



Sunday Service – 03/05/2017

2 Corinthians 12:19 – 21

2 Corinthians 13:1 - 8

John 6:53 – 55

John 6:60

John 6:66 - 69

I want you to open to 2 Corinthians chapter 12. I was actually going to finish 13 today, but we're going to look at 11 through 14 next Sunday morning as kind of my "Facebook is not enough" sermon. Now don't go home and say, "Brother Chris said we can't have Facebook anymore." Don't do that. That is not what I said. But it's not enough. We're going to look at that next week. They've been advertising this new show coming on TV. Here's the title of it: When Calls the Heart. What is it? Oh, Hallmark. I don't care what it is. I'm not watching it. That's all I need to know: When Calls the Heart. I don't want that. I'm not watching it. It's not my kind of film. I remember the last time I went to a chick flick there were six other couples and my wife looked at me and said, "OK, here are the rules. You can't look at your watch. You cannot roll your eyes. You cannot sigh out loud and you may not make comments that makes everybody else in the theatre laugh." And my response was, "Well then there's no point in me going, is there." No. I'm more into the tough movies. When I was coming up, a guy that my generation will know, most of you won't, Burt Lancaster, was this really tough, yeah, yeah, he's not Leonardo DiCaprio. That's all I got to say. Burt Lancaster, tough dude, and he had this, he made this movie called "Valdez is Coming". And basic intent of the movie is these guys beat him up in the beginning of the movie and they think he's just a weak nobody and they put this cross on him and he walks through this desert deal and he gets home and he pulls out this trunk and you realize this is one bad dude. So he pulls all these guns out and he goes out and he escorts a number of those people to heaven. That's how we're going to say this, or wherever they went, he escorted them there. That's my kind of movie. I like a guy that's just tough, he's going to get up, here's what I'm doing, Valdez is Coming.

That is the last chapter of 2 Corinthians. Paul is Valdez. They think he's weak. They think he's nobody. They've already said that. They said, "Man, his letters are weighty, but his speech is nothing. He's a horrible speaker. He doesn't look good. He's a weak nobody." And so Paul look in verse 19 of chapter 12.

¹⁹Have you been thinking all along that we have 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. ²⁰I 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 quarrelling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.

All of which were in the movie Valdez.

²¹I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality they have practiced.

He basically says, "I'm on my way and it's going to be a bad day for you. I'm coming. I'm not going to cut any slack and I know you think I'm weak, but I'm telling you I'm coming in Christ. I love you but I am coming to deal with you. We're not going to just ignore this anymore. I'm on my way. And when I get there I don't care if it's bad or not, we're dealing with the issue." Now here's the issue. Look in chapter 13.

¹This is the third time I'm coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them – ³since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. ⁴He was crucified in weakness, but he lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.

He says, "I'm done. I've had it and I am weak, but I'm not coming to you in my power. I'm coming to you in the power of Jesus Christ and we're going to deal with the issue." What's the issue? He says, "I tell you, you've got to have two or three witnesses before you make an accusation." These false teachers have come in, remember, they've attacked Paul the whole book. Then they talked about how great they were. That they had been persecuted and they have this great knowledge and now we come to the last kind of strategy on their docket which is let's take, and remember Paul was there a year and a half. He set up, because he told Titus to do the same thing, he set up elders in the church. He set up the pastor. He set up the elders. And now what they're doing is they're coming in, the last part

of their little gimmick is to start making up stuff about the elders. And I'm going to tell you. It is amazing the stuff you'll hear made up about you. When I was in my second church, we were going to see my mother-in-law. So somehow the word had gotten out and there was a little church near my mother-in-law, about 30 miles, that wanted to talk to us about maybe coming as pastor. So Peg and I go there. We drive out there. We pull up into the church parking lot, really nice looking church, and they have this really big antebellum, if you get that in the South, this really nice antebellum home. My wife looks at it and goes, "I feel called here." So we get into the room, we sit down with the pulpit committee, this is Georgia, probably in what '70 or '80, '78, '79, so we get in with this Georgia church, we sit down, and you can tell, it's one of those deals where you can tell they got a question they're asking, want to ask you, but they're kind of wandering all around the thing, and they finally get to the question. Now I'm just telling you the question because I really thought, just being naïve, that this kind of thing was done with, but apparently it wasn't. They said, "What if a black man comes forward and wants to accept Christ. What would you do?" And I gave what I thought was a responsible answer. I said, "Well I'd pray with him, explain what it means, and lead him to Christ." So it got kind of quiet and then they said, "Well couldn't you just do that in the parking lot and not in the worship center?" I mean you really kind of think, you know, you're passed all that, but obviously you're not. That was the extent of the conversation. They gave me no money. We asked for no money from the men, no expense, we're thirty miles from her mother-in-law's so we just go over to the house and spend some time with the mother-in-law. We told one person that we were going to Georgia. I get back, we've been back about a month from Georgia, this guy walks up to me and he goes, "You know I'm really disappointed in you." "OK. Why?" "Well, I heard what you did in Georgia." Now remember he says, right, two or three witnesses. You have to have been there and seen the act before you can do the accusation. Nobody was there, but he said, "I know you went out there and you, they wanted you to come as pastor and you said, "No." and that the only reason you went out there is you used the money they gave you for the trip and you used that to finance your vacation and I just think that's horrible." And walked off. It's one of those moments you, number one, I had nothing to say because, number one, I'm trying to figure out how in the world did you even know we went to Georgia, and number two, who makes that stuff up? Are there people that just sit around, really, maybe it's just Baptists. Are there certain Baptists like little Baptist demons that sit around and just make that stuff up? I mean it was so far from the truth it was incredible and I'm sitting there just absolutely shocked because I can't believe it happened.

That's what's happening here. These guys have come in, they've said, "Paul's bad. We're great. And oh by the way, the people Paul's installed, here are some things about them you need to know. We saw them looking at this magazine the other day and you need to know this. They're really bad." So they make all these stories up and that's why Paul says, "I'm coming. I'm fed up. And when I come, listen, don't you ever entertain the accusation unless there are two other people that saw it

happen. Don't say a word." So he's coming. He is really in a very real point fed up with these people. So he's coming. Valdez is on the way and he's going to clean some clock here. He's on the way.

Now but before he comes he asks them to do something. Now this is a little, the request is a little bothersome. Here's what he says. Look in verse 5 – 13:

⁵Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you fail to meet the test! ⁶I hope you will find out that we've not failed the test. ⁷But we pray to God that you may not do wrong – not that we appear to have met the tests, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed.

Little sarcasm there in verse 7.

⁸We cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.

Now here's what he says. "I've had it. You people are on my last nerve and I'm coming and I'm going to deal with you and I'm coming in the power of Jesus Christ. I'm not coming as some weak old man. I'm coming in the power of Christ and we're going to settle this and deal with this. But before I do there's no point in me talking to you if you're not a believer. So I want you to test yourself. Are you in the faith?" Now that's a hard little question isn't it? He doesn't tell you what it is. But obviously they knew. So what is the test that shows you're in the faith? Do you have to go to church a certain amount of times a month? If you're Baptist you have that covered. Do you, do you have to read the Bible a certain amount? Do you have to have stopped certain sins in your life? Do you have to be nice to certain people? Do you have to forgive certain people? What is really the test that shows whether or not you're in the faith? Because he's not coming, he's on the way, he's going to make them be sure of who they are in Christ. So what is it? In the context it's 11 & 12. But the test itself is in John 6. I want you to go over to the gospel of John and you keep your place because we're going to come back. But I want you to go over to John 6. Now Jesus has got, remember this also the story that's repeated in Mark 6. Jesus has got a bunch of people following him. He fed them, remember, he fed them, sent his disciples in a boat, he goes and prays, He comes out the next morning and they're still there. They can't find him. They come to the other side of the lake, He's not in Capernaum, Peter's home town, and they're in there and now they're after him again, and they're about, the Bible says 5,000 men, which generally would mean 12 to 15 thousand people because they're going to have the wives/children with them, so we'll say generously 12,000 people, or conservatively, 12,000 people. So there are 12,000 people following Jesus and Jesus begins to talk to them very seriously about the fact, as a matter of fact He says, "Look. The only reason you're coming is because I fed you. You got some food and so that's the only reason you're

coming." And there's this dialogue going back between Jesus and them. And He begins to move them to who He is. He says, "I'm the bread from heaven." They start going, "Oh, come on, we know who your parents are. This is ridiculous." And so they're going into this little debate. And then He comes and He offers an invitation.

Now in John 3 He offered an invitation to Nicodemus. He said, "Unless you're born again you cannot see the kingdom of God. In John 4 He offered an invitation to the woman at the well and said, "If you're thirsty you come to me and you drink from me and I will quench your thirst. You will never thirst again if you'll come to me." But now He comes to chapter 6. Now you remember something, OK, Jesus grew up in a Jewish home. Mary and Joseph were normal Jewish people. There wasn't anything extraordinary about them except Godliness. But He grew up in a Jewish home so he knew a couple things that were absolutely tradition. Now you Aggies should get this part of the sermon. Tradition. Because you people sing a song at the basketball games about a team you don't even play anymore. So you should get this. In a Jewish home there were some traditions. If you were male, the most important tradition would be what? What's the most important tradition if you're a male? What is it? Circumcision. It's embarrassing a lady knew that. The only issue there. Most important issue in a man's life. You're not circumcised, you're not a Jew. Now but there was another that obviously when you look at Acts 15 was huge. Old Testament says you don't eat meat with the blood in it. So you didn't do that. If you were a little Jewish guy and you went to another home and they cut the meat and blood comes out, you, no matter how offensive it seemed to the people, you pushed the meat aside and you ate something else because you did not eat meat with the blood in it. It was a deep seated tradition. As a matter of fact it's so deep seated that when Christianity first began to spread into the Gentile empire, they started having struggles because the Jews are going, "Look. You can't be saved unless you're circumcised. You've got to be circumcised and then you can meet Jesus." And so there's this big debate. And so they have a big council and they come out with this deal, right. The Jews comes out and say, "OK. Here's our deal. You don't have to be circumcised but I want you to remember the poor and don't ever eat meat with the blood in it." And the Gentiles, realizing how important it was, said, "Absolutely. We'll take care of the poor." Which, remember, he does in 2 Corinthians. They're sending money back to the Jewish church and they don't eat meat with the blood in it because it was huge. So here's the invitation of Jesus Christ; John 3, born again, John 4, come to me, I'll quench your thirst, John 6. Look at verse 53.

⁵³So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. (2)⁵⁴Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. (3)⁵⁵For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. (4)⁵⁶Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him.

Now let's be honest here. There's not a 21st century American preacher that would preach that text unless he's walking through it. If you're not walking through the gospel of John, you're not reading that text to your church and you're not preaching it because that is pretty tough saying. So you can imagine if it's tough on us, what it did to the Jews. Look in verse 60:

⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?"

There's the understatement of the millennium. They are shocked. They've grown up very clearly; you do not eat meat with the blood in it and they've got Jesus who, if He had said, "come to me and I'll quench your thirst." They would have stayed. There are 12,000 people. He makes that statement, they just can't believe it, they are shocked, they can't even listen to it, and watch what happens. Verse 66:

⁶⁶After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.
⁶⁷So Jesus said to the twelve,

So how many left? 12,000. He had 12,000 people hanging on his every word. He finishes this invitation, I'm telling you, if He'd done the same thing He'd done in John 4 and said, "Listen, if you're thirsty come to me, I will quench your thirst. You'll never be thirsty again." Every one of those 12,000 would have stayed. But he doesn't do it. He puts it in a terribly traditional painful method and all 12,000 leave. They're done. So He looks at the 12:

⁶⁷"Do you want to go away as well?" ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered,

Why? Because he always answers. Listen to what he said.

"Lord, to whom shall we go?"

In other words if we had an option we might go. Because this was hard for them.

You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

That is the test. The test for you as to whether or not you're in the faith does your belief in Jesus hold you to Him no matter what happens or what He says in your life. 2 Corinthians 11 Paul says, "Five times I received at the hands of the Jews 40 lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. One night and one day I was adrift at sea. Frequent journeys in danger from rivers, robbers, my own people, Gentiles, danger from the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger of false brothers, in toil and hardship

through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food and cold and exposure. You don't think he struggled in those times? You think he sat in those times and sang Chris Tomlin songs? Think he's waiting in the ocean going, "Hallelujah" and singing Kumbaya with Barnabas? You think he's doing that? Buddy he's struggling. That's his whole point in that chapter. It is hard following Christ. Why in the world would any man go through what he's gone through? Why would anybody suffer every bit of that? Because if he gets rid of Jesus he doesn't suffer any of that. But he suffers all of it because he's so sure of who Jesus is that nothing can pull him away from Christ. That's the test. Chapter 12. What does he say? I'm desperate, God pops me because of a sin I can't control and I prayed three times. It is exhausting. It's debilitating. It's painful but I don't care. If his power is made perfect in my weakness, I'm hanging in there because I know who Jesus is. That's it. That's the test. When the Holy Spirit comes to you, even as a child, and he speaks into your soul that the truth of that book is legitimate and your faith joins with what the Holy Spirit tells you, and you pull the truth about Christ into your life, if you've done that you will not walk away. Preacher I'm struggling. Sure you're going to struggle. You may even have moments where it's really a tough struggle. But I've watched a lot of people go through some really tough struggles that have hung in there for one simple reason. Because they knew who Jesus was. That's it. That's the test. That's why it's in the context of chapter 11 and chapter 12.

It's been amazing to me. I've not often seen this until the last probably 10 years. But I've seen more of it than I, to be honest I guess I've never seen it until the last 10. But I the last 10, more than once, for example, one, one example. I had a young man in our college ministry come out of a Christian home, led our worship, great guy, sang great songs, guitar, tears, and he comes in one day and he says, "I'm done." "What do you mean? Struggling?" Nope. No struggles in his life. No difficulties. No trials. No discipline. But he came in he said, "Look. I don't buy this anymore. I don't believe in it anymore. And I'm walking away." Never came back. Has never returned. And he led worship in our church. I've seen more of that in the last 10 years than I've ever seen. And partially I think it's because God's getting this church ready for whatever it's going to face. But then you have the opposite. Went to see a lady in the hospital this week; intensive care, known her for 30 years, never seen her without a smile, watched her kids grow up in this church, both kids walking well with Christ, daughter's laying with her on the bed. Her husband's sitting in the chair. And she basically looks at me and says, "There's a disease in her body that they want her to go down to Houston and get some more work done." She's already been through that. And they said, "Really before we do any work you're going to have to get healthy." And so finally she looked at them and said, "Look my body can't take it and I know that. So I'm good to go." So hospice came home with her and she looked at me and she said, "You know the only things I'm really worried about, I want my family to be OK. But I know where I'm going." And here was the, if you want to say the most beautiful part to me, that's kind of a weird statement but it's true in this context. She didn't say that in this tone of resignation like, "Well, I'm

going to die." She's laying on her side, she really can't move all that much, and she looks up at me with this bright, pumped face and she says, "I know where I'm going." You can face this stuff if you know who He is.

Let's pray.

Father thank you for your Holy Spirit telling me at age 17 who your son is. Thank you for those of us in this room that your Holy Spirit's done that with. It's subtle in our soul and we may struggle and we may hurt, but thank you Jesus that the enemy cannot pull us away from you. Father I ask you real simply if there is anybody in this room that right now they know that they don't know who Jesus is, and they want to know, Father, let them this morning surrender to the call of your Holy Spirit. I ask you that in Jesus Christ name.