

2 Corinthians 12:11-13:10

1-23-13

Tested & Approved!

I. Slide#1 **Announce:**

- A. **This Saturday:** Taking Off The Gloves, Men's Conf. [**Accept** Gods **invitation** to a **grand adventure**; **Answer** God's call to **authentic masculinity**]

II. **Intro:**

- A. **Slide#2** Remember the old EBS? "This is a test. For the next 30 seconds, this station will conduct a test of the **Emergency Broadcast System**. This is only a test." - **Beeeeeeep** - "If this had been an actual emergency, the Attention Signal you just heard would have been followed by official information, news or instructions." (ended 1997)
- B. **Slide#3 Tests, Tests, Tests!** – **Test:** *a procedure intended to establish the **quality, performance, or reliability** of something, esp. before it is taken into widespread use.*
1. It seems like every day there's a **test** for something.
 2. **Medical tests** (Biopsy's, blood work, pregnancy tests); **School Tests** (From pop-quizzes to finals); Even our **automobiles** have **diagnostic tests** run on them. **Psychological tests**; **Paternity tests**; **Stress tests**.
 - a) **Well**, spiritually there are some tests that ought to be run **often**.
- C. **Slide#4 Outline:** Paul gives 5 *open book Tests*: **The Serving Survey**; **The Attitude Analysis**; **The Faith Final**; **The Authority Assessment**; & **then** our very own **Personal Fruit Inspection**.

III. **Slide#5 SERVING SURVEY! (11-18)**

- A. 5 good questions to ask regarding Serving!
1. **Slide#6a Am I too big for my britches?** (11-13)
 - a) **I am nothing** – Not false humility here. (True humility)
 - b) "When you see yourself as **nobody**, **then** you don't mind working with people who have **taken advantage of you!**"
 - c) (Spurgeon) "He whose garments are the whitest will best perceive the spots upon them. He whose crown shines the brightest will know when he has lost a jewel. He who gives the most light to the world will always be able to discover his own darkness."¹
 2. **Slide#6b Am I seeking their souls or their stuff?** (14)
 - a) **I do not seek yours, but you** – He's not after **what** you **got**, **but who** you **are!**
 - b) This lays down one of the supreme principles of Christian living!
 3. **Slide#6c Am I a joyful servant?** (15)

¹ Charles Spurgeon

- a) I will very gladly **spend & be spent** – Mt.20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.
4. **Slide#6d Am I taking advantage of anyone?** (16-18a)
- a) Did I (or Titus) take advantage of you? – He refuses to **use** them.
5. **Slide#6e Am I modeling what I'm expecting of others?** (18b)
- a) Did we not walk in the same steps – Paul **models** what he expects of others.
- b) Edgar Guest said, “I'd rather see a sermon *than* hear one any day; I'd rather one should walk with me *than* merely tell the way.”
- c) **Leonardo da Vinci** had started work on a large canvas in his studio. For awhile he worked at it--choosing the subject, planning the perspective, sketching the outline, applying the colors, with his own inimitable genius. Then suddenly he ceased, the painting still unfinished, and, summoning one of his students, invited him to complete the work. The student protested that he was both unworthy and unable to complete the great painting which his master had begun. But da Vinci silenced him. “Will not what I have done inspire you to do your best?”

IV. Slide#7 ATTITUDE ANALYSIS! (19-21)

- A. The bible is packed full of *relationships*...many were very turbulent!
- Cain & Abel; Jacob & Esau; Joseph & his brothers; Samuel & Saul, David & Saul, Saul & Saul; David & Absalom; Paul & Barnabas; Euodia & Syntyche(Phil.4:2).
- B. We speak before God in Christ – On one occasion **Abraham Lincoln & his counselors** had taken an important decision. One of the counselors said, “Well, Mr. President, I hope that **God** is on our side.” Lincoln answered, “What I am worried about is, not if God is on our side, but if we are on **God's side**.”
- C. Paul reveals his **motive**(19b)...*their building up not their tearing down!*
- D. **Slide#8** (20) *Backbitings* (slander) are loud-mouthed attacks. Someone speaking in public about you. *Whisperings* (Gossip) on the other hand are more sinister, lurking like a shadow behind someone's back.
- Slide#9** Funny poster I saw: Sure, “*Love your neighbor,*” But you can say whatever you want about somebody...as long as you add... “**Just sayin**”.
 - See *whisperings* are, “the **slanderous story** murmured in someone's ear, the discreditable tale passed on as a **spicy secret**.” (Barclay)
 - Both are aimed at character assassination, **but** at least w/a **slanderer** you can deal w/it because it is a **frontal attack**.
 - With a **whisper campaign**, it is an **underground movement** which will not face you. **Thus** you are helpless to attack, because you do not know about it! (like fighting terrorists)

a) **Slide#10** But remember, "a tiger doesn't lose sleep over the opinion of sheep"

- E. (21) After Paul's list of sins of the **heart & tongue** he deals with the sins of the body.
1. **Slide#11** *Paul lists forms a downward spiral* from: **uncleanness** (a general word describing any impurity); **to fornication** (includes fornication & adultery); **to lewdness** (filthiness that knows no restraint).
- F. Has the world squeezed you into its mold? Or, are you remolding the world?
- G. Are you living the lifestyle of the carnal Corinthians? Or, are you incarnating the character of Christ?
1. If you are not **salt** infiltrating a decaying world, the decaying world is infiltrating you!²

V. **Slide#12 FAITH FINAL! (13:1-6)**

- A. (1-4) Paul appeals to **the Law**(Deut.17:6). He is through warning them. Discipline is imminent. It is time for a **thorough spring cleaning!** [fur is going to fly!]
- B. (2) **I will not spare** – He's coming w/his white glove!
1. Sometimes your doctor recommends **medicine**. When that doesn't work, he resorts to **surgery!** :(
- C. **Slide#13** (5,6) Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living."
1. The test here **isn't** asking, *how often you go to church, or how often you say your mealtime prayers, or how many verses you've memorized*. It goes right to the bottom line...*are you even in the Christian faith?*
 2. If those in the church **chronically reject** God's **words & ways**, checking to see if they're saved isn't just *wise*. **It's essential!**
 3. Before we examine someone else's life we are encouraged to examine our own 1st!
- D. **Slide#14 Note 3 words used here:** Examine, Test & Know.
- E. **Examine** – A test.
1. Do you have a **personal** relationship w/Christ?
 2. Have you experienced any significant **changes** in your life through knowing Him?
 3. Do you **experience** His leading, His presence, His peace, & His joy?
 4. If you were to die today, do you have the assurance of eternity w/God?
- F. **Test** – A proof. [test is stronger than examine]
1. How would you "**prove**" you were a Christian?
 2. If you were **abducted** in a closed foreign country would there have been enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian?

² Charles Swindoll, pg.78.

3. Can you show **evidence** you are really a changed person? How different are your thoughts? Your habits? Your goals? Your relationships? Your feelings?
4. Are you getting **easier** to live with?
5. Are your **attitudes** any different now than they were in the past?

G. **Know** – A perception.

1. Do you have any **inner discernment**?
2. Do you have **His peace**?

VI. Slide#15 **AUTHENTICITY ASSESSMENT! (7-10)**

- A. (10) Paul reiterates his intention of this letter. To **build up** not tear down!
1. He sought to **lead sheep**, not *drive cattle*!

VII. Slide#16 **PERSONAL FRUIT INSPECTION!**

- A. (5c) **Disqualified** = do not stand the test. **Do you stand the test?**
- B. **How many professing Christians are living in self-deception?** - **Most test life this way...**
1. **Slide#17a Externally**, things are more or less all right in my life. I have a pretty sound doctrinal basis of faith. My life is lived more or less righteously. I'm not conscious of any gross sin in my life.
 - a) But Paul says, *that's not the test!* That's the *good moral person* test! **No**, it's about an **Slide#17b Internal** test...*Christ in you!* (5b)
 - b) This is how one is approved by God.
 - c) God's concerned not only with *outward conduct* but **inward life**.
 - d) I can have a **correct creed**...but I am **not saved** by a *statement of Creed!*
 2. I want to know, **do these questions find you out?**
 3. **These questions shouldn't lead you to morbid introspection!**
 - a) **How does it not?**
 - (1) **Slide#18a Ask the H.S. to guide you!** Ps.139:23,24 **Search me, O God, & know my heart; Try me, & know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.** (You **can't** do by yourself, you **need** the H.S. guiding this process)
 - (2) **Slide#18b Don't look for sin, look for Jesus!**
 - (3) **Slide#18c Search w/in yur heart for evidences of the indwelling H.S. in your life**
 4. **Results:**
 - a) **Keeps** your **heart** tender; **keeps** your **will** submissive; **keeps** your **mind** open to leading of the H.S.

- b) **It takes** the chill away from your **soul**; **it takes** away hardness from your **heart**; **it takes** shadows away from your **life**. **It breaks** up any **clouds** that have formed between you & your Savior. **It sets** the prisoner **free**.
- c) **It ushers** in...His **peace**, His **forgiveness**, His **cleansing**, His **Presence**.

C. **Slide#19,20** These questions have their origin in the spiritual accountability group started by **John Wesley** when he was a student at Oxford called "**The Holy Club**."

1. The first list appeared about 1729 in the preface to Wesley's second Oxford Diary. (284 yrs ago)

D. **Questions:**

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Do I confidentially pass on to others what has been said to me in confidence?
3. Can I be trusted?
4. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work or habits?
5. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
6. Did the Bible live in me today?
7. Do I give the Bible time to speak to me every day?
8. Am I enjoying prayer?
9. When did I last speak to someone else of my faith?
10. Do I pray about the money I spend?
11. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
12. Do I disobey God in anything?
13. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
14. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
15. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrustful?
16. How do I spend my spare time?
17. Am I proud?
18. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?
19. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?
20. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
21. Is Christ real to me?