

Text: 2 Corinthians 13:1-10

Because of Paul's late arrival on the scene, his apostleship was at times questioned. In Corinth, although established by Paul, the church struggled with many sins. There were some among the Corinthians less inclined to correct their problems or to heed Paul's rebukes. Paul warned that if he must he will come displaying his full authority. Notice the end of v2. ***2 Corinthians 13:1-2 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. (2) I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare:***

It was the Corinthians who needed to examine themselves in regards to whether sin was in their lives. So Paul begins v5 by saying ***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? 2 Corinthians 13:5***

***2 Corinthians 13:6-7 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. (7) Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.*** Paul didn't need the truth of his apostleship to be examined by them (v6) However, it was Paul's prayer that the Corinthians would not sin (v7). Not because he said so, but because it was the honest thing to do. Paul could tolerate not having an opportunity to prove his apostleship if they remained out of sin. "The Greek word *kalos* for honest means things that are beautiful, good, excellent, and noble.

It was Peter's wish as well that all Christians conduct themselves with honor, even while living in a world lacking in honor. ***1 Peter 2:11-12 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; (12) Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*** We are talking about living an honorable life. We see this illustrated by a man of noble character found in the Old Testament, a man by the name of Mordecai.

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**Mordecai was a man of responsibility.** *Esther 2:7 And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.* Mordecai took in his cousin and raised her as his own daughter. There was no law requiring this of him. It was needed, and Mordecai took up the burden. The Lord expects for family to be responsible in provide for his own - 1 Timothy 5:8. This is not always the case in our society today. We see husbands forsaking their families, we see mothers leaving their children for someone else to care for. We see old people being abandoned. We see people walking away from their obligation because there is no commitment. We have men and women living together so when children come, it's easy for the father to walk away and at best providing some financing thru child support. The providing is not just financial. *Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Fathers are needed for training, for teaching, for guidance. A fact to which our society need to relearn.

### **A man of loyalty**

*Esther 2:21-23 In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. (22) And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name. (23) And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.*

Circumstances caused Mordecai to become aware of a plot on the life of the king. He didn't "forget" what he heard out of fear. He didn't say "I don't want to get involved." He reported it to Esther who passed on the information to the king. Here was a man who feared God and honored the king. *1 Peter 2:17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.* How much loyalty do we show to our Lord and King? When sin abounds around us, often we timidly try to avoid it instead of trying to do something about it.

**Mordecai was a man of discernment**

*Esther 3:1-5 After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. (2) And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. (3) Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment? (4) Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew. (5) And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.*

We are not told why Mordecai refused to bow to Haman. There are cases in the Old Testament where people gave honor to men, but here Mordecai refused. We must suppose that Mordecai did not find Haman to be a man worthy of honor. Righteousness is not about accepting or tolerating something; it is a discernment between choosing between good and evil. Hebrews 5:13-14 reminds us of this need. *Hebrews 5:13-14 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. (14) But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.* A person of discernment will be picky in his behavior. *1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. (22) Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

**Mordecai was a man of brotherly love**

*Esther 4:1-4 When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; (2) And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. (3) And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and*

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*fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. (4) So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not.*

Mordecai loved his people and was genuinely distressed over their fate. Love is an honorable characteristic of Christians. *John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. (35) By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* Many years later, John would echo the same thought. *1 John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* We need to have a genuine common concern for our fellow Christian - 1 John 4:20-21.

But it is also a concern for man in general. Our fellow men are in danger of being lost. If we love them then we will strive to bring every man to perfection - Colossians 1:28-29.

**Finally we see Mordecai as a man who encourages righteous action** - Esther 4:13-14.

*Esther 4:13-14 Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. (14) For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?* Mordecai did not wallow in grief, but took steps to save his people by encouraging Esther to take action. We all need to be people of noble character. Let your light shine so the world sees beautiful, honorable deeds and thereby give glory to our God. *Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Invitation: