

2 Corinthians 11

Verses 1-4:

--(1) Paul had just made it clear that it doesn't matter what anyone boasts themselves to be. It only matters what God knows we are and will commend or condemn. Yet the false teachers won the confidence of the Corinthians to some level by boasting of themselves. Now Paul is taking a similar course to address their folly—though his boasting will be noticeably different.

--(2) Paul was jealous *for* the Corinthians not *of* the Corinthians. The very jealousy of God was stirred in him through the Holy Spirit.

--Our God is a jealous God—and righteously jealous—because He knows that He is the best thing for us! *He cannot rest with us being far from Him or live disinterested in our lives.*

Exodus 20:5: You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God. . .

--Fidelity to Him is felicity to us. He is our best.

--So Paul illustrates that reality by saying that he had set them up in an arranged marriage with Christ. His hope was to present them as loyal in that covenant relationship.

--Remember that this is being said to a fellowship with a fair share of issues! Look at this love and care and jealousy that Paul has—from God—for the Bride of Christ. *Beware how you feel and talk about the "Church" because she is His bride.*

--(3) Paul's fear was that they would be disloyal to Christ by being led astray through the ***craftiness*** of the enemy. Paul goes all the way back to Eden where Satan deceived Eve through conversation, arguments, and high things against the knowledge of God.

--(I will also make the side point here that Paul obviously believes the Genesis record is not an allegory but that these are all real beings and events. See also: **1 Tim. 2:13-14.**)

--Paul is afraid their ***minds may be corrupted***. To be corrupted is to disbelieve the truth and believe a lie. Some no longer held the simple truths in Christ.

Saphir (Our Life-Day): "The difficulty which the apostle Paul seems to have felt with all his congregations, was to convince them of the perfection of Christ, and of the all-sufficiency, simplicity, and comprehensiveness of the gospel of grace. Our tendency is first to lower Christ, and then to feel the necessity for something in addition to this self-made conception of the Savior. 'Come to Jesus,' is the first message to the sinner; it continues to be the divine message to the believer. Jesus is our righteousness, our life, and the hope of glory. Our great and lifelong task is to abide in 'the simplicity that is into Christ.'"

--Life is a war to keep ***the simplicity that is in Christ***. The idea of simplicity is that of singleness of heart and mind to Christ. Are we loving Christ more? Are we loving His bride more? Are we loving His Word more? If not, we are being corrupted by crafty godless ideas.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12: That you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own two hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

--(4) Paul is concerned with their willingness to put up with those that would do these three things—no doubt their willingness to receive false teaching was justified by the cultural pressure to be knowledgeable in the philosophies and wisdom of the world.

--Paul names three major lines Satan's crafty corruption comes along:

1) **Another Jesus:** A Jesus of people's own making—conformed into our own image and likeness. Jesus made like us Vs. Us conformed to Him. *Do you believe in God? Vs. Do you believe God? Will you allow Jesus to define Himself to you?

2) **A Different spirit:** Something other than the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:3: Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 3:2: This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Romans 8:9: Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

--The "spirit" of a ministry can be known by what they believe enough to emphasize. Not just by what they say they believe in doctrinal statements. The Holy Spirit will emphasize Christ through the Word of God.

3) **A Different gospel:** Usually any form of works-based righteousness. A gospel with no cross and no shame. *Jesus-And. . .*

--The Scriptural warnings given to teachers of false doctrine are more severe than those directed to the sinner with moral failings. Bad doctrine perverts the Gospel at its source and removes the only place of forgiveness or cleansing for the man or woman that knows they are in need of a Savior. (See **Anathema of Gal. 1:8-9**)

--Putting up with those teaching false doctrine is no virtue in the sight of God.

Titus 3:10-11: Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Verses 5-11:

--(5-6) There is some discussion here about whether Paul is defending that he is on equal terms with the rest of the true apostles like Peter and John—or he is ironically speaking of these false apostles as "super-apostles"? I think false apostles makes the best sense of the context—especially with 6 as a likely reference to the false apostles and their particular "training."

--Paul says they should recognize he was no different than these boasting men—especially in knowledge—even though he didn't speak according to the learned wisdom and rhetoric of the day and age (which was also on purpose as he trusted the power of the message to the work of the Holy Spirit so that their faith would rest in the power of God).

--(7-11) Here Paul also differed from these super-apostles in terms of how he handled money. Again, it seems that Paul's virtues were constantly being condemned by others as failures: being led of the Lord made him untrustworthy; not demanding money made him seem a lesser apostle; supporting himself showed he love them less; pleading with them in meekness and gentleness made him cowardly and weak; writing letters while inspired by the Holy Spirit covered his feeble presence, etc. *We are in good company if similarly slandered*

--We know Paul did not accept money at a number of places including Thessalonica (**2 Thess. 3:8-9**) and also Ephesus (**Acts 20:34**) as well as Corinth. As far as we know, he only accepted funds from Philippi—apparently having no concerns about the ramifications for the gospel or church there.

--Paul had numerous reasons for taking this position:

- 1) To set an example for the churches: **2 Thess. 3:7-9**
- 2) To keep from being a burden to fledgling churches: **2 Cor. 12:14**
- 3) To never hinder the gospel: **1 Cor. 9:11-18**

--The last being the most important reason and something that set him apart from these false teachers. If this practice wasn't out of love, why else would he make this stand? It's way easier to take money from people! *If a ministry constantly hammers people for money it is not motivated by godly love.*

Verses 12-15:

--(12) Paul continually has this minority group in mind: *some of 10:2+12*; the *super-apostles* of **11:4**; and now the *those* here in **12**. He is involved in this foolish boasting to show that they are not *just as we are*—Paul and his fellow-laborers—in heart and the calling of God.

--(13) Paul makes it clear that these super-apostles are fake in both! There were false apostles then and there are false apostles now.

Revelation 2:2: I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot hear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them to be liars.

--These are men or women that transform *themselves*—not a work of God!—into an image and likeness of their own making.

--(14-15) Not only that, but their self-formed image will be likeable. It will be likeable with real Satanic power behind it! *Who are the likeable evil, lying, apostles of our day?*

--When the anti-christ comes—the ultimate false apostle—he will be quite likeable. May I also point out that the two distinguishing factors of his “ministry” will be worldly material wealth/peace + miraculous works of supernatural power.

--Tell me, are these the two themes of the ministry that you love best? Beware! The world is getting primed for the pinnacle of Satan's craftiness.

--But, what will be the end of it all? Judgment according to their works—the works that God sees and knows that are unrecorded, off the stage, and away from the crowds.

Verses 16-21:

--Notice, Paul admits he is boasting in a way that is foolish and totally out of the character of Christ. Even so, his boasting will not be like theirs. He will only boast in the Lord and his own shame.

--(20) *devours* has the idea of *exploiting* and is used by Jesus of the hypocritical Pharisees.

Matthew 23:14: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for pretense make long prayers. There you will receive greater condemnation.

--Sadly, instead of calling out these false teachers as evil and liars, the Corinthians put up with so much! Even literally being slapped in the face. These were ungodly assertive men who were abusive in their ministry. ***1 Tim. 3:2-3: A bishop then must be. . . not violent. . .not quarrelsome. . .***

--Paul, who had the truth as his weapon, was too weak for that type of ministry!

Verses 22-29:

--(22) By this reference we can surmise this segment of false apostles was most likely Judaizers. They wanted to be seen as having a "special" spirituality because of their Jewish heritage. ***This stuff is still out there today!***

--(23) Here now Paul begins to lay out the character of his ministry in a way similar to that of **1 Cor. 4:6-13**. He asks: ***Are they ministers of Christ?*** And then speaks about what true ministry looked like—no doubt exceedingly different from their boasting.

--I will say, this list can be a bit depressing and make us feel like we are not real Christians. Paul is not comparing genuine ministry with genuine ministry. He already said that is not wise. He is showing the foolishness of the boasting false apostles with what he could boast in as a genuine apostle. ***Really, I have no doubt the rest of the genuine apostles could read similar lists!***

--That said, not every minister of Christ will face this level of persecution or suffering, nor should. That is up to God, not us. Even so, all true ministers of Christ will face some persecution and suffering and should embrace it accordingly.

--(24) The Jews were commanded to stop at 39 lashes in the law (**Deut. 25:3**) and likely used a whip with three cords—which would then be 13 lashes to make 39.

--(25) The only shipwreck we have recorded in the book of Acts happened after this!

--(26) Ministry may not always be safe. Christ was in peril as He ministered, as was Paul, as are many around the world today, and so are some that minister in our very city!

--I think it is hard for us to understand how difficult it was for Paul to be in constant danger from his own countrymen. We see it almost everywhere he went: **Acts 9:23+29; 13:50; 14:5+9; 17:5+13; 18:12**.

--For Paul to honor Christ as a faithful servant he had to endure slander as one that betrayed his own culture and roots (**Acts 21:21**). True today! ***Black, White, Hispanic, Indian, Asian, etc.***

--(27) ***In cold and nakedness***—this was likely during his beating with whips or rods as well as imprisonments. Think of the shame endured to get back out there and serve.

--**(28-29)** Here Paul admits the burden of care. He felt compassion for the weakness and burned at the plight of sin in the world and its effects.

--True love to God will coincide with true love for others. It will bring a burden to the heart but the type of burden that makes life better. *The luggage of life*

--Knowing the value of the Bride of Christ to God or the precious cost of a lost soul to Christ will change a man or a woman forever.

Verses 30-33:

--**(30-31)** Here Paul makes it clear that he was not exaggerating his life in ministry. This was a clear picture of apostolic weakness and the power of God.

--**(32-33)** People are not exactly sure why Paul finished with this. This event happened either right after he came to Damascus (**Acts 9**) or on his return to Damascus from his time alone in Arabia (**Gal. 1:17**).

--My guess, is that Paul is just using it as a wild summary of his apostolic ministry. The hard and confident persecutor is literally turned into a helpless man stuffed into a basket. What a change God made in him and his life and ministry!