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# WEST VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

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9:30 am Bible Class—all ages  
10:30 am Sunday Worship  
5:00 pm Proverbs study (online)  
7:00 pm Wednesday Bible Class

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June 12, 2022

## Finally Brethren, Farewell

As many of you know, this Sunday is my family's last Sunday serving as a ministering family to the church here at West Valley. On behalf of my family, I want to thank you for the love that you have shown to us over the two and a half years of our sojourn here. Several of you went the extra mile in service to our family during this time even as we tried to serve you. We are forever grateful.

The title of this article is not original to me. It is found in 2 Corinthians 13:11 and is among the last recorded words of the apostle Paul to the church at Corinth. Though it is clear from the first verse of this chapter that Paul intended to visit the Corinthians again, there is a certain finality to the words as they appear in the English text. After examining these words and the ones that followed more closely, I discovered a perfect outline of my wishes for each of you as we part.

First, "farewell." You'll notice that some translation committees believed this to be an instruction rather than a greeting and render it as a command to rejoice. Goodbyes are never easy, and joy usually isn't the first thing that comes to mind. For Christians though, we know that parting is only temporary and that, for the faithful, reunion is promised. I want you to experience joy here and want to experience joy with you in the hereafter, so make sure you "rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4) by continually living under His authority (Colossians 3:17).

Second, "Become complete." The word here means literally to be reunited, to repair, or to mend again. You can see that slant of meaning in the ESV's "Aim for restoration" rendering or the NASB's marginal reading, "Put yourselves in order." Not to overstate the role of our family here, whenever anyone leaves a congregation, it feels as though a piece of the fabric is missing. However, God always provides ample ability to sow a new tapestry, provided everyone's aim is to be "knit together" (Ephesians 4:16).

Third, "Be of good comfort." Interestingly, this literally means to receive advice or admonition. The ESV's marginal reading is, "listen to my appeal." The only way to be comforted is to listen to the entreaties of the Spirit as He works through His word, the Bible. We must continue to be open both to the positive and negative messages of Scripture.

Fourth, "Be of one mind." Literally, this is a command to think the same thing. As Christians, we must "[endeavor] to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). The only way to do this is to take on "the same mind" (1 Corinthians 1:10), namely, the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5). Disunity destroys churches but humble, Christlike service unites them and causes them to grow.

Finally, "Live in peace." This isn't merely a desire; it literally means to cultivate or follow after peace. Peace is not the absence of evil; it is the presence of all that is good. Good exists in a church as it pursues the above things, promotes an environment where such can be pursued, and holds accountable those who seek to destroy peace and hinder others.

As you can see, Paul's words do not signify an end but a new beginning. It is interesting to note that even the word "finally" doesn't spell an end; it actually carries the idea of something remaining. It is my heart's desire that we meet again, if not here, then in the hereafter. In the meantime, "The God of love and peace shall be with you." Follow Paul's instructions, and He always will be.

With Love,  
Patrick Swayne