

## Meeting The Enemy

2 Cor. 6:11-13

**2 Corinthians 6:11-13** - Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in a like exchange--I speak as to children--open wide to us also.

### **Introduction:**

- A. The enemy is real, and the warning is clear - be alert and resist the devil (1 Pet. 5:8-9). "But he is so subtle." True, but "we are not ignorant of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2:11).
- B. Certainly, the Corinthians had first-hand knowledge of Satan's tactics. He had launched a full-scale attack on them from within and without.

### **I. Problems In Corinth**

A. Divisions (splits, schisms) in the church - 1 Cor. 1:10

**1 Corinthians 1:10** - Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

- 1. Not of the same mind (understanding)
  - a. Factionalism was rampant - 1 Cor. 1:12

**1 Corinthians 1:12** - Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

- b. Flagrant immorality was condoned - 1 Cor. 5-6
- c. The Lord's Supper had been perverted - 1 Cor. 11:17ff
- d. Spiritual gifts were misused; attitudes were amiss
- e. The resurrection was denied by some - 1 Cor. 15
- 2. Not of the same judgment (understanding or opinion)
  - a. Local customs re: the covering - 1 Cor. 11:16

**1 Corinthians 11:16** - But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.

- b. Liberty in eating meat - 1 Cor. 10:23; 8:9

**1 Corinthians 10:23** - All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.

**1 Corinthians 8:9** - But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

B. Caused by a lack of spirituality / carnality - 1 Cor. 3:1-3

**1 Corinthians 3:1-3** - And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

- 1. Lacked love - 1 Cor. 13:1

**1 Corinthians 13:1** - If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

- 2. Their hearts / affections were withheld - 2 Cor. 6:12

**2 Corinthians 6:12** - You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.

## II. *Peril Of Small Hearts*

A. "Injustice", "corrupt w/ false doctrine", "defraud" - 2 Cor. 7:2

2 Corinthians 7:2 - Make room for us in your hearts; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one.

1. Cause murmuring & discontent - 1 Cor. 10:10

1 Corinthians 10:10 - Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

2. Suspicious of Titus, et al - 2 Cor. 12:13, 17

2 Corinthians 12:13 - For in what respect were you treated as inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not become a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

2 Corinthians 12:17 - Certainly I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I?

B. Prejudice - prejudged Paul - 1 Cor. 4:3-4

1 Corinthians 4:3-4 - But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

1. Judged by outward appearances - 2 Cor. 10:7a

2 Corinthians 10:7 - You are looking at things as they are outwardly.

a. Crafty & tricky - 2 Cor. 12:16-18

2 Corinthians 12:16-18 But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit. Certainly I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I? I urged Titus to go, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit and walk in the same steps?

b. Earthly motives - 2 Cor. 10:2

2 Corinthians 10:2 - I ask that when I am present I need not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh.

c. Fickleness of purpose & impulsive plans - 2 Cor. 1:17

2 Corinthians 1:17 - Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no at the same time?

2. Pure motives, not personal attack - 2 Cor. 7:8a; 2:4, 17

2 Corinthians 7:8 - For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it--for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while--

2 Corinthians 2:4 - For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

a. Paul went out of his way to deal w/ problem - 1 Cor. 4:6a

1 Corinthians 4:6 - Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

C. Conceit (Know it all, so my way the only way). - 1 Cor. 8:2

1 Corinthians 8:2 - If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know;

1. Caused by judging by ourselves - 2 Cor. 10:12

**2 Corinthians 10:12** - For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

2. Guard against thinking too highly of self - 2 Cor. 12:7

**2 Corinthians 12:7** - Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself!

D. Personal Bias

1. Marriage - 1 Cor. 7:26, 28, 35, 38

**1 Corinthians 7:26** - I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.

**1 Corinthians 7:28** - But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.

**1 Corinthians 7:35** - This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 7:38** - So then both he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.

2. The way people ought to live - 1 Cor. 9:3-6

**1 Corinthians 9:3-6** - My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we not have a right to eat and drink? Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?

III. *Enlarge Your Hearts* - 2 Cor. 7:2; 6:13

**2 Corinthians 7:2** - Make room for us in your hearts; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one.

**2 Corinthians 6:13** - Now in a like exchange--I speak as to children--open wide to us also.

A. Aim for "perfect holiness" - 2 Cor. 7:1

**2 Corinthians 7:1** - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1. Test yourselves FIRST - 2 Cor. 13:5

**2 Corinthians 13:5** - Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?

2. Strive for maturity in mind- 1 Cor. 14:20; 2 Cor. 13:11

**1 Corinthians 14:20** - Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.

**2 Corinthians 13:11** - Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

B. Express confidence in others - 2 Cor. 7:4

**2 Corinthians 7:4** - Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.

1. WE ARE to build UP! - 1 Cor. 14:26b; 2 Cor. 12:19b

1 Corinthians 14:26 - What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

2 Corinthians 12:19 - All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. Actually, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved.

2. Remember, not all things edify - 1 Cor. 10:23

1 Corinthians 10:23 - All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.

C. Voice your commitment to others - 2 Cor. 7:3

2 Corinthians 7:3 - I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together.

1. Because we do care for each other - 1 Cor. 12:25

1 Corinthians 12:25 - so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

2. To help thru good & bad times (may need reproof)

D. Understanding, tolerant, forgiving attitude

1. Paul unduly charged - 2 Cor. 10:10

2 Corinthians 10:10 - For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."

2. He bore no grudge - 2 Cor. 6:11-12

2 Corinthians 6:11-12 - Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.

E. Remember, we are a "team," not just individuals - 1 Cor. 12:26

1 Corinthians 12:26 - And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

1. Seek good of others - 1 Cor. 10:24, 31-33

1 Corinthians 10:24 - Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.

1 Corinthians 10:31-33 - Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved.

2. Watch and Love - 1 Cor. 16:13-14; 2 Cor. 13:11

1 Corinthians 16:13-14 - Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.

2 Corinthians 13:11 - Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

### **Conclusion:**

A. In 1813 Commodore Perry sent a message to General Harrison stating, "We have met the enemy, and they are ours." Walt Kelly, the creator of Pogo reworded the phrase into what we probably know best, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

B. Satan “prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour” but he uses us to do his dirty work. We must be every vigilant that we do not fall into his trap of a small heart closed to everyone and everything but us.