

Introduction

How many of you this morning want to experience God's presence in your life? That is something that we all want. We want to know that God is with us at all times and in everything we do. There was a popular song a few years ago by Avalon called, "I don't want to go." The chorus went like this.

I don't want to go somewhere
If I know that You're not there,
'Cause I know that me without You is a lie.
And I don't want to walk that road,
Be a million miles from home,
Cause my heart needs to be where You are.
So I don't want to go.

I think that many of us identify with that song. We don't want to go somewhere if the Lord is not there. We want to be with the Lord. We want to be in His presence. We want Him in our lives. In Paul's closing remarks, he makes a promise to the Corinthians. I love God's promises. Some of His promises are unconditional, meaning He will do them no matter what we do or don't do. However, many of God's promises are conditional, meaning there are things that we must do before we can expect that promise to be fulfilled. In our text, Paul gave a conditional promise to the Corinthians, and to all of us. The word of God was not just for them, but God intended it to be for all of us. When God makes a promise to us, we can bank on it to be true. We can trust in His promises and stand on them, because He will always do the things that He promises to do. What was the promise that Paul gave them? He said that if they will do five things, the God of love and peace will be with them. There were five conditions in that promise that we are responsible for doing, and if we do those five things, the God of love and peace will be with us.

How many want more love in your life? We not only want God to be with us, but we want love in our lives. People have a need to be loved, and they want to experience love. Not only do we want to be loved, but we want to love others. I want to love my wife like Christ loved the church. I want to love my neighbor as myself. I want to grow and abound in my love for others. Most of all, I want to love God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength, which is the greatest commandment. If I will do my part, then the God of love will be with me. I want the God of love to be with me, and to experience His love. We love because He first loved us. He is the One that gives us the ability and capacity to love others.

How many want more peace in your life? In the 60's, people were looking for love and peace. They had peace signs on their VW vans, t-shirts, and everywhere else. Unfortunately, they were looking for love and peace in the wrong places. The God of peace gives peace that surpasses all comprehension, and He guards our hearts and minds with peace. He does not give us peace as the world gives; He gives perfect peace. In our passage today, we will look at the conditional promise that Paul gave, and the five conditions. Second, we will look at his closing greeting. Third, we will look at his closing prayer.

(Php 4:7) "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

(Jn 14:27) "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

Paul's Closing Remarks and Prayer (2 Cor 13:11-14)

1. **Closing Promise** (2 Cor 13:11)
 - a. Rejoice
 - b. Be Made Complete
 - c. Be Comforted
 - d. Be Like-minded
 - e. Live In Peace
2. **Closing Greetings** (2 Cor 13:12)
3. **Closing Prayer** (2 Cor 13:14)

(2 Cor 13:11-14) “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. {12} Greet one another with a holy kiss. {13} All the saints greet you. {14} The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”

1. **Closing Promise** (2 Cor 13:11)

Paul begins with the word, “Finally.” This is the conclusion of his fourth letter to the Corinthians, even though it is labeled 2 Corinthians. There are two letters that were not included in the canon of Scripture. The church in Corinth was a carnal church. There were divisions and strife. There were lawsuits against one another. There were divisions between the wealthy and the poor, and there were many slaves in the church who were not well off. Paul has addressed the various factions in the church. If there was ever a body of believers that needed the peace of God it was the Corinthians. They needed peace with one another, and they needed peace with God. Paul's promise that the God of peace would be with them was a meaningful promise to them.

(2 Cor 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.”

The church in Corinth was plagued with selfishness and people wanting to exercise their rights to the fullest. Paul had exhorted them to pursue love when contemplating whether to use their rights. When considering wine, or meat sacrificed to idols, Paul encouraged them to base their decisions on love. The church in Corinth had and exercised the gifts of the spirit. Unfortunately, they were being used to exalt themselves instead of the body. Paul wrote about love, and we all benefit from the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. He told them to pursue love, but to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially prophecy. If there was ever a church that needed the God of love and peace, it was the church in Corinth.

a. Rejoice

What are the five conditions that need to be met for the God of love and peace to be with us? The first condition is to rejoice. The Greek word is *chairō* (Strong's G5463), which means to be cheerful, glad, or joyful. In their culture, *chairō* was frequently used as a greeting or a farewell, wishing people to be full of joy. Our joy as a Christian is not dependent upon external circumstances. We can have the joy of the Lord at all times, even in difficult circumstances.

(2 Cor 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.”

Paul exhorts the Christians to rejoice; therefore, we can choose to rejoice. The church in Philippi was also have problems with unity, and much of Paul's letter to them was about unity. He exhorted the church to help two of the women get along with one another. When there are conflicts, like in Corinth and Philippi, there is usually not any peace, and where there is no peace, there is usually no joy. Paul exhorted both churches to rejoice. Paul told the Philippians three times to rejoice. He told them to rejoice in the Lord always. In the midst of their trials, they were to choose to rejoice in the Lord. We are to have, manifest, and display a joyful countenance always.

(Php 3:1) "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things *again* is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you."

(Php 4:4) "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, he also exhorted them to rejoice always. We are to rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for us in Christ Jesus.

(1 Th 5:16–18) "Rejoice always; {17} pray without ceasing; {18} in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

While Jesus was going through His suffering, the Scriptures tell us that He did it for the joy set before Him. His mind was not on circumstances, but on the joy before Him, which is the redemption of mankind. He did it to forgive us of our sins and to restore fellowship with God, and this was the joy set before Him. He is our example to follow, and we are to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. We have a future and a hope. We have an inheritance, which is undefiled, imperishable, and will not fade away, and it is reserved in heaven for us. We have a joy set before us, and we should greatly rejoice in this, even in the midst of our trials.

(Heb 12:2) "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

(1 Pe 1:4–6) "to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, {5} who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. {6} In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

Joy is also a fruit of the Spirit. When we are filled with the Spirit, and are walking in the Spirit, we should be manifesting joy, the second fruit of the Spirit. If you are struggling with having joy, spend time worshipping the Lord and getting filled with the Spirit. Ask God to give you and produce in you His joy.

(Ga 5:22) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,"

(Eph 5:18–19) "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, {19} speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;"

b. Be Made Complete

The second condition of this promise to have the God of love and peace with us is to be made complete. Many times, the Greek word for complete is *teleios*, which means to reach a point in the distance, to achieve or finish a goal, or to become mature. When Paul wrote that he worked hard to present every man complete in Christ, he was working to help believers become mature in Christ. The word that is used in 2 Corinthians 13:11 is *katartizo*, which has a different meaning. It means to be repaired, mended, restored, or to be put in order. It is not incomplete, in the sense that it is missing something; it is incomplete in the sense that it needs to be put in order. If you think of a jigsaw puzzle, normally an incomplete puzzle may be missing some pieces. In this verse, the puzzle has all the pieces but they are scattered everywhere and the puzzle needs to be worked and put together.

(2 Cor 13:11) “Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made **complete** (*katartizo*, Strong’s G2675), be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

(Col 1:28) “We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man **complete** (*teleios*, Strong’s G5046) in Christ.”

The church in Corinth had been fractured by divisions, strife, selfishness, and other sinful behavior. Paul wanted them to repent and be put back together, to be mended, repaired, and restored. The ESV translates it as “Aim for restoration,” which is a good rendering of what Paul is exhorting them to do.

When relationships are restored, there is joy and peace, and God will certainly be in the midst of that work. When individuals are set free from sin and restored to fellowship with God and others, the God of love and peace is certainly going to with them.

c. Be Comforted

The third exhortation and condition of this promise is to be comforted. The ESV says to “comfort one another,” and when people comfort one another, people are being comforted. The NASB gives the sense that we should allow ourselves to be comforted, while the ESV gives the sense that we are to comfort others. The KJV translates it as “be of good comfort,” which is more in line with the NASB. In any sense, we are to be comforted, and comfort others that are in need of being comforted.

(2 Cor 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.”

Paul opened this letter to the Corinthians blessing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. So, when Paul tells them to be comforted, they are to be comforted by God in their present afflictions and trials, and they are to comfort others with the comfort that they have received. I believe all of the renderings are good, and that God wants you and I to be comforted.

(2 Co 1:3–4) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, {4} who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to

comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

The God of love and peace will be with us as we receive comfort from Him. He wants to comfort us. He will also be with us as we give comfort to others with the comfort that we have received. He is the God of comfort and it is His desire for us to be comforted.

d. Be Like-minded

The fourth exhortation and condition is to be like-minded. With the divisions about leadership, divisions between the rich and the poor, divisions because of lawsuits and personal rights, and divisions over doctrine, becoming of one mind was not an easy thing. The tendency is to separate ourselves and move on. There may be times where God calls us to move on, especially if where there is disagreement about essential doctrines. Paul tells the Corinthians to be like-minded.

(2 Cor 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.”

Being of one mind was an important principle in the early church. We see in Acts 1:14 that the apostles and believers were with one mind continually devoting themselves to prayer. In Acts 2, after three thousand had been added to the church, the believers were with one mind continuing in the temple and breaking bread house to house. It was obvious that God was with them, and He added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

(Ac 1:14) “These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”

(Ac 2:46–47) “Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, {47} praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Paul embraced this principle that the early church modeled, and he taught the Romans to be of the same mind toward one another. He told them not to be haughty in mind, but to associate with the lowly, and not to be wise in their own estimation. One of the things that keeps people from being of one mind is haughtiness or arrogance. When people think they are better than others, or know more than others, they look down on others. For us to have one mind, we have to be humble and consider others as more important.

(Ro 12:16) “Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”

In Philippians, Paul exhorted the church to make his joy complete by being of the same mind. There were some relational problems there, particularly between two strong women in the church. Paul told them to be of the same mind and to maintain the same love, and to be united in spirit. He told them to have a common purpose, which was the gospel. Then, he gave them some relational keys. First, he told them to do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind to regard one another as more important than themselves. Second, he told them not to just look out for their own interests, but also the interests of others. Third, he told them to

follow the example of Christ, who was humble, and emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant. Serving one another helps bring unity between brothers.

(Php 2:1–7) “Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, {2} make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. {3} Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; {4} do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. {5} Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, {6} who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, {7} but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.”

Sometimes, becoming of one mind requires much effort and debate. There was a doctrinal division in the church about what was required to be saved. The Judaizers said that you had to be circumcised to become a believer, and they were upsetting the faith of people in churches everywhere. Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem and met with the apostles and elders to look into the matter. Luke records that there was much debate. We have to be willing to discuss our differences and get the mind of Christ on matters. In verse twenty-five, Luke records that they became of one mind on the matter, and then they communicated their decision to the churches. Husbands and wives have to talk through some matters to become of one mind. Church members have to work through and discuss things to become of one mind. The God of love and peace honors this unity, and promises to be with us when we do this. Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians was that they would be like-minded and the God of love and peace would be with them.

(Ac 15:6–25) “The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. {7} After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe.... {25} it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,”

e. Live in Peace

The fifth exhortation and condition was for the Corinthians to live in peace. If they would live in peace with one another, the God of love and peace would be with them. Paul spoke about the principle of sowing and reaping. When we sow peace, we reap peace. James also spoke about sowing peace in his letter to the churches. He said, “And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Those who make peace sow seeds of peace, and the fruit is righteousness. There are things that destroy peace and there are things that we can do to sow peace. We must forgive one another and not keep bringing up past offenses. Bringing up old offenses separates friends, instead of making peace. We must forgive one another. Harsh words stir up anger, but gentle words turn away wrath and make peace.

(2 Cor 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.”

(Jas 3:18) “And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

Paul wrote the Romans, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." It takes a willingness of both parties to be at peace. We do not have control over the actions of others, but we are responsible for our actions. We have to do as much as possible on our end to be at peace with all men. When we are wrong, we need to humble ourselves and ask for forgiveness. In Proverbs 6, Solomon said that "if you have been snared with the words of your mouth, have been caught with the words of your mouth, do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor. Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids." We should not procrastinate or put reconciliation off until later. We need to go make peace with our neighbor. We need to ask for forgiveness and make restitution if appropriate. So far as it depends on us, we need to be at peace with all men.

(Ro 12:18) "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

(Pr 6:2-5) "*If* you have been snared with the words of your mouth, have been caught with the words of your mouth, {3} Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor. {4} Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids; {5} Deliver yourself like a gazelle from *the hunter's* hand and like a bird from the hand of the fowler."

Jesus echoed the words of Solomon, and gave it an even higher priority. He said that if we are presenting our offerings and remember that our brother has something against us, we are to lay down our offerings and go be reconciled to our brother. Then, we can present our offerings. Our relationships with others affect our relationship with God. We must make being at peace with others a priority in our lives. There are many people who are in church every week that are not at peace with their family members, neighbors, and others. We must make being at peace with our neighbor a priority.

(Mt 5:23-24) "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, {24} leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering."

The results of meeting these conditions is that the God of love and peace will be with us. This was an appropriate promise to give the Corinthians as he ended this letter to them.

(2 Cor 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."

2. **Closing Greetings** (2 Cor 13:12-13)

Paul exhorted the Corinthians to greet one another with a holy kiss. That was an affectionate way of greeting one another, and it was appropriate in their culture. Paul said a holy kiss, so there is no hint of any other motive when people greeted one another with a holy kiss. Having grown up overseas, it was very common in Europe and the Middle East for people to greet one another with a kiss. Most of the time it would be a kiss on the cheek of the other person. Sometimes, someone would kiss the hand of the other person. In America, the most common greeting is a handshake or a hug. In four of Paul's letters, he exhorts the churches to greet one another with a holy kiss, so this was a practice he encouraged in all the churches.

(2 Cor 13:12) "Greet one another with a holy kiss."

(Ro 16:16) "Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you."

(1 Co 16:20) "All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss."

(1 Th 5:26) "Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss."

Paul was in Macedonia and he greeted the saints in Corinth on behalf of the saints in Macedonia. That would have included the saints in Philippi, Berea, and Thessalonica. The greetings from one church to another, like the offerings that they gave to one another when needed, all help build the unity of the church. They understood that all the saints in all the churches make up the body of Christ. There is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father who is over all and through all and in all. The early church understood this truth.

(2 Cor 13:13) "All the saints greet you."

(Eph 4:4–6) "*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; {5} one Lord, one faith, one baptism, {6} one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."

3. **Closing Prayer** (2 Cor 13:14)

Paul ended this letter of defense with a short prayer for the Corinthians. He prayed for three things. First, he prayed for the grace of the Lord. We all need God's grace in our lives. We need His unmerited favor in our lives. We need His strength, favor, anointing, and help to do the things that He has called each of us to do. God's grace is different in each of our lives, but He gives each one of us the grace that we need.

(2 Cor 13:14) "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

Second, Paul prayed for the love of God to with them. One of the things that I pray for people, especially people that I do not know, is for them to know and experience the love of God. I pray over the people in our subdivision when I walk. I know some of them are believers, and I pray for them to love God with their whole heart. I pray for them to know and experience God's love for them. I pray for their love of others to abound. The two greatest commandments are for us to love God with our whole heart and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Praying for the love of God in others is a great prayer.

Third, Paul prayed that the Corinthians would have fellowship with the Holy Spirit. That is something that I pray for my own life. I want to abide in Christ. I want to have fellowship with God, and the Holy Spirit is God's Spirit. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we should all desire to have regular and continual fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

When I wake up in the morning, I say good morning to the Father, to Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the trinity; He is God. I ask the Holy Spirit to fill me and to lead me throughout the day. I ask the Holy Spirit to speak to me and reveal the thoughts of God. I ask the Holy Spirit to clothe me with power and to bear His fruit in my life. I want a strong presence of the Holy Spirit. I want the ministry of the Holy Spirit to work powerfully through me. Paul's prayer for the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is a great prayer.

Conclusion and Applications

When people come to me for counsel, I look at their situation, and then I consider the Scriptures that would be helpful to them. Paul knows the situation in Corinth. He knows their struggles, and he knows the principles and promises that will help them grow and mature in their walk with Christ. In his close, he gives them a promise with five conditions, and if they will rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, and live in peace, then the God of love and peace will be with them. What a great and appropriate promise to share with them.

In closing, Paul exhorted the Corinthians to greet one another with a holy kiss. He also greeted them on behalf of the saints in Macedonia. He ended by praying that they would have the grace of the Lord, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

How many of you this morning want to experience God's presence in your life? Paul's promise to the Corinthians is a great promise for you. How are you doing with the five conditions that Paul gave? Are you rejoicing in the Lord at all times? Are you being made complete? Is your life in order? Are your relationships in order? Are your finances in order? Are there things in your life that you need to give some attention to and put in order?

Have you been going through some trials? Are you rejoicing in those trials? Do you have God's peace in those trials? Are you being comforted in your trials? Are you comforting those around you that are going through trials? God wants to give you comfort so that you can comfort others with the comfort He gives to you.

Are you like-minded? Do you work through situations with others to become one mind, or do you shy away from those difficult conversations? Do you have the same attitude that the Lord had, who humbled Himself and took on the form of a bond-servant? Are you serving others? Are you looking out for the interests of others? Are you considering others as more important than yourself? Are you being like-minded?

Are you living in peace with those around you? Inasmuch as it depends on you, are you living in peace with those around you? Are you sowing peace? Are you forgiving others when they offend you? Are you humbling yourself and asking for forgiveness when you have wronged others? Are you living in peace with those around you?

Take a few minutes to speak to the Lord about the things that He has impressed on your heart this morning. Ask Him what He would have you do in response.

Closing Prayer

Father God, the God of all love and peace, we want You to be with us. Holy Spirit, we want to be full of You and experience more of You in our lives. Help us to pursue peace with others. Help us to receive Your comfort in our times of need, and to give comfort to others in their time of need. Help us to be like-minded. Help us to be humble, not haughty. Help us to value and appreciate other people, and to look out for their interests, not just our own interests. Help us to be made complete, and to be in order. Whatever is out of order in our lives, show us how to fit those pieces together so that our lives reflect You. Finally, Lord, give us fullness of joy. Fill us full of Your joy and peace. May Your joy be our strength. Holy Spirit, produce in us the fruit of love, joy, and peace. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Paul's Closing Remarks and Prayer (2 Cor 13:11-14)

Introduction (Php 4:7, Jn 14:27, 2 Cor 13:11-14)

1. Closing Promise (2 Cor 13:11)

- a. Rejoice (2 Cor 13:11, Php 3:1, 1 Th 5:16-18, Heb 12:2, 1 Pe 1:4-6, Gal 5:22, Eph 5:18-19)
- b. Be Made Complete (2 Cor 13:11, Col 1:28)
- c. Be Comforted (2 Cor 13:11, 1:3-4)
- d. Be Like-minded (2 Cor 13:11, Ac 1:14, 2:46-47, Ro 12:16, Php 2:1-7, Ac 15:6-25)
- e. Live in Peace (2 Cor 13:11, Jas 3:18, Rom 12:18, Pr 6:2-5, Mt 5:23-24)

2. Closing Greetings (2 Cor 13:12-13, Ro 16:16, 1 Cor 16:20, 1 Th 5:26, 2 Cor 13:13, Eph 4:4-6)

3. Closing Prayer (2 Cor 13:14)

Conclusion and Applications