

Bible Study & Spiritual Chat Notes 9/2/2015

2 Corinthians 13:3-13

The Apostle Paul often scolded the early Christians when they got off the track and engaged in sinful practices. Some of those who were sinful and trying to influence and lead others astray, then tried to challenge Paul and convince others that he was somehow a bad person or as in this case, they accused him of weakness—sort of calling him out as it were.

Paul responds by first showing how people thought that Christ was weak in that He was crucified, but Paul shows that Christ was not weak, but all-powerful.

There were those who believed that Christ and His Apostles were weak because they did not use their power to punish the unbelievers. St. John Chrysostom points out that it was not because of weakness that the Lord and His Apostles did not punish or curse the sinners with their Divine power, but rather they exercised patience, hoping and praying that the sinners would repent.

St. Chrysostom also shows how the term ‘weakness’ is used in different ways. Sometimes, it refers to a person who is sick, as for example when Lazarus was sick and near death, in John 11:3-4, they said ‘Behold, him whom Thou lovest is weak’ and Christ says, ‘This weakness is not unto death.’

Another use of the word ‘weakness’ is when one is weak in faith. In Romans 14:1-2, Paul says “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.”

But St. John Chrysostom points out a third sort of ‘weakness’ which is when Christians are persecuted, in dangers, in trials, in plottings, in death. In Corinthians 12:10 St. Paul says, “in injuries, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then am I strong.”

In verse 5, Paul tells them to examine themselves as to whether they are in the faith. Test themselves, etc. and he also points out that Jesus Christ is in them,

unless they are reprobate—corrupt in life. Then, they themselves will not be in the faith, since the Grace of the Holy Spirit does not abide in someone who is unrepentant. But he also attests that the Apostles are not reprobate or corrupt.

St. Chrysostom also says that faith is not enough by itself to draw down the energy of the Holy Spirit and that many who had faith did not have the Grace of the Holy Spirit because they were reprobate.