

## 2 Corinthians 11:16-33 “Paul’s Deep Concern”

- The folly of the Corinthians to entertain the accusations against Paul was met with Paul’s own folly, of sorts.  
**2 Corinthians 11:1** Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me.
  - The Corinthians had entertained the False Apostles on the basis of their resumes and references
    - But – they preached another Gospel
    - But they promoted themselves
    - But they were only interested in “fleecing the flock”

**16** I say again, let no one think me **a fool**. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little.

- The word **fool** (vv. 16-17, 19, 21; 12:6, 11) is from the adjective *aphrōn*, meaning “ignorant,” not *mōros*, which means “stupid.”<sup>1</sup>
- Paul feels compelled to boast of his career and work as an apostle of Christ after the terrible picture just drawn of the Judaizers. He feels greatly embarrassed in doing it. Some men can do it with complete composure (*sang froid*).<sup>2</sup>

**17** What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

**18** Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast.

- Paul’s conduct here then is not as the example of Christ – to never allow of conduct himself in boasting of himself.
- Paul felt it absolutely necessary here for their sake
- Christian competition – never fruitful to anyone concerned
  - The best \_\_\_\_\_ of any church
  - The greatest
  - The biggest
  - Etc.

**19** For you put up with fools gladly, since you *yourselves* are wise!

**20** For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours *you*, if one takes *from you*, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face.

**21** To *our* shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also.

**22** Are they Hebrews? So *am* I.

Are they Israelites? So *am* I.

Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I.

**23** Are they ministers of Christ?—**I speak as a fool**—**I am more**:

- The irony of what Christians will allow as influences in their lives

vv. verses

<sup>1</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>2</sup>Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Vol.V c1932, Vol.VI c1933 by Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. (2 Co 11:16). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

- Christians are rarely upset when:
  - Our legislature attempts to circumvent the majority's will with regard to Homosexual marriages in California
  - The Ninth District Court of Appeals
    - Removal of "under God" from the pledge of allegiance
- These professional Apostles **accused Paul of three things** apparently:
  - He wasn't a true Hebrew Jew
    - They claimed Paul didn't speak in the Hebrew tongue (Aramaic)
  - He wasn't native Israelite
    - They claimed Paul was from Tarsus, not a Israel born native
  - He wasn't the "seed of Abraham"
    - They claimed Paul wasn't a pure descendent and therefore outside Abraham's promises
- **But Paul accused them of:**
  - They aren't ministers of Christ
    - They obviously didn't have the character of one led by Christ
    - They failed the typical tests of true Apostles in those days:
      - Personally breathed on by Christ Himself. (John 20:19-21)
      - Personally saw the risen Christ in the flesh
      - Personally commissioned or sent by the risen Christ, in the flesh.
      - Only 14 such men mentioned in the N.T.

### Comparing resumes, Paul said:

**in** labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.  
**24** From the Jews five times I received **forty stripes minus one**.

- **This was a Jewish punishment.**
  - The Jewish law lays down the regulations for such scourging (Deuteronomy 25:1–3). The normal penalty was forty stripes, and on no account must that number be exceeded, or the scourger himself was subject to scourging. Therefore they always stopped at thirty-nine. That is why scourging was known as "the forty less one." The detailed regulations for scourging are in the Mishnah, which is the book in which the Jewish traditional law was codified. "They bind his two hands to a pillar on either side, and the minister of the synagogue lays hold on his garments—if they are torn, they are torn, if they are utterly rent, they are utterly rent—so that he bares his chest. A stone is set behind him on which the minister of the synagogue stands with a strap of calf-hide in his hand, doubled and re-doubled, and two other straps that rise and fall thereto. The handpiece of the strap is one handbreadth long and one handbreadth wide, and its end must reach to his navel (i.e. when the victim is struck on the shoulder the

end of the strap must reach the navel). He gives him one third of the stripes in front and two thirds behind, and he may not strike him when he is standing or when he is sitting but only when he is bending down ... and he that smites smites with one hand and with all his might. If he dies under his hand, the scourger is not culpable. But if he gives him one stripe too many, and he dies, he must escape into exile because of him.” That is what Paul suffered *five times*, a scourging so severe that it was liable to kill a man. <sup>3</sup>

**25** Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

- **Beaten with rods three times:**
- This was a Roman punishment.
  - The attendants of the magistrates were called the *lictors* and they were equipped with **rods of birch wood** with which the guilty criminal was chastised. Three times that had happened to Paul. It should never have happened to him at all, because, under Roman law, it was a crime to scourge a Roman citizen. But, when the mob was violent and the magistrate was weak, Paul, Roman citizen though he was, had suffered this, <sup>4</sup>

**26** in journeys often, *in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*

**27** in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—

- **Again and again Paul speaks of the dangers of his travels.** It is true that in his time the roads and the sea were safer than they had ever been, but they were still dangerous. On the whole, the ancient peoples did not relish the sea. “How pleasant it is,” says Lucretius, “to stand on the shore and watch the poor devils of sailors having a rough time.” Seneca writes to a friend, “You can persuade me into almost anything now for I was recently persuaded to travel by sea.” Men regarded a sea voyage as taking one’s life in one’s hands. As for the roads, the brigands were still here. “A man,” says Epictetus, “has heard that the road is infested by robbers. He does not dare to venture on it alone, but waits for company—a legate, or a quaestor, or a proconsul—and joining him he passes safely on the road.” But there would be no official company for Paul. “Think,” said Seneca, “any day a robber might cut your throat.” It was the commonest thing for a traveller to be caught and held to ransom. If ever a man was an adventurous soul, that man was Paul. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>*The letters to the Corinthians*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

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**28** besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: **my deep concern for all the churches.**

**29** Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation*?

**30** If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.

**31** The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

- Paul's accounting of disasters in his life are lacking in most of the book of Acts
- Clearly, Paul was unconcerned about his body to some extent.

**Acts 21:10-14**

**10** And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

**11** When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his *own* hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.' "

**12** Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem.

**13** Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

**14** So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

**Job 13:15** **Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.** Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.

- Though Paul does plead with the Lord to remove a demonic oppression against him in Chapter 12 because of the weakness and pain it brought.

**2 Corinthians 12:8-10**

**8** Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

**9** And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

**10** Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

**32** In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;

**33** but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

- Paul's quick reference to an event in Ephesus that occurred there