

"The Day of Accountability"

Part 2

2 Corinthians 5:9-16

Introduction: Tonight in our study of 2 Corinthians we need to do a short review so that we can be refreshed on the *CONTEXT* of the letter.

The church at Corinth was started as a result of Paul's second missionary journey. He spent 18 months in Corinth preaching and teaching the Word of God to those who were there. After Paul's departure there was a group of Jews who did their best to discredit Paul. They did all they could to cause the Corinthians to question Paul's integrity and in so doing they picked his ministry apart. They were Judaizers who were servants of Satan. It was their mission to discredit Paul so as to cause the believers to question his teachings. The intended purpose of the attacks was to cast doubt upon the Word of God. Let us remember that the New Testament was not yet complete so the New Testament church did not have a New Testament Bible. They relied upon the Apostle's doctrine and so the attack upon the integrity of Paul was an attack against the word of God.

Now here in 2 Corinthians Paul is defending his apostleship because there is so much at stake. We have looked at some of the accusations which the Judaizers had brought against Paul.

1. They accused him of false teaching and they had told the Corinthians that the suffering he was going through was a result of God judging him for the false teaching. In chapter 1 Paul made it clear God was not chastening him but He was strengthening him.
2. They accused Paul of not being true to his word. He had told the Corinthians that he planned to visit them but he had not yet made the journey. His critics pointed to this and said he could not be trusted. He addressed this criticism at the end of chapter 1 and the beginning of chapter 2.
3. They accused Paul of preaching a distorted message. The Judaizers desired to live under the Law and the message of grace to them was offensive. In chapter 3 Paul stated that his message was the message of the New Covenant. He made it clear that the Law was a murderer but the New Covenant was a message of life.

4. They accused him of twisting the Scriptures to his own benefit. In chapter 4 Paul explained that he was preaching nothing but the manifestation of the Truth.
5. They accused Paul of preaching about himself. He addressed this accusation also in chapter 4 and he made it clear that he preached Jesus Christ.

So throughout the letter he is dealing with the accusations which have been leveled against him and at the same time he is defending his integrity as an apostle. This now brings us to where we are tonight.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

Part 2

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:10

Now we looked in detail at this verse last week and we considered what will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This judgment will be for all who are of the body of Jesus Christ or the Church. This is not the judgment of the unsaved for that will take place at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

For a few minutes I want to look at this verse in the context of Paul defending his integrity. Remember that the critics were accusing Paul of twisting the Scriptures, they were accusing him of preaching a distorted message, and they were accusing him preaching himself. So here in this verse Paul is letting the Corinthian believers know he and they will one day stand before the Lord to give an account of how they used what had been entrusted to them from the day they were saved until the day when they were taken from the earth. So the reasoning would be that it would make no sense for Paul to distort the message, twist the Scriptures, nor preach himself instead of Jesus Christ for on the day of accountability he would face the One who had called him into the ministry and there would be no eternal rewards.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:9

Here he is telling them that he labors so that his service will be pleasing to the Lord and then he moves on to verse 10 to remind them that he knows at the Judgment Seat of Christ he will be held accountable. So for anyone to say that he was being deceptive would make absolutely no sense at all.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:11

There are many different views as to what Paul is writing about here. But tonight I will explain to you the proper interpretation so that you will be able to grasp what Paul is saying here.

There are many who teach that in this verse Paul is stating that the thought of the "TERROR" at the Judgment Seat of Christ is what motivated him to persuade men to believe the Gospel. But this does not fit the context. Let me show you the contrast in the verse.

2 Corinthians 5:11

¹¹ *Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; **but we are made manifest unto God;** and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.*

The first part of this verse is in contrast to what I underlined and bolded. The part that is underlined and bolded is Paul acknowledging that his heart is KNOWN TO GOD. So if in the first part of the verse Paul is saying that he does all he can to convince men to believe the Gospel because he knows the "Terror" that will exist at the Judgment Seat of Christ then the contrast makes no sense.

Let me give you something else to consider. If Paul is motivated by the terror he will encounter at the Judgment Seat of Christ then how could he ever have any peace in his heart? Something else to consider is, what are we going to do with 2 Corinthians 5:14?

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:14

Here Paul states that it is the LOVE OF CHRIST which constrains/controls him. So if the "TERROR" in verse 11 is something he fears at the Judgment Seat of Christ then these 2 verses contradict one another.

The bottom line is that in verse 11 Paul is not writing about a TERROR that will exist at the Judgment Seat of Christ and he is not referring to persuading men to believe the Gospel. Let me now tell you what Paul is writing here.

The word "TERROR" is the word "FEAR". Let me show you what William Barclay writes concerning this verse.

*"This is not the **fear and trembling** of the slave cringing before his master; nor **fear and trembling** at the prospect of punishment. It comes from two things. It comes, first, from a sense of our own creatureliness and our own powerlessness to deal with life triumphantly. That is to say, it is not the **fear and trembling** which drives us to hide from*

God, but rather the **fear and trembling** which drives us to seek God, in the certainty that without His help we cannot effectively face life. It comes, second, from a horror of grieving God. **When we really love a person (God), we are not afraid of what He may do to us; we are afraid of what we may do to Him!**"

Barclay goes on to reference **John 14:15**

¹⁵ *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

Notice the words of Chuck Smith concerning the word "TERROR":

"The word is the fear of the Lord. And I don't think that we really properly understand the fear of the Lord. You see, for many years, I feared that the Lord might hurt me because I had a wrong concept of God. Now I fear that I might hurt the Lord. And I think that that's what the fear of the Lord really is. The fear that I might hurt Him by my failure to do what He wants me to do."

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:11 again.

Paul is saying, "I know that I will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and I want to live a life of integrity because I do not want to hurt my Lord. I have a deep reverence for Him and the last thing I want to do is to break His heart with my lifestyle."

So let us understand that to fear the Lord is to desire to live a life that will not hurt our Lord in any way.

But what does Paul mean when he says that **"we persuade men"**?

Let me show you the words of Henry Alford:

"The best Interpretation in context (context is "king" of accurate interpretation) is that Paul sought to convince men "of his own integrity."

This fits the CONTEXT perfectly!! Let me pull this together. Paul's love for the Lord and his reverence for the Lord caused him to live a life of integrity. It was his desire to live in a way that others would know and be persuaded of his integrity.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:11 again.

Let me now word this so that we can grasp the interpretation.

"Knowing that one day we shall stand before the Lord and because we have this deep reverence for the Lord we live in a way so as not to bring any hurt or grief to our Him and we live in a way that others are also persuaded of our integrity. The bottom line is we desire all men to know the sincerity and integrity of our hearts so we live so as to persuade them. But we are already made manifest to God for he knows our hearts better than we do and we trust that you also know our sincerity and our integrity."

This is what Paul is saying here in this verse. The Corinthians knew Paul for he had spent 18 months with them. They watched how he lived his life and they listened as he taught. He never abused his liberty as an apostle. Now the critics were accusing him of having no integrity at all and that was difficult to deal with but if the Corinthians who knew him so well believed the critics and began to question his integrity that would be tough for Paul to bear.

Think about this for a moment. If an enemy brings a false accusation against you that is one thing but if those who are the closest to you begin to believe it and side with your accusers that is difficult to deal with.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:12

Paul was not boasting to the Corinthians so as to puff himself up. This was not an attitude of pride within him. But it was an attitude of concern. Paul was giving to the Corinthians ammunition which they could use to silence the critics.

There is an interesting statement at the end of this verse. The critics gloried in appearance and placed little emphasis upon the heart. This is one reason why the critics disliked Paul. Let me show you what how they viewed Paul.

2 Corinthians 10:10

¹⁰ *For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.*

Those who criticized Paul were Jews and many were of the Pharisees. Let me show you what Jesus said concerning the Pharisees.

Matthew 23:1-7

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

² *Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:*

³ *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*

⁴ *For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.*

⁵ *But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,*

⁶ *And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,*

⁷ *And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.*

They were all about the outward appearance and they were hypocrites. They preached how others were to live while they themselves did the opposite. They had no integrity. Let me show you how Jesus viewed these religious leaders.

Matthew 23:27-34

²⁷ *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.*

²⁸ *Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*

²⁹ *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,*

³⁰ *And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.*

³¹ *Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.*

³² *Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.*

³³ *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*

³⁴ *Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:*

Conclusion:

There was much at stake here. Paul's integrity was vital to the message of the Gospel and he did all he could to be sure that he caused NO one to question his integrity.

We need to understand that integrity is so very important within our lives also. If we are going to be used by God for the Kingdom of our Lord then we are going to need to walk in integrity. I will leave you with the words of Job.

Job 27:2-8

² *As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul;*

³ *All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;*

⁴ *My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.*

⁵ *God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.*

⁶ *My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*

⁷ *Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.*

⁸ *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?*