

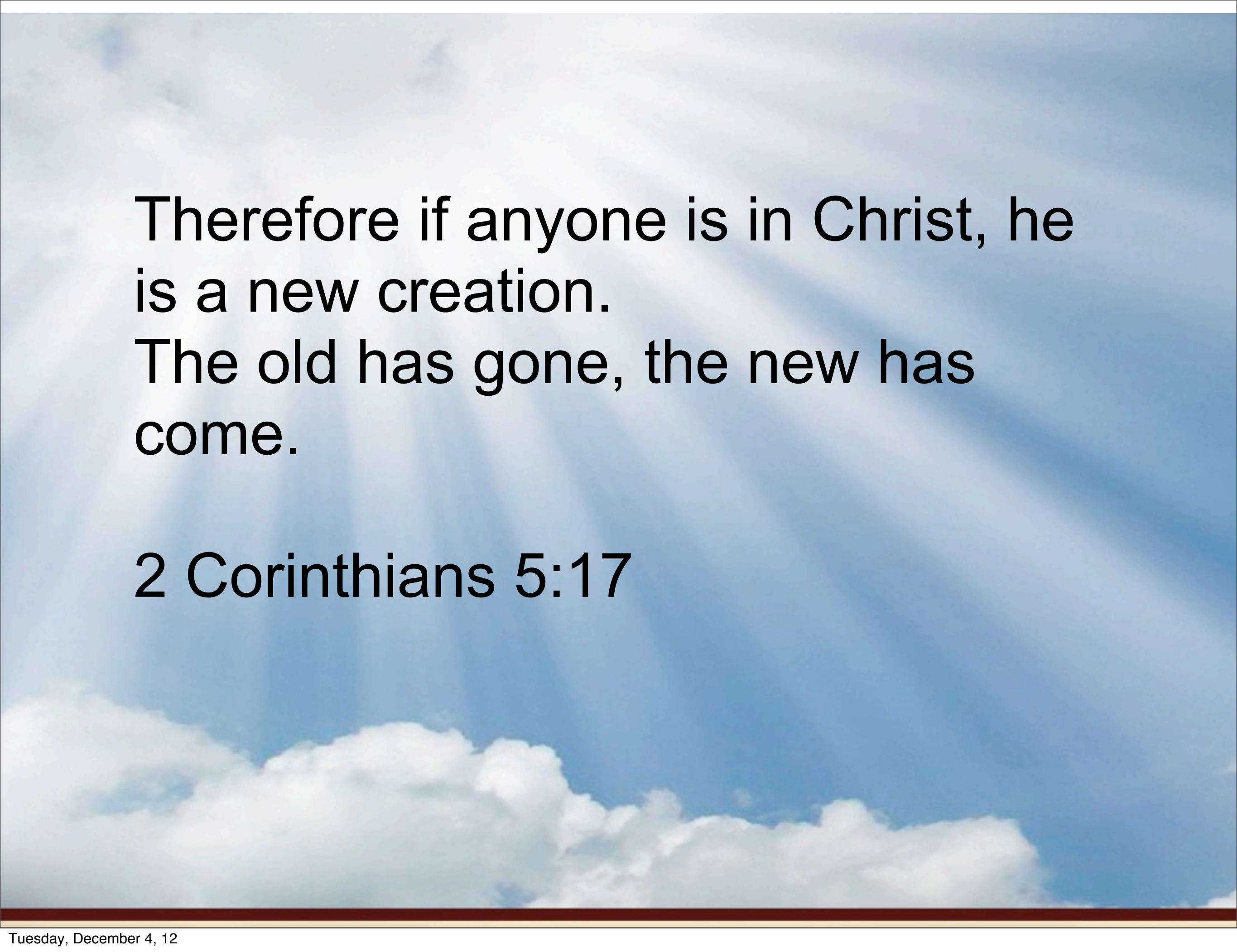
Rebuilding *for* God's People

*A Study of Nehemiah
and 2 Corinthians*



Lesson 11: Standing Firm





Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he
is a new creation.

The old has gone, the new has
come.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Review of Introduction to 2 Corinthians

Nehemiah and Paul shared a passion for faithfulness in building God's church although they lived four hundred years apart.

Intertestamental period saw:

- spread of Greek language to Jews and Gentiles
- creation of Septuagint (Greek Old Testament)
- rise of Roman Empire
- relative peace--the Pax Romana
- network of reliable roads/transportation



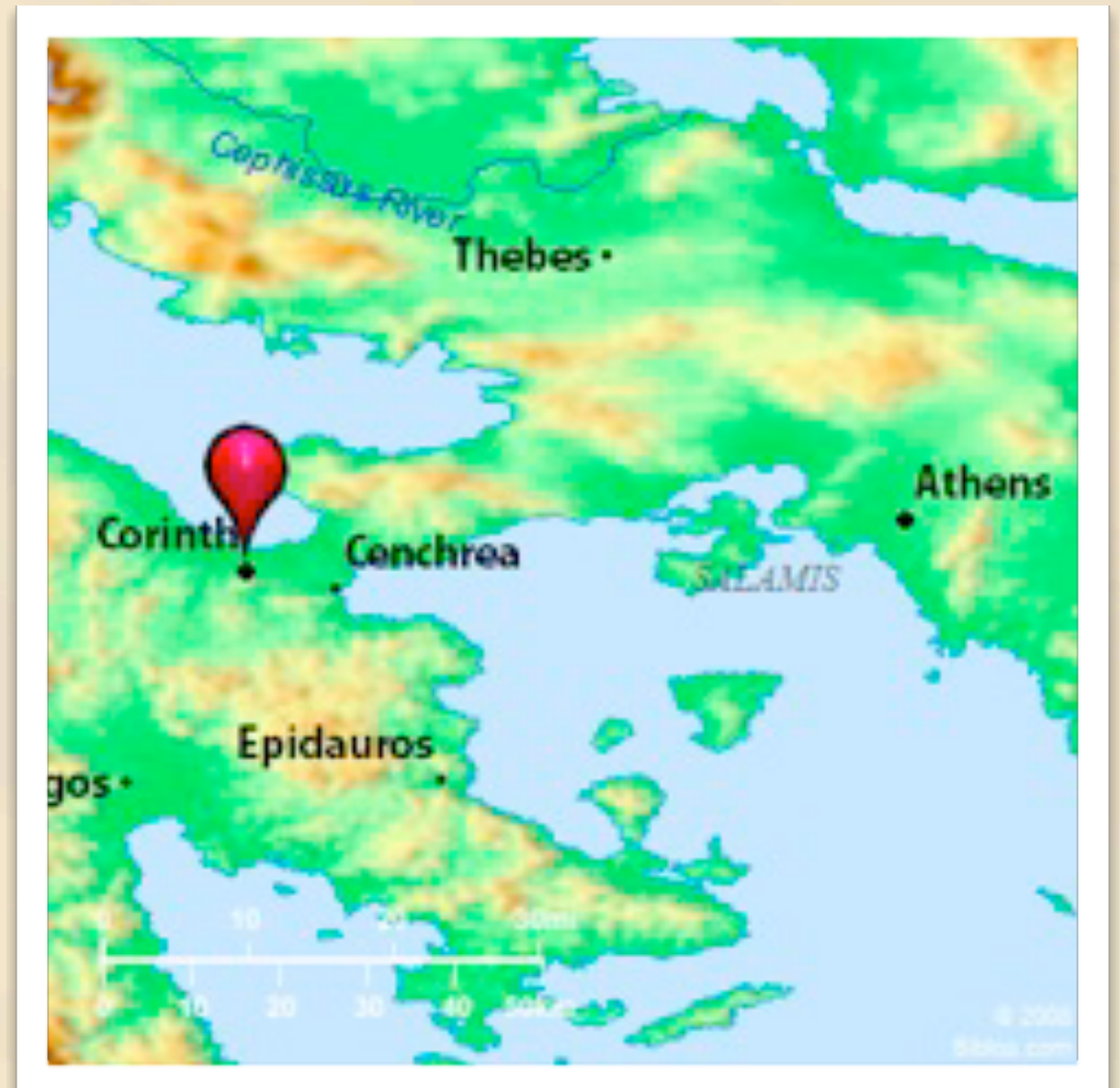
The City of Corinth

Major port of the Roman empire

Diverse population

Wealthy

Strategically located



Corinth in the Time of Paul

- Destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC
- Julius Caesar establishes Corinth as a Roman colony in 44 BC
- Resettled by freed slaves, Syrians, Egyptians and Jews
- Wealthy city due to trade by land and sea with many beautiful buildings and public facilities
- Population estimated at 1 million people
- Destroyed by earthquake in 521 AD



CORINTH	HOUSTON
One of 3 economic centers of Greece	Fastest growing economy in North America
Major seaport	Major seaport
Large, diverse population	Large, diverse population
Center for temple prostitution	Major hub for human sex traffickers
New city	New city

Christians in Corinth

- Jews expelled from Rome in 49 AD by Claudius
- Priscilla and Aquila, Jews from Rome, befriend Paul on his first visit to Corinth
- Included “God-fearers” (Acts 18:4) who attended synagogue
- Paul expelled from synagogue for preaching Jesus is fulfillment of OT prophecies about the Messiah
- About 150-200 Christians at time of 2 Corinthians



Aquila and Priscilla



The Church in Corinth

- Priscilla, Aquila and Paul form first “ekklesia” or house church
- Ekklesias formed around households which included more than the nuclear family
- Villas of wealthier members hosted larger gatherings
- Women like Priscilla, Phoebe and Chloe headed house churches in their homes

Ekklesia:

A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place or assembly.





Roman style villa or “domus”



Characteristics of House Churches

Formed around households which were NOT defined by kinship but by dependence and subordination

Heads of household tend to become heads of the house church

Dependent members of the household expected to share religion of head of household--at time of Paul this not always the case

Multiple congregations with diverse memberships invite division

Threat of division among congregations is Paul's primary concern

People of God in Nehemiah and 2 Corinthians

Nehemiah

One temple
One congregation
One leader
Homogeneous group

2 Corinthians

Multiple house churches
Multiple congregations
Multiple leaders
Diverse group

Two Literary Genres

Nehemiah: History

Detailed
Chronological
Documented
Impersonal
Objective Tone

2 Corinthians: Letter

Few details
Not chronological
Undocumented
Intimate
Subjective Tone

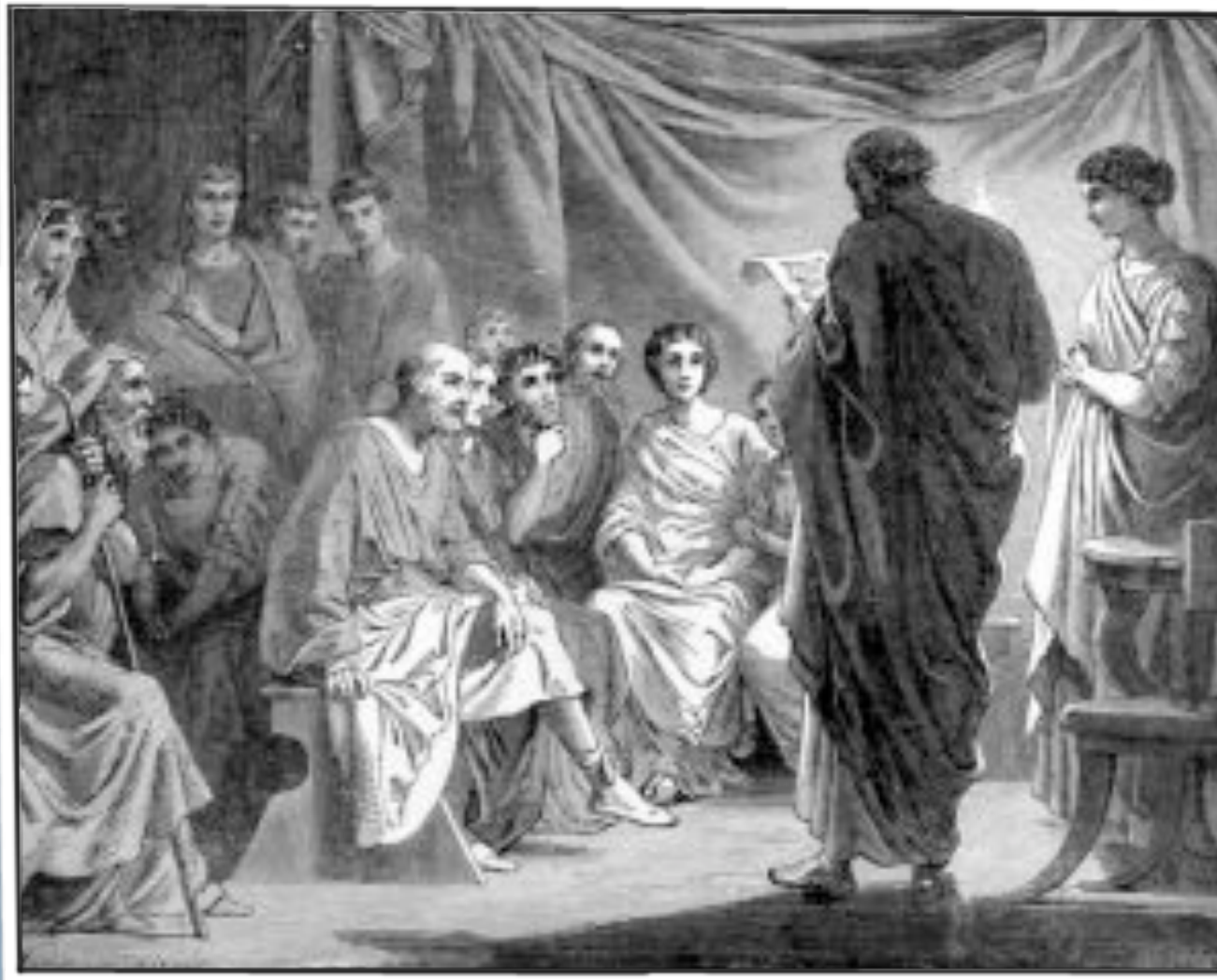
Review of Paul's Letters to the Corinthians

The Previous Letter: written in response to reports of failure to separate from those practicing sexual immorality. (1 Cor. 5:9)

First Letter to the Corinthians: written in response to letter from Corinthians asking clarification about a number of questions.

The Severe Letter: Sent after a second visit to Corinth which ended in “grief” for Paul and the Corinthians. Some scholars think chapters 10-13 of 2 Corinthians is this letter.

Second Letter to the Corinthians: Written in anticipation of his third visit to Corinth. Some scholars think chapters 1-9 of 2 Corinthians was written separately and after chapters 10-13.



Reading a Letter From Paul
In an early house church

SECOND CORINTHIANS: AN APOLOGETIC LETTER

Different from First Corinthians and Romans

Follows the style of “apologetic letters” of the period

“An Apologetic Letter is one that brings against charges the opposite arguments with proof.”

Paul Barnett, NIV Commentary on Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

UNDERSTANDING “BOASTING”

- Greek word *Kauchema*: “that of which one glories or can glory” *
- Kauchema* or its cognates used 21 times in 2nd Corinthians
- Used most frequently in chapters 10-13
- Paul’s meaning is more like “confidence” or justifiable pride” than some kind of self-glorification**

*(Strong’s New Testament Greek Lexicon)

** (Barnett, NIV Commentary on 2nd Corinthians)

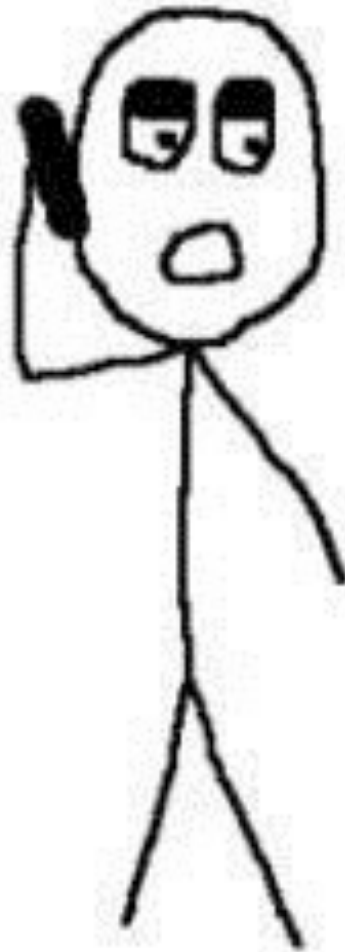
Paul's Use of "Boasting" words either:

1. mirrors the bragging of others about their own achievements (chapter 11) OR

2. Discloses his own understanding, as seen throughout this letter, that boasting can only be in the Lord.



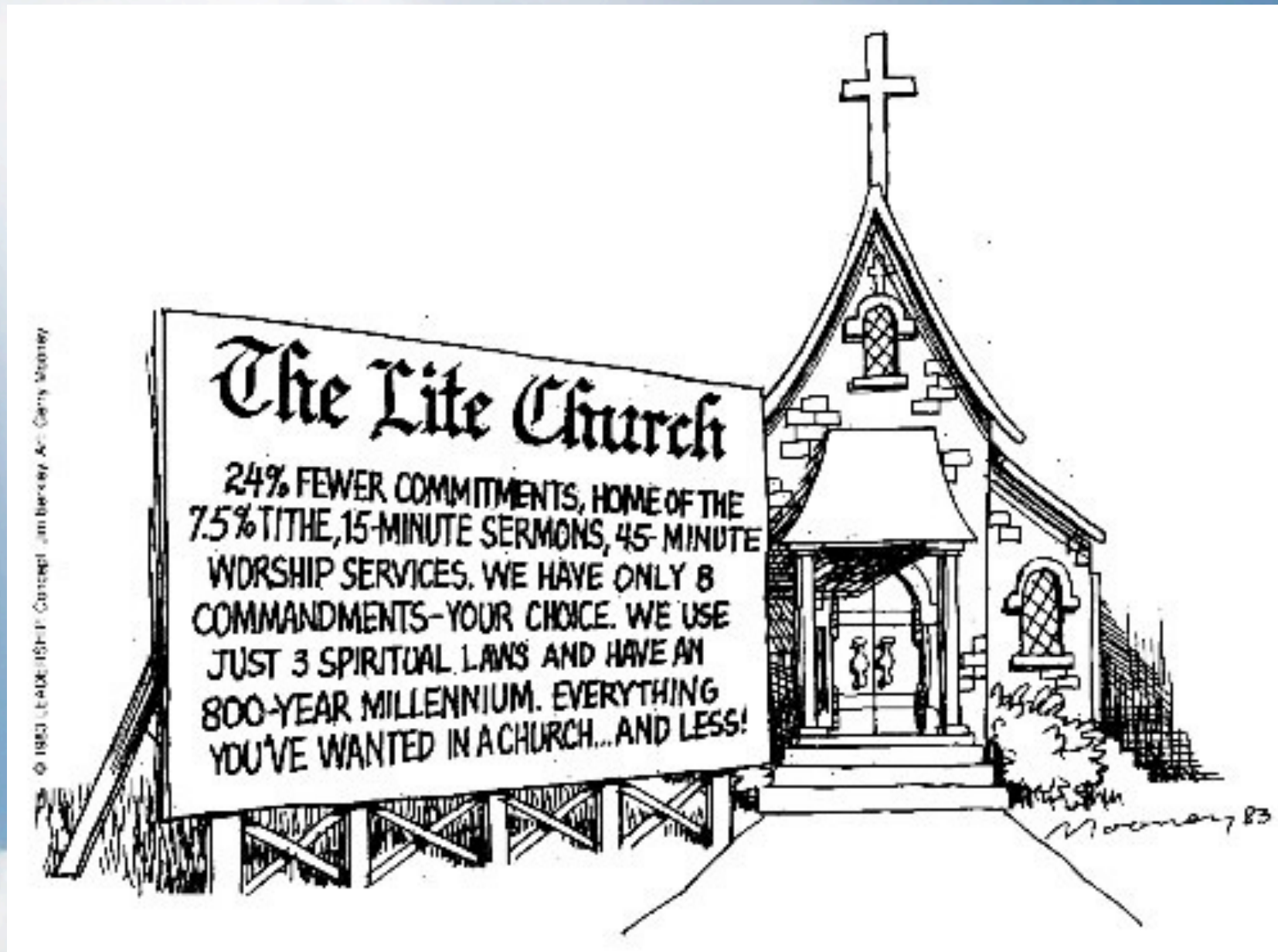
ON THE PHONE WITH MOM



Yep. OK. Alright. OK. Alright. Yes.
I will. Yep. OK. Alright. OK. Alright.
Yes. I will. Yep. OK. Alright. OK.
Alright. Yes. I will. Yep. OK. Alright.
OK. Alright. Yes. I will. Yep. OK.
Alright. OK. Alright. Yes. I will. Yep.
OK. Alright. OK. Alright. Yes. I will.
Yep. OK. Alright. OK. Alright. Yes.
I will. I love you too. Bye.

FILLING IN THE DETAILS...maybe

- Many Corinthians criticized Paul for his fickleness in changing his plans
- They also thought he had been weak in dealing with disciplinary problems
- Unhappy that he did not return to them as promised
- Jealous of his stop in Macedonia
- “Grief” of the earlier unscheduled visit possibly comes from unjust action of a Corinthian against Paul that may have resulted in public quarreling and disorder. (see 2:6, 9 ; 7:11)



Standing Not So Firm ?





The Dream of John Wesley



Applying the Lesson in Your Life

Pray about how God is calling you to stand firm in your faith during this season of Advent.

