

Prove It

2 Corinthians 13:3-5

- I. You want Proof v.3
 - a. Proof of Christ in Me
 - i. **the experience of going through a test with special to the result, *standing a test, character***
 - 1. Paul is ready to present the proof desired by the Corinthians. From
 - 2. in the instrumental use of ἐν, “in,” we see that the Corinthians were demanding proof that Paul was a true apostle of Christ. It is hardly an issue of Paul’s “spirituality” that is under consideration. Rather, it is the legitimacy of his apostolic office. In their eyes, and abetted by the rival mission preachers, the Corinthians viewed Paul as “weak” and “ineffectual”
 - ii. Correcting the Sinners- The opening ἐπεὶ, ‘since’, shows that in Paul’s view the ‘proof’ the Corinthians are demanding will have something to do with his ‘not sparing’ the wrongdoers (v. 2) in the Corinthian Christian community
 - 1. It is a grievous insult to him to imply that he needs to go through another “trial” period to prove whether or not he satisfactorily meets the conditions of being a genuine apostle. Perhaps they expected him to be more heavy-handed in dealing with the rebels and mistakenly inferred from his forbearance that he either lacked sufficient authority or lacked the courage to use it. Some may have attributed his meekness and gentleness to his being a weak-kneed flatterer, which caused them to question his suitability as an apostle.
 - 2. The Corinthians understand power as something exerted by assertive, domineering, forceful personalities who boisterously and tyrannically wield authority. The apostle sees divine power perfected in weakness.
 - iii. Miracles- Several commentators suppose that they were looking for charismatic demonstrations such as ecstatic speech, accompanied, perhaps, by miraculous signs. They would look for outwardly perceptible signs of inspiration
 - 1. Of an apostle something further was to be expected. Perhaps, then, this ‘something more’ was to be a practical demonstration that Paul had the power, acting in Christ’s name (cf. 1 Cor 5:3–5), to inflict overt and spectacular punishment on blatant sinners.
 - 2. the word of the accredited messenger of Christ—the sign that Christ is speaking in him—is not marked by its demonstrable form but by its meaningful content (*durch seinen sachlichen Gehalt*). It

is not a performance to amaze people, but a word to address them and so (Paul is sure) to have an effect in their lives.

- b. Not Weak toward you but Mighty in You
 - i. Weak - **to experience some personal incapacity or limitation, *be weak*** of weakness in general
 - 1. “His presence is weak, and his rhetoric is contemptible” (10:10).
 - ii. Mighty - **to display capability, *be effective, be able***
 - 1. Paul counters that assessment here, asserting that the Christ who speaks in him “is not weak toward you but is powerful among you.” Paul’s understanding of what it means that Christ speaks in him becomes fully clear only in the following verse. But it is apparent that Christ’s power is manifest in the weakness of the apostle, just as Christ himself has communicated to Paul (12:9).
 - 2. *be powerful,*” is found only in Paul in the NT (9:8; 13:3; Rom 14:4) and is always speaking of divine power. Paul has said that the Corinthians have failed to recognize the power of Christ just as they have failed to comprehend Paul’s power. The church at Corinth equated great overt acts of apostleship with power

II. Proof is in Christ v.4

- a. He was Crucified because of weakness
 - i. Christ Weakness
 - 1. Weakness - of the frailty to which all human flesh is heir
 - 2. Thus Christ, to whom 2 C. 13:3: properly refers, became weak as a man (Hb. 5:2; 2 C. 13:4: Those who are in Christ share the same weakness
 - 3. Paul here plays the Philippians hymn that tells the story of the Incarnate One, in a slightly different key (Phil 2:6–11). Weakness is inherent to the humanity into which Christ has entered (cf. 8:9).
 - 4. It was finally out of this weakness (and not by external forces) that Christ was crucified
 - a. The crucifixion displayed an apparent helplessness that caused the spectators to taunt Jesus to show them some miraculous display of power or to pull off some miraculous escape that would finally convince them that he was the Son of God. A spectacular show of worldly power on the cross—the kind they wanted to see—would have proven only that Jesus was some kind of superman, but not the Messiah, the Son of God. Just as his tormentors suspected, nothing happened. His eyes closed, his head went limp, the breathing spasms stopped. The bystanders could not see that his weakness came from his voluntary sacrifice to give his life for others in absolute obedience to God.

5. Power - The Christ of whose power in Paul his readers demand evidence has himself suffered weakness, but nevertheless is the recipient of divine power.
 - a. In the resurrection, however, the power of God is triumphantly manifested. It was concealed under the flesh in weakness and mortality, and it asserts itself as the power of God.
 - b. just as weakness is inherent to Christ, God's power is inherent or essential to him as well.
 - b. Lives because of Power of God
 - i. The power of God which Jesus possessed is particularly demonstrated in the hour and event of His death. The overcoming of death in the resurrection leads Jesus
 1. It is God who raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 6:14; 2 Cor 4:14). And this risen life is not just a state of being but is also a form of activity
 - ii. The place of operation is human and earthly existence which the flesh stamps as weak and corruptible. This is what gives rise to the concealment of the power of God, which is visible only to faith. But this is what also assures us that it really is the power of God and not a human power.
 - iii. In taking God's will to be his own, Christ acted in power, despite the fact that the world would think otherwise (cf. Mark 15:30–32). Always the weak Jesus remains the subject in dependence on God,
 - c. Weak in Him 12:9
 - i. Paul experienced the fact that the weakness and limitation of human existence are the necessary presupposition for the operation of the divine power which is made perfect in this weakness and limitation.
 - ii. Paul is instructing the Corinthians, as he has done throughout the letter and now does in a summary manner, that the opposite applies. God's power is present and operative *only* within weakness
 - d. Live with Him
 - i. Power of God toward You
- III. Prove Yourselves v.5 Gal 6:4,
- a. Test Yourself
 - i. Test- Test- **to endeavor to discover the nature or character of something by testing, try, make trial of, put to the test** The process of proving one's worth. When ascribed to God in his dealings with people, it means that God tests his peoples' faith and moral character
 - ii. put yourselves to the test as to whether you are in the faith (or not)' 2 Cor 13:5
 - iii. See if you are in the Faith

1. in a broad sense as referring to Christian conduct that accords with Christian doctrine. That is, “being in the faith” means continuing true to the faith in conduct as well as in belief.
2. “Faith” here does not refer simply to trust in Christ, which is its primary meaning in Paul’s usage, but to the whole Christian way and truth (see Titus 1:13; 2:2). It is not a matter of examining their doctrines, however, but of bringing their conduct and thinking into conformity with their belief in Christ.
3. Paul speaks with unconditioned certainty of the faith and salvation of the Corinthians. From the perspective of the Corinthians themselves, especially in view of their recent behavior, it is an entirely different story. Within the space of a few short verses, he can address them both as unbelievers and as believers. His certainty concerning the Corinthians does not lie in the Corinthians, but in Christ.
4. Faith is to be understood primarily as obedience: This is Paul’s basic conception of faith, and it has appeared already in the present letter, at least by implication: in 10:6 he describes the state of affairs he hopes for in Corinth as one in which obedience will be completed, whilst in 10:15 he looks for the increase of faith. In the letter of chaps. 1–8, moreover, we find the explicit connection between obedience and testing: in 2:9 the ‘tested character’ (δοκιμή) of the readers consists in their being ‘obedient’. In consequence, it could be that the apostle’s call to self-examination in respect of their faith might associate itself in their minds with the thought of obedience,
5. the result of the self-testing, Paul would hope, would be the attestation of a moral condition which would leave no future opening for vices of the kind mentioned in 12:20–21

b. Examine Yourself

i. **to make a critical examination of something, to determine genuineness,**

1. On this view Paul is requesting self-examination regarding their adherence to an unadulterated form of the gospel. “Put yourselves to the proof, to see whether you are holding to the Faith

c. Do You not Recognize

i. Jesus Christ in You

1. After his twofold invitation to the Corinthians to scrutinize their conduct and attitudes (v. 5a), Paul now appeals with confidence to their theological self-awareness. ἐπιγινώσκετε need mean no more than “you realize/recognize” (γινώσκετε), but in a rhetorical question that expects the answer “Yes, indeed!”
2. The summons to test themselves will therefore authenticate Paul’s ministry to them when they conclude that Christ is in them. This

conclusion should lead them to recognize that just as they belong to Christ, so does Paul (10:7). Barnett is correct, “their verdict about themselves will likewise be their verdict about him

3. To be indwelt by Christ is to be thrust into the conflict between God and the fallen world. For the Corinthians to recognize this truth about themselves will mean that they must surrender their dreams of earthly power and glory. They will have to come to themselves, to mourn the unrepented transgressions in their midst, to recognize their frailty and mortality. They will have to recognize the presence of Christ in the suffering apostle who also shall soon be in their midst. They will have to receive the comfort of God that is given through him in order that they themselves may be comforted. Following the pattern of the apostle, they will have to share that comfort “with those who are in any and every affliction” (1:4). Within its passivity, faith is exceedingly active. As is apparent from Paul’s definition of the self-examination the Corinthians are to perform

- d. Unless you fail the test

- i. ‘not standing the test’, then ***unqualified, worthless, base***