

Second Corinthians 11:16-33

11:16 - I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little.

- A. Paul picks up with his opening thought of this chapter in 11:1
- B. Before Paul begins his self-confident, self-promoting boasting, he begs them not to classify him with the fools even though he is speaking as a fool.
- C. Paul realizes in his wisdom that the only way to impress these people and cut the ground from under his opponents is to compete at their level, which is self-promotion. And, Paul has the track record to provide some impressive numbers, statistics, awards, stories and accomplishments!

11:17 – What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool.

- A. The type of speech that Paul is going to engage in is not what the Lord would say or what a follower of the Lord would say.
- B. This type of speech is fleshly and carnal. It is not glorying in the Lord
- C. Christ's humility in Philippians 2:5
- D. A believer has nothing which he has not received from the Lord in 1 Cor. 4:7
- E. There is nothing good dwelling in the flesh (sarx) according to Romans 7:18
- F. Paul is critical of those who glory in the flesh and he will not put any confidence in the flesh according to Philippians 3:3
- G. It is only in the cross of Christ that Paul glories (Galatians 6:14)

11:18 – Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast.

- A. For the benefit of the objective Paul will speak as a fool.
- B. Paul is not speaking to glorify himself, but to draw attention away from the false teachers to himself
- C. Paul will then use this boasting and self-promotion to lead the people back to the truth
- D. With this strategy Paul is not compromising his soul or his intentions.

11:19 – For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves!

- A. Paul insults the Corinthians ability to correctly judge a fool from a wise man. Paul had come in as a wise man. He served and asked for no money. He spoke of Christ and empowered the people.
- B. The false teachers had come in self-promotion, gloried in themselves, took money and enslaved the people.
- C. So, the Corinthians do not have the best track record of correctly judging character.
- D. Paul is sarcastic when he calls them wise. If the Corinthians were wise they would have seen through the "super-apostles" circus routine.

11:20 – For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face.

- A. The bondage or oppression that the Corinthians had been under is described by Paul with five phases. There are five possible suggestions made for what type of bondage Paul is referring to:
 - a. "makes slaves of you " - Ceremonial law of Judaism
 - i. Galatians 2:4
 - ii. Satan's ministers had established superiority over the believers

- iii. The Believers freedom in Christ had been sacrificed
- b. “devours you “ - “swallowed up” would indicate the “super-apostles” were living on the Corinthians like parasites.
 - i. This would match Romans 16:18 – “For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naïve people.”
 - ii. Philippians 3:19 – “Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven.”
- c. “takes advantage of you “ - The Corinthians had been taken captive. Paul even says in 12:16 that he “caught” them. This is similar to being a fisher of men as in Mark 1:17. But, Paul’s intent was entirely different than the “super-apostles”.
- d. “puts on airs “ – Present themselves as leadership and take away the people’s authority in their own church. The Corinthians had watched as these “super-apostles” came into the Corinthian church and took positions of authority which they did not have, did not earn, did not deserve.
- e. “strikes you in the face” - Then, from these stolen positions of authority the “false-teachers” began to slap the “little people” in the face.
 - i. This can be metaphorically speaking –
 - ii. This can likely be understood as actual physical assaults on the people who dared stand up against the “super-apostles”
 1. Acts 3:2
 2. 1 Cor. 4:1
 3. 1 Tim. 3:3
 4. Titus 1:7
 5. Turn the other cheek in Mat. 5:39 and 1 Peter 2:19 is true, but laying down under false teaching is not godly. There is no honor in tolerating false teachers and imposters. The apostles themselves set the example.

11:21 – **To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that! But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that.**

A. Paul’s sarcasm reaches it peak.

B. Paul is now ready to move into facts that defend his superiority as an apostle and teacher.

11:22 – Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I.

11:23 – Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.

11:24 – Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned.

11:25 – Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea;

11:26 - on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers;

11:27 - in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

11:28 – And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

11:29 - Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?

11:30 – If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

11:31 – The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

11:32 – At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me,

11:33 – “but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.”