

**"Paul's Defense of his Apostleship"**

**Part 5**

**2 Corinthians 11**

**Introduction:** As we started into 2 Corinthians 11 looking at Paul's defense of his apostleship he asked the Corinthians to bear with him in his folly.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 11:1**

He was going to do some boasting about his apostleship to defend his position and to open the eyes of the Corinthians who had bought into the lies of the false apostles. But we have made our way through 11:1-15 and he has not used his pen yet to boast of his apostleship. He has expressed his concern for the Corinthians and his concern was that as Eve was deceived so they too might be deceived. He explained why he refused to take any finances from the Corinthians and he probably did this because the false teachers tried to shame him into taking finances from them. If they could shame Paul into taking their money then they would not feel as guilty when they took the money from the Corinthians. Paul then went on to call the false teachers exactly what they were and that was false apostles.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 11:13-15**

These were the verses which we looked at last week and in these verses, we could see how Satan will masquerade as an angel of light to lead God's people down a path of compromise.

He will use a sin or a cause which the church stands strongly opposed to and he will do his best to get the church to look at the END RESULT and IGNORE THE MEANS. When this happens the body of Christ has bought into the lie that the END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS. God's Word is our compass and our LIGHT. We must be sure that we follow the details of His Word because if we do not we will step off the path of Light and onto the path of darkness.

**Psalm 119:105, 130**

<sup>105</sup> *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

<sup>130</sup> *The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*

As we continue tonight Paul will now pick up the thought found in 11:1 and he will get back to the thought of boasting.

**I. Paul's Credentials**

**Notice 2 Corinthians 11:16**

Here we see that he gets back to the thought from 11:1. The boasting which Paul is about to do is something that really grieves him. But as we looked at before there are times when a fool must be answered in his folly.

**Proverbs 26:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> *Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.*

<sup>5</sup> *Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.*

**Notice 2 Corinthians 11:17**

Now there have been some critics who point to this verse and attempt to use it to prove that certain parts of Scripture are not inspired. They also point to other verses.

**1 Corinthians 7:6**

<sup>6</sup> *But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.*

**1 Corinthians 7:25**

<sup>25</sup> *Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.*

The question is, "How do we harmonize these verses with what Paul wrote to Timothy?"

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

<sup>17</sup> *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

In 1 Corinthians 7 when Paul says he has no commandment of the Lord he is saying he had not received this as a direct revelation from the Lord. It does NOT mean these writings of Paul are not inspired. There were some Truths which Paul received directly from the Lord and others were INSPIRED as he wrote as was the case with 1 Corinthians 7. Let us notice what Paul recorded concerning the rapture.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-15**

<sup>13</sup> *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

<sup>14</sup> *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

<sup>15</sup> ***For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.***

This was received as a direct revelation from the Lord. But what about our verse in 2 Corinthians 11.

#### **Notice 2 Corinthians 11:17**

Paul is about to boast of his apostleship and what he is saying is his boasting is not after the Lord. In other words, Jesus never boasted so Paul is not following an example from Jesus Christ. But his words are still inspired.

#### **Notice 2 Corinthians 11:18**

Paul is about to join up with all others who have boasted but he will boast in a completely different way.

Paul was a very humble man. He saw himself as the chief sinner. He saw himself as a simple clay pot. So, when Paul boasts he will do it in such a way that he will remain humble.

It is his desire that the Corinthians allow him to boast so that he might prove that he is not inferior to the false apostles.

#### **Notice 2 Corinthians 11:20**

Here in this verse he is showing why they need to give him the platform to explain his case.

Paul points to 4 things the church at Corinth had allowed the false teachers to do within the church.

1. **They allowed the false teachers to bring them into bondage.**

Let us remember the false teachers desired to bring the church under the Law and so they mixed grace with Law which was legalism and this brought the Corinthians under bondage. They brought in a set of rules and regulations of and convinced the Corinthians that THEIR rules and regulations had to be kept for anyone to be saved. It may have been keeping the Sabbath, practicing circumcision, offering animal sacrifices or anything of that order. The point was they had been brought under bondage.

2. **They allowed the false teachers to devour them.**

This was probably a reference to the financial burden which the false teachers placed upon the Corinthians. The false teachers were devouring their finances.

3. **They allowed these false teachers to exalt themselves.**

It seems that everyone within the church at Corinth was afraid of the false teachers and they therefore allowed them to control the entire church. These men who came in were probably men with very strong personalities and so they came in and they intimidated the people and no one would stand up against them. They therefore EXALTED themselves right into the places of authority.

4. **They would strike the people in the face.**

This seems odd to you and me. But in the days of the early church this would often be the response of those who had been offended. They would slap the person who offended them across the face.

**Acts 23:1-2**

*And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.*

<sup>2</sup> *And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.*

Ananias was offended by Paul's words and he gave the command to smite Paul in the mouth.

There have been many practices over the years that would be so out of place in our society. Remember Nehemiah's actions.

**Nehemiah 13:23-25**

<sup>23</sup> *In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab:*

<sup>24</sup> *And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people.*

<sup>25</sup> *And **I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair,** and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.*

Getting back to Corinth, it seems that if someone decided to stand oppose the false teachers then the false teacher would smite them across the face. This was permitted and the false teachers dominated the Corinthians.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 11:21**

The false teachers had come into the church boldly and exerting dominion over the people. Paul on the other hand was weak in his personal approach. But while they did their boasting Paul would also boast just to open the eyes of the Corinthians.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 11:22**

These false teachers claimed to be superior to Paul but he need not to take a back seat to any of these men.

Paul could trace his roots right back to the tribe of Benjamin.

**Philippians 3:3-6**

*<sup>4</sup> Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:*

*<sup>5</sup> Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;*

*<sup>6</sup> Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

Apparently, the false teachers boasted of their roots and so Paul would make it clear that he too was from the nation of Israel. But Paul also knew that in Christ this meant nothing.

**Galatians 3:27-29**

*<sup>27</sup> For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

***<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.***

*<sup>29</sup> And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

**Notice 2 Corinthians 11:23a**

Paul could hardly bring himself to refer to these men as ministers of Jesus Christ.

Now as we continue Paul will begin to boast. But not in the way we would expect.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 11:23-28**

You would expect if a man was going to boast he would speak of his accomplishments not his sufferings and the trials which he had been through. You would expect a true apostle

to boast of his apostolic gifts but Paul does none of that. Why then does he give the Corinthians a list of the sufferings which he went through?

I believe there are two reasons why we have this list.

1. He points to his suffering as proof of his apostleship because the false apostles would never suffer for the church and the cause of Christ. So, his sufferings separated him from the false apostles. But there is yet another reason.
2. This was exactly the life which Jesus had said the apostles would live.

**Matthew 10:1, 5, 16-25**

*And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.*

*<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:*

*<sup>16</sup> Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

*<sup>17</sup> But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;*

*<sup>18</sup> And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.*

*<sup>19</sup> But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.*

*<sup>20</sup> For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

*<sup>21</sup> And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.*

*<sup>22</sup> And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

*<sup>23</sup> But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.*

*<sup>24</sup> The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.*

*<sup>25</sup> It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*

**John 15:18-21**

*<sup>18</sup> If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

*<sup>19</sup> If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

*<sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.*

*<sup>21</sup> But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

Then we read the message which God had for Paul.

**Acts 9:10-16**

*<sup>10</sup> And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.*

*<sup>11</sup> And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,*

*<sup>12</sup> And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.*

*<sup>13</sup> Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:*

*<sup>14</sup> And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.*

*<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

*<sup>16</sup> **For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.***

Conclusion:

Paul could strip his shirt off and show the Corinthians the MARKS of an apostle. Jesus had said they would suffer and Paul did truly suffer. Next week we will look at the details of what is recorded here.