

Series: Words of Counsel and Correction

# EXAMINE YOURSELVES (PT 1)

## 2 CORINTHIANS 13

Text: 2 Corinthians 13:5

### **2 Corinthians 13:5**

*<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

Introduction:

It is much easier easier to see another's faults than our own. This is the case of the Pharisee and the Publican, a parable of our LORD. In the parable, the Pharisee stood while praying, saying:

### **Luke 18:11-13**

*<sup>11</sup> The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. <sup>13</sup> And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

What was the difference in the two men? Well, one saw everyone else's faults and thanked God he was not

like them. The other, humbled himself, and agreed with God about his sins, calling himself a sinner.

We need to examine our own lives and see our own faults, before calling attention to someone else's. We are, even after salvation, still just a sinner saved by Grace!

In our text, Paul challenges the Corinthian believers to, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves..."

Paul faced scrutiny and opposition everywhere he went.

Men would question his apostleship, his message, and his ministry.

Throughout his letter to the Corinthians, Paul had subjected himself and his ministry to scrutiny.

Now he challenged the Corinthians, to look at their own lives, before looking to someone else's.

It is our relationship and fellowship with God that should be foremost in our minds, for we will answer for ourselves, not others.

Every Christian is either in a state of spiritual growth or stagnation. If we are growing spiritually, we pray, study

the Word of God, share our faith, love biblical teaching, and long for the Lord's Day.

The believer who matures in Christ is sensitive to sin, swift to repent, and desires to stay in a right relationship with the Lord and with others.

When we are growing in the Lord we continually think on the things of God and speak of them at every occasion.

This is a result of being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

The stagnant Christian's life reveals that the power of the Spirit no longer flows.

They find time for everything but prayer and Bible study.

They don't feel comfortable talking about Jesus in front of others and often camouflage their faith. They may go to church but they don't look forward to it; rather they just endure it.

Before we can grow in our relationship to the Lord, we must be confident in our relationship to the Lord.

Let's consider this evening our relationship and fellowship with God.

Note:

## **1. THREE GROUPS OF PEOPLE**

- Confused Christians who struggle with doubts

In the back of their minds there is always the question, "Am I really saved?"

They worry over this and ask, "Did I believe enough?" "Was I sincere enough?" "Did I really mean it when I asked Jesus to save me?"

They think, "How can I really be a Christian when I struggle with so much sin and doubt?"

Satan our enemy loves to exploit these feelings.

He knows that if he can keep a Christian in doubt, that lack of confidence will mean zero spiritual growth.

There is a second group:

- Counterfeit Christians who believe they are genuinely saved

They really believe they are Christians.

They may give money and serve as volunteers for ministry.

They sit alongside genuine Christians in the church pews but they are unredeemed.

They are trusting in something other than Christ for salvation.

The third group is:

- Christians who are confident and growing in their relationship to Christ

They have examined their lives to be certain they are in Christ.

Though they sometimes fall into sin, their hearts are tender and they quickly repent and trust in God's faithfulness to forgive.

Again note our text:

**2 Corinthians 13:5**

*<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

We have briefly considered “The Three Groups of People” note secondly:

## 2. THREE KEY PHRASES

- Examine Yourselves

Paul says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith"

### **2 Corinthians 13:5**

<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

"The faith" here refers to true Christianity.

We are to "examine" ourselves to be certain that we are true believers.

"Examine" means "to try, scrutinize, assay."

The root word carries the idea of piercing, looking through.

As a student, from time to time you are given examinations to test your competency of a subject.

Medically, we go to a physician for an examination, to find out about our health.

Militarily, an officer reviews or examines his troops to be sure they are up to standards.

Legally, a witness is put on the stand to examine his knowledge of a case

Scientifically, a slide is put under the microscope to closely examine its contents

We are to pierce the outer shell of our lives and closely examine our hearts to be certain we are "in the faith."

Notice a second phrase:

- Prove Your Own Selves

### **2 Corinthians 13:5**

*<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

The Greek word for "prove" is different from the one for "examine."

It means specifically "to approve."

Illustration:

Before buying a used car, you would want to take it on a test drive and to a trusted mechanic to be certain as possible that it was reliable.

When a new ship comes out of the shipyards it is taken to proving grounds to be sure it is seaworthy before setting out on a long voyage.

We are to "examine" our hearts, but much more we are to "prove" our lives in order to be certain that we are genuine Christians.

The third phrase:

### **2 Corinthians 13:5**

<sup>5</sup> *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, **except ye be reprobates?***

- Except Ye Be Reprobates

The root word for prove means "to approve."

The word used here for 'reprobate' means "unapproved"!

Paul was saying: "Approve your standing before God so that when you stand before him you will not be found unapproved. Test yourself so that you will be confident in your faith."

Now I want to close in considering some wrong way of test our relationship with God and continue next week with the right way of testing our relationship with God.



Notice some test their relationship and fellowship on:

- Outward Morality

We all know that there are some good people in the world.

They are very moral.

They like to help others.

They are honest and trustworthy, generous and kind.

Illustration:

You have car trouble and a "Good Samaritan" comes along and helps out.

But just because they were helpful that doesn't mean they are saved.

There are people who are kind, generous, grateful, helpful, loyal and honest with everyone but God.

The Pharisees were outwardly moral, but we read in Matthew 23:

**Matthew 23:27**

<sup>27</sup> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed

appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

A second wrong test is:

- Religious Activity

There are a lot of religious people in hell.

Ever notice how many people wear the cross and other religious symbols?

People whose lives in no way reflect biblical Christianity, yet they wear a cross around their necks.

Someone has once said "It's more important to bear our cross than to wear a cross.

They are much like those we read about in 2 Timothy:

**2 Timothy 3:5**

*<sup>5</sup> Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

We may attend church every week, with a cross around our neck, and a Bible under our arm and still not be saved!

Religion gets no one into heaven, only a real relationship with Christ is sufficient.

Another false test that many use is:

- Ministry Involvement

Many think that they have a relationship because they are involved.

Remember a man named Judas:

***John 6:70-71***

*<sup>70</sup> Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? <sup>71</sup> He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.*

Ministry involvement is a poor substitute for salvation.

***Matthew 7:22-23***

*<sup>22</sup> Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? <sup>23</sup> And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Close:

I will close here for now. Next week we will consider the positive side of self-examination of our faith.

**2 Corinthians 13:5**

*<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*