

## Finally, Brethren...

As Paul closed his second letter to the Corinthians, he wrote, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you" (2 Corinthians 13:11). These are good words for us to take to heart, at least the Holy Spirit thought so.

First, we know the Corinthians were incomplete. They needed to mature in the faith, so Paul exhorted them to this end. God had provided all things necessary for this: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11-13). Through God's providence we have all things that pertain to life and godliness from the apostles and prophets, and we at the Loop have been blessed to have five pastors at present, two evangelists, and a host of teachers. Let us take advantage of our situation to become complete--individually and congregationally.

Second, Paul wanted the Corinthians to "be of good comfort." This returns us to the first thoughts of this epistle where it was noted that God is the God of all comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3-7). Whether the problems we have come from an external source or an internal one, we know there is solace in God. We must rely upon Him to guide and chasten us, and, no matter the challenges, we can overcome.

Third, the brethren were told to "be of one mind [and] live in peace." Unity is a necessity to peace in the congregation. If the members are not "on the same page" then strife and division will result. The Spirit tells us to "speak the same thing...be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). This is accomplished through recognizing and adhering to the same standard, the word of God (Philippians 1:27; 3:16).

"Finally, brethren," when these things are heeded, we will be blessed of God, often in ways that escape our notice. We will find kindness and love from God that only the faithful know; the joy and strength that come to few. Therefore, let us "become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, [and] live in peace."

Steven F. Deaton