of the service, do talk to your friends and your contemporaries.

But if you should see a grumpy old fellow with grey hair, sitting in a corner, looking truculent, go up to him and say, And how has your week been, Edward?

Edward. And he would be enchanted. Now, I'm putting this in a lighthearted way, I know, but I am really serious.

This is how we begin to take responsibility for each other. How we learn not to be independent, but interdependent upon each other. Now, let's look at our passage and we'll see how Paul goes on taking loving responsibility for these Corinthian Christians.

They had caused him so much grief, but he didn't give up on them. He was determined that their church should improve and grow to greater maturity. So let's notice three things that Paul impresses on the Corinthians.

[10 : 40] Three things which will greatly help their church if they will only listen to him and respond to him. And there'll be lessons for us as well, I trust. So the first thing he presses them towards is a thorough submission to apostolic teaching and leadership.

A thorough submission to apostolic teaching. We'll look here at verses 11 and 12 which I'll read again. I've been a fool, you forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super apostles, even though I'm nothing.

The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. Now at this point in his letter, Paul is reaching the end of his so-called boasting section.

So when he says in verse 11, I've been a fool, what he means is, I've been a fool in having to resort to all this ironic boasting about my qualifications, but you forced me to it.

I couldn't think of any other way to get you to see that I'm a true apostle and these other men, these super apostles, are frauds. The fact is, verse 11, that I ought to have been commended by you.

[11 : 52] I shouldn't have had to have spent the last two chapters commending myself. For the truth is, and this is putting it very mildly and humbly, I'm not at all inferior to these people that you're lionizing as super saints.

And then in verse 12, he does a little bit more of this necessary self-commendation, just to press home the point that he is their true apostle and therefore his teaching and leadership should be gladly accepted by them.

In verse 12, he reminds them that in the years that he was with them, going back two or three years previously, various signs, wonders, and mighty works were performed by him.

But just look at the way he phrases it there in verse 12. He doesn't say, I performed signs and wonders as though to draw attention to himself. He says, the signs of a true apostle were performed among you, a way of putting it which draws attention to the power of God and not to the power of the apostle.

It was God whose power was displayed through him and that power marked him and authenticated him as a true apostle. And this is consistent with what we read in the Acts of the Apostles.

[13 : 04] In the period following Pentecost, the only Christians through whom miracles were performed were the apostles with the exception of Stephen and Philip who were commissioned by the apostles for their particular work.

And the book of Acts records Peter and Paul both being used by the Lord to heal the sick and even once or twice to raise the dead. So in 2 Corinthians 12.12, the signs of a true apostle is a phrase that carries its weight from the fact that the early church understood that miracles were done by apostles but not normally by other Christians.

So signs and mighty works marked out the Lord's apostles and distinguished them from other Christians. But notice an interesting phrase in the middle of verse 12.

It's the sort of phrase that we could easily miss. These signs were performed at Corinth, says Paul, with utmost patience. Now, what is going on there?

In what sense does an apostle need patience if he's healing the sick or raising the dead? After all, doesn't a miracle happen instantly? Well, the best way to understand verse 12 is like this.

[14 : 19] The signs and mighty works that mark a true apostle were indeed performed among you but there was nothing slick or easy or triumphalistic about them.

They were done in the midst of a life of great endurance and suffering which required utmost patience on my part. I've told you, Paul is implying about my sufferings back in chapter 11.

Your super apostles may be claiming to be miracle workers in some way but think of their lives and then think of mine. They don't know the endurance and utmost patience required of real Christian leadership but I do and you know that I do and that's why you must gladly accept my leadership and teaching once again.

Now we too, nearly 20 centuries later, we need to submit thoroughly and gladly to the teaching of the Lord's true apostles. That is, Peter, Paul, John, Matthew, James and their close associates Luke and Mark.

Paul's appeal to the Corinthians in verse 12 is to say I'm a true apostle. I'm not a false apostle like your super apostles who are really servants of Satan. As Paul has said back in chapter 11 verse 15.

[15 : 38] Now how does this apply? Well churches and especially church leaders are often faced with tricky decisions. So you'll find on a Kirk session meeting or a deacon's board that a particular course of action for a church is suggested by somebody.

Now how do Christian leaders react, respond to the suggestion? Well they ask, is this suggested course in line with the teaching of the Lord Jesus and the apostles?

If it is, let's do it. If it's not, let's dump it. Let's often thank the Lord that we have the teaching of his true apostles. We have all these books in the later part of the New Testament from Acts to Revelation.

No doubt we could follow the Lord Jesus truly if all we had were the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. But we have Acts and Revelation and all these great letters which add so much strength to the Lord's church because they draw out the implications of the teaching of Jesus and of the Old Testament.

They teach us both the gospel and the lifestyle that accompanies the gospel and grows out of it. and they enable us to distinguish true teaching from false teaching. So there's the first thing.

[16 : 55] Paul continues to press the Corinthians to accept his true apostleship and teaching because he knows that if they turn away from him they will turn away from Christ.

To turn away from Paul is to turn away from Christ. Now secondly, he presses them to a wholehearted belief in his personal integrity.

Now here we're looking at verses 13 to 18 and much of it is to do with money. Now let's notice the telltale question at the start of verse 13.

Just fix your eyes on verse 13. Now think back to your childhood for a moment to the tea table in the kitchen with the family sitting around the tea table and mother is serving up the tea and putting on everyone's plate what they're getting and you look around at everyone's plate at the tea table and you say mom, it's not fair.

Michael's got a bigger helping of chocolate ice cream than I have. I remember that, don't you? Now verse 13 is echoing an it's not fair complaint.

[18 : 00] The Corinthians have obviously been saying to Paul it's not fair Paul. You've been favoring the other churches more than us. And he replies in verse 13 how have I favored you less than the other churches?

Oh, maybe in one thing. And here he suddenly becomes ironical again. The one way in which I was unfair to you was that I never put any financial burdens on you.

Do forgive me for the wrong of not charging you any fees. Now we looked at this a few weeks ago when we were studying the early part of chapter 11 so I won't say much about it again tonight.

But in brief, in brief, the reason why Paul accepted no financial remuneration from the Corinthians was probably because Corinth was a buzzing center of trade.

Money was big there. Money would have been something of an idol and had a high profile. And Paul didn't want to run the risk of being accused of being in the business of evangelism and ministry only for the money.

[19 : 00] As he said in chapter 11 verse 9 his needs had been met while he was at Corinth by the churches of Macedonia so that he wouldn't have to ask for any financial support from the Corinthians so that no false accusations could be made against him.

And he goes on now back to our chapter 12 and verse 14. He says, I'm coming to you again soon and when I come again I'm not going to be seeking a penny of financial support from you.

And why? Now just notice this lovely phrase because I seek not what is yours but you. I'm not in the business of loving you and serving you and teaching you because I want your money.

It's you that I love. It's you that I want. The Corinthians were so misunderstanding Paul and so twisting his motives so as to set him in a bad light.

Silly, immature Corinthians. Don't you want to bang their heads together? They have this gracious wonderful man looking after them and loving them to the nth degree and all they can do is besmirch his integrity.

[20 : 05] And yet he keeps on loving them. He never gives up on his dysfunctional Corinthians. And the lesson for us is never to give up on the Lord's people even when we are sorely tried by the Lord's people.

And let's look on in verses 14 and 15 because we see a little bit more into Paul's heart there. Halfway through verse 14. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents but parents for their children.

So in the ordinary family it's the parents who pay for their children's food and their children's clothing and their children's bicycles and rabbit hutches and hamster food in my experience.

Not vice versa. We don't expect the children to pay for the parents. Now Paul has always seen himself as the father of the Corinthian church. In fact in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 he says I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

That's why he goes on to say in verse 15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. Outlay of money and effort and energy. I'm glad to do anything for you that will build up your Christian life.

[21 : 20] And then at the end of verse 15 he puts in a little question which expresses his perplexity and his sadness over them. Is my reward for loving you so much to be loved so little in return?

Do you remember his plea back in chapter 7? Make room in your hearts for us. At the heart of this letter is this unstinting unceasing love for these Christians who are so unappreciative of their father in Christ and so ungrateful to him and yet he never says I've had enough of you.

The great example for us. Now verses 16 to 18 take us straight back to the money question. Let me offer a rather extended paraphrase of those three verses just to help bring out the sense of them.

16 to 18 You concede don't you that I never asked you for a penny of financial support but you're still nursing this idea that I was on the make that I was crafty that somehow I got my hands on your money by deceit.

I think you're remembering that when I was absent when I was away from Corinth I sent various people to you I sent Titus and another Christian brother with him and I sent them to arrange for the collection of money that was to be taken to Jerusalem for the relief of the poor Jewish Christians there and you're thinking I fear that some of the money that you gave for the poor Jewish Christians might have found its way into the pockets of yours truly but I can tell you it didn't did Titus do the dirty on you did he put his fingers into the till of course not and don't Titus and I act in exactly the same way as each other and keep exactly in step with each other now Paul is writing like this so as to restore their trust in his personal integrity because they're not going to submit gladly to his leadership and teaching if they're holding on to this crazy idea that he's been fingering their wallets he's having to defend his actions and his motives and yet verse 19 now here we come to a critically important moment in the whole letter

[23 : 36] I think actually that verse 19 is one of the key verses in the whole of 2 Corinthians and he says in verse 19 have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you it is in the sight of God that we've been speaking in Christ and all for your upbuilding beloved now he has been defending himself to them hasn't he he's been defending himself and commending himself to them he's had to do that but his big reason for doing so has not been to shine up his own reputation self-defense has never been an end in itself it's not himself that he's concerned about his self-defense has only been in order to restore their trust in him so that they will then allow him to teach them and build them up and help them to greater maturity in their faith what he's concerned about is not himself but them and that's what this whole letter has been about his only aim is to see them grow up and leave behind their silliness and their juvenile lack of discernment which has led them to follow these shallow triumphalistic false apostles now here's a tricky question when Paul has been commending and defending himself throughout much of two Corinthians as we've seen is the case is he following or is he contradicting the example of Christ now we might immediately want to say surely he's contradicting the example of Christ because didn't

Christ keep his mouth distinctly shut when he was being questioned by the Jewish high priests and by Pontius Pilate just before his crucifixion wasn't Jesus in the words of Isaiah 53 like a sheep led to the slaughter like a lamb before its shearer is silent so he opened not his mouth surely therefore we might think there's a disjunction between Jesus and Paul Jesus saying nothing in his own defense while Paul says quite a lot but to say that would be to judge the thing too hastily Jesus actually had a great deal to say about himself in the course of the four gospels and while much of his teaching was given to his disciples much of it was also given in the hearing of his opponents particularly in John's gospel where Jesus speaks at length about his identity and about his mission to groups of Jewish leaders who are fiercely hostile to him and yes in those long speeches

Jesus is commending himself and defending himself against the accusations of his enemies there's no real disjunction here between Jesus and Paul both have to defend themselves under certain circumstances and and this is the point they do it for the sake of their hearers Jesus does it he says this himself in John's gospel he does it so that some of his opponents in the end may be saved Paul does it here in our verse 19 not in order to shine up his reputation but for the upbuilding of his beloved Corinthians and he gives great strength to what he says in verse 19 by saying that all this self defense has been done in the sight of God and speaking in Christ in the sight of God in other words he's calling the father and the son to bear witness to the truthfulness of his motives now for us Christian leaders do sometimes have to defend themselves any Christian but particularly leaders have to defend themselves sometimes and defend their motives when they're being falsely accused if a just a just accusation is laid against a

Christian leader he needs to acknowledge the truth and confess and repent but if the accusation is false it's right for him to defend himself so that others should be built up if Paul had failed to defend himself against the malicious talk of his opponents at Corinth the church at Corinth would simply have collapsed the Christians would have lost their bearings and would have been overwhelmed by these false apostles Paul wasn't interested in proving his integrity for the sake of his own reputation at one level he couldn't care tuppence for his reputation he knew that the Lord knew him and that the Lord appraised him rightly but at another level he had to show the Corinthians that he was a man of integrity because it was the only way that they would be rescued so let me read that verse 19 again I think it's a gem of a verse I wasn't aware of it until doing my study this week but it's a great verse have you been thinking all along that we've been defending ourselves to you it is in the sight of God that we've been speaking in Christ and all for your upbuilding beloved so there's the second thing Paul presses them to a wholehearted belief in his personal integrity but it's for their upbuilding now thirdly Paul presses them to a reverent fear of falling into moral disorder and this is the subject of verses 20 and 21 just notice how each of those last two verses begins verse 20 for I fear that verse 21 I fear that he's fearful he's anxious for them in verse 20 his fear is that there will be social disorder among them quarreling jealousy anger hostility slander gossip conceit and disorder and then in verse 21 his fear is that he will find unrepented sexual immorality going on in the church when he comes to visit them now what

Paul is doing here is warning them look back to verse 14 here for the third time I'm ready to come to you it isn't exactly a threat it's more like a loving warning look on to chapter 13 verse 1 this is the third time I'm coming to you every charge against a church member must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses I warned those who sinned before and all the others and I warned them now while absent as I did when present on my second visit that if I come again I will not spare them so Paul is determined that where discipline needs to be exercised he will exercise it so his message in these verses the last two verses of the chapter is to say to the Corinthians brace yourselves brothers and sisters for my arrival which may be in the near future if repentance needs to take place it's better that you repent now before I come than that you have to be brought before me to have your conduct examined and charges laid before me in the presence of witnesses now with this in mind let me say a word to those who are very new to our church who may have been only coming for perhaps two or three weeks what Paul is saying here is based on the firm understanding that real Christian life will always be marked by real Christian behavior and a healthy church is a disciplined church and where a congregation learns to turn its back and keep on turning its back on the sins of verse 20 and the sins of verse 21 that congregation will not only be a godly congregation but also a happy congregation and a united congregation congregation but a healthy church that is serious about the

[31 : 26] Christian life and the gospel is a church that is willing to discipline its members when they step out of line now you might ask what form does this discipline take is it a question of bend over that chair Jones minor while I give you six of the best no you'll be glad to know it's not church discipline means that when a Christian behaves in a verse 20 fashion or a verse 21 fashion others in the church will speak to that person and urge him or her to repent and change and if repentance and change is not forthcoming the elders and the ministers of the church need to get involved and they too will urge change and repentance and if the person refuses to heed their urging then the elders may have to remove that person from any responsibilities they hold and in extreme cases of bad behavior bar them from coming to meetings of the church in other words godly behavior is essential for Christians and if a church is to be happy and united we need to keep each other up to the mark and here at this church at the

Tron we aim to follow Paul's teaching in all this now it's a worldwide problem not simply a problem in the western world but worldwide that many churches are simply not willing to exercise pastoral discipline in this way and the consequence is an immeasurable weakening of those churches Paul knew that the Corinthian church was immeasurably weakened by this kind of behavior now there's an obvious parallel that you can draw here between the church and the family at home a disciplined family will be a united and happy family if one of the younger members of the family begins to misbehave the parents lovingly say no son or no daughter this behavior is disruptive and causes grief and chaos it must stop so we know that the parents must make clear where the boundaries lie between good behavior and unacceptable behavior and the children need that boundary marking if they in turn when they grow up are going to lead disciplined and happy lives and bring up disciplined and happy children but if the parents don't insist on those boundaries and if they allow their children to run wild everything begins to fall apart that's just the same in the Lord's family everything begins to fall apart in a congregation or for that matter in a denomination if Christians are not willing to hold one another to the standards of behavior taught by the

Lord Jesus and the apostles just look again at verse 20 at that list of things quarreling and just think about this in terms of our congregation quarreling jealousy anger hostility slander that's horrid speech isn't it Mrs Winterbottom is a horrible woman because she x y z blank blank let me just say if there is a Mrs Winterbottom here tonight believe me sister i'm not talking about you going on with the list gossip conceit disorder now you've only got to think about those things to realize that if they're practiced persistently in a congregation the strength the love the joy and the unity of a congregation simply breaks down and then look on to verse 21 impurity sexual immorality and sensuality in one of the churches that i pastored in England many years ago we had two young couples who were running a section of our youth work together and the husband of one couple committed adultery with the wife of the other couple now mercifully both of them were accepted back and forgiven by the spouses that they had betrayed after it was all over but the grief and distress that that episode caused not just to them but to the whole church that was horrible now let's see the thrust of what Paul is saying in these two verses because these two verses tell us a lot about him he is not just a fierce dry-eyed authoritarian moralist he's anything but that he loves them his call to repentance comes from a heart of love so verse 20 for i fear that perhaps when i come i may find you not as i wish and that you may find me not as you wish in other words i fear that i'm going to find disorder and therefore you may find me the stern disciplinarian which is not at all what you want but if the situation requires it that's the way it will be and then verse 21 i fear that when i come again my God may humble me before you and i may have to mourn notice that verb i may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity sexual immorality and sensuality that they have practiced so if Paul on his return should find the church full of sexual immorality it would grieve him he would weep he would sob that's what Paul would do because he would know that his beloved Corinthians had still not learned about the loveliness of marital fidelity and chastity and self-control Paul knew them all too well they had so much growing up still to do and that's why he was still fearful for them doesn't this say something as well about the influence of the false apostles if the Corinthians were looking to them for leadership and their leadership led to a breakdown of moral discipline like this it doesn't say much for their gospel well let me sum up and quickly finish now Paul is pressing the Corinthians to these three things first a thorough and glad submission to the apostolic teaching and especially in this case to Paul's own teaching secondly a wholehearted belief in Paul's personal integrity which they had to be convinced of if they were to follow him again and thirdly a reverent fear of falling into moral disorder he presses these things on these wayward Christians whom he refuses to give up on and we are to follow his example of perseverance as he follows Christ's example of perseverance now friends we in our experience

we will often find the lord's people to be lovely delightful encouraging godly and a great joy to be part of but it won't always be quite like that and when it's not let's stick to our brothers and our sisters determined to work for their upbuilding verse 19 have you been thinking all along that we've been defending ourselves to you it is in the sight of god that we've been speaking in christ and all for your upbuilding beloved beloved let's bow our heads and we'll pray how we thank you our dear heavenly father for this perseverance on paul's part which he so wonderfully exemplifies and we do pray that because we are weak men and women you will give us the grace to have hearts that grow larger with love for our brothers and sisters and more filled with the desire always to persevere with your people please protect us from the kind of disorder that paul speaks of in the later verses of this chapter and we pray that you will help us to love not only the teaching here but you yourself our dear father and the lord jesus with great love as we continue on our way and we ask it all in jesus name amen thank you to you the good you the you the