

**II CORINTHIANS 10**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Corinthians chapter 10 as we continue our study through this letter that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth.

As we have seen in our study so far, II Corinthians 1-7 primarily dealt with Christian living. How we are to live out our faith.

Then, in II Corinthians 8-9 the focus was Christian giving. Not an easy topic but when you look at what the Word of God has to say, it just makes sense. There is no pressure to give, you give cheerfully and not because you are forced to give!

Tonight, we begin the last section of II Corinthians that primarily deals with Christian guarding, and it covers chapters 10-13. The focus here is Paul is going to show those that opposed him that he has every right to confront them on this issue. The focus really is the unrepentant, those who were coming against Paul. And, as we will see, Paul is going to fight against this rebellion of this minority!

Was Paul insecure and that is why he had to defend himself?

Absolutely not! Paul did not really care what others said about him or felt about him.

Then what was the issue?

The issue was the false teachers that were attacking him and undermining the Gospel message. They came in with another Gospel and Paul was not going to let that fly. It was too dangerous, and their false doctrine could have eternal consequences to those who listen and believe them!

I know that over the years people have gotten mad at me because they think I have too much power. Some have even left the church because of that reason.

Let me say this. My responsibility is to teach you the Word of God so that you may grow and do the work of the ministry, the work that God has called you to do.

In saying that I am also to watch over the sheep and protect them from false teaching, false doctrine, and I don't think I have negated my responsibility here; I take this very seriously.

And if people get mad at me, that is between them and God!

Paul felt the same way and he was not going to let false teachers with their false doctrine confuse and hurt the people that God had entrusted to him and neither will I!

Listen to what Paul said in II Corinthians 11:3-4, **“But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted - you may well put up with it!”**

Do you see his concern about what these false teachers with their false doctrine were bringing into the church! No wonder he was concerned.

What upset Paul and what truly upsets me and discourages me at times, is how easily these false teachers with their false doctrine can infiltrate the local churches. It is so bad that some just welcome them in!

And when they come, they spew their poison!

We should know better because we have the truth and the truth sets us free from the lies that are out there. We not only have the Word of God but the Holy Spirit to show us what is right and what is wrong!

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in II Corinthians chapter 10 and let's see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

**II CORINTHIANS 10****VERSE 1**

As you can see, Paul is changing gears here.

And some feel that this is just too much. So much so that some feel II Corinthians chapters 10-13 are a different letter that Paul wrote.

I don't believe that is true, I see no indication of that. Paul is going to plead with the Corinthians regarding the false prophets who came in and were confusing them.

Clarke put it like this, "Having now finished his directions and advices relative to the *collection for the poor*, he resumes his argument relative to the false apostle, who had gained considerable influence by representing St. Paul as despicable in his person, his ministry, and his influence."

Now these accusers of Paul were basically saying, "***Paul is good at writing tough letters but in person he's all 'meek and mild'. How can we trust someone like that who acts one way when he's with us and another way when he's not - Paul's a hypocrite!***" (II Corinthians 10:10)

Over the years I have seen people confuse my meekness with weakness as well. And thus, they try to take advantage of me and when I don't give in to their demands, it is usually not pretty.

That word, "***meek***" doesn't speak of weakness but it does speak of "power under control." Think of it like this. A horse that has been broken is still powerful but that power is under the control of his master.

The same is true for us. The power we have is under control of our Master, Jesus!

And that is what Paul is saying here. That when he is with them it is with the meekness and gentleness of Christ!

We are not to be bull's in a china shop. We are to be ambassadors for Christ and treat people as Christ would! I hope I have made that clear for you.

## VERSE 2

Here is the problem. Because Paul was gentle at times and then bold at other times, they were coming against him. But Paul did what was needed to be done in each situation, he didn't walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit, the Spirit of God guided his actions.

And yet they accused him of being in the flesh, behaving in the flesh. And yes, he struggled like we all do, but not in the sense the Corinthians were accusing him.

And what Paul is basically saying to them is this. ***“Look, I can use my apostolic authority and be bold when I am with you, but please don't make me come to you like that. Deal with this situation.”***

I also want you to note that not all the Corinthian believers were acting like this, just **“some.”** And that is usually the case, a few are loud enough to make it bad for everyone else and that is what we see here.

## VERSES 3-6

Now some may be confused and a little concerned when Paul says that **“we walk in the flesh.”**

***“Maybe Paul does but not me, I am a spiritual man!”***

First of all, that is a little prideful. Okay, maybe not just a little!

Secondly, that is not what Paul is saying here. Yes, we all walk in the flesh, we have physical bodies.

And because of that, because he is flesh and blood, he struggles with the same things that the Corinthian Christians struggled with and with what we struggle with as well!

But Paul wants them to understand that “**we do not war according to the flesh.**”

In other words, Paul was not going to get into a verbal battle with these false teachers and their false doctrine. He was going to use the spiritual weapons that God had given to him.

What are these weapons? Well, the two offensive weapons are the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, and prayer for our offensive weapons.

Our defensive weapons are the belt of truth which holds us up and keeps us from tripping over ourselves.

The breastplate of righteousness which protects our hearts.

Our feet are firmly planted upon the Gospel of peace.

Our shield of faith can quench the fiery darts that Satan will fire at us.

And the helmet of salvation will protect our mind from the evil one.

We need to understand that these battles are spiritual, and Satan and his forces use people to carry out their work. Don't let Satan draw you into the wrong battle!

Listen again to what Paul says about these battles we are fighting. He wrote, “**. . . for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**” II Corinthians 10:4-5.

Paul is saying that we are fighting against ideologies or beliefs that people have that are not of God. And “**even every high thing [every proud, arrogant, lofty ideology] that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.**”

Think about that. It includes all the false religions of the world. It includes all the cults, atheism, communism, Marxism, secular humanism, and naturalism. They all try to exalt itself above God or in place of God, the God of the Bible!

And please understand that this spiritual warfare that we are fighting is primarily against the brainwashing of the Devil who has pumped into the minds of the people his false doctrines that will keep them away from the saving faith that is found in Christ.

He does not oppose religion, he will use religion for his purposes, but again, it keeps people from saving faith!

Now some laugh at this and think it is foolish. It is not. Maybe that is why the church today is so ineffective, because we are not using the spiritual weapons that God has given us!

Make no mistake about it, the Word of God defeats them, and prayer defeats them, and they will not get at us if we put on our spiritual armor!

Does that really work?

You bet it does!

Clarke tells us, “In like manner the doctrines of the *reformation*, mighty through God, pulled down – demolished and brought into captivity, the whole papal system; and instead of obedience to the pope, the pretended vicar of God upon the earth, obedience to Christ, as the sole almighty Head of the Church, was established, particularly in Great Britain, where it continues to prevail. Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!”

Tragically, Europe has now turned away from God and we are seeing the results and it is not pretty! And it is happening in America as well. We did not learn the lesson from Europe!

Thus, may we bring our thoughts to the obedience of Christ and pull down the strongholds of the enemy in our families, neighborhoods, workplaces, cities and-so-on!

Now, in verse 6 Paul says, “**and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.**” What does that mean?

Many commentators feel that Paul is taking that phrase, “**to punish all disobedience**” from the Roman military court.

Paul says, “We are all soldiers together in this battle, and I am ready to bring in some discipline among these troops.”

In other words, he is speaking of these false teachers with their false doctrine!

## VERSE 7

Some of the Corinthians, most likely the false teachers, judged Paul by his outward appearance and for Paul it was not too impressive.

This description of Paul is from around 200 A. D. and it says that he was, “A man of small stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked.” (Cited in Kruse).

Paul was not tall, dark and handsome and from a worldly appearance, he was nothing. And yet, look at how God used him mightily!

We may not look too strong. We may not look too powerful. But in Christ, nothing will stop us! Never forget that.

Remember when Samuel was to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as King.

The first one went by him; Eliab and God said “No!”

And starting in I Samuel 16:7 we are told, **“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’ So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, ‘Neither has the LORD chosen this one.’ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, ‘Neither has the LORD chosen this one.’ Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘The LORD has not chosen these.’ And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Are all the young men here?’ Then he said, ‘There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.’ And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.’ So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, ‘Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!’ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.”** I Samuel 16:7-13.

God anointed David and look at the man of God he turned out to be, a man after God’s own heart!

May we learn the lesson that we don’t judge by outward appearance but the fruit that is born in a person’s life because God can take a nobody and use Him mightily! We will only be fruitful as we surrender to Him. It is not by our might or our power but by the Holy Spirit working in us and through us for His glory!



VERSES 8-11

Listen to how The Living Translation puts II Corinthians 10:8, **“I may seem to be boasting too much about the authority given to us by the Lord. But our authority builds you up; it doesn’t tear you down. So I will not be ashamed of using my authority.”**

Please understand that Paul used his apostolic authority to build up the saints, not to tear them down.

But these false teachers were utilizing their false authority, something the Lord did not give to them, to tear down their faith!

I think you can see why Paul is letting them have it!

And Paul’s authority came from the Lord, not like these false teachers, and Paul was not ashamed to use it!

Now those who were coming against Paul used this to justify their position – that Paul was bold, tough in his letters but in person he was weak, a Casper milk toast you might say!

And Paul’s response to them is basically, ***“If you want me to be hard in person like I am in my letters, so be it! You know, I’ll be back!”***

I don’t think that was what they were looking for but when someone is against you, there is nothing you can do to please them.

Paul loved the Lord dearly and he gave them what they needed when they needed it, all with the idea of restoration and not destruction.

Yes, destruction of the flesh nature if that was what was needed, but building them up in the faith, building up the inner man!

VERSE 12

Those who came against Paul, these false teachers, looked at themselves, according to their standards and they were proud of it.

Paul is saying that is not the standard he measures himself by, the standard is God, and he is pressing on toward Christ and not self-exaltation!

Folks, all that we have, all we can do comes from the Lord. May we not forget that!

They were measuring themselves by themselves, comparing themselves among themselves, the standard of man, and that is *NEVER* a good thing!

And Paul is saying that this is not a wise thing to do. This is not smart, and the reality is, it is not of God!

It is as Trapp tells us, “Oh, pray to be preserved from this perilous pinnacle of self-exaltation. Look into the perfect law of liberty, and draw nigh to God. The nearer we come to God, the more rottenness we find in our bones.”

How true that is!

VERSES 13-16

Paul’s sphere of authority was not unlimited, but it did include the Corinthians as he founded the church in Corinth and worked with them for 18 months!

Paul knew his limits and stuck to them while some in Corinth have stepped over their boundaries and into Paul’s sphere of authority and that was wrong!

VERSES 17-18

Here in II Corinthians 10:17 Paul is quoting out of Jeremiah 9:24. And I would like to read from that portion of Scripture in Jeremiah to give you a clear understanding of what this is all about.

In Jeremiah 9:23-24 we are told, **“Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the LORD.”**

In other words, there is no room for us to boast in our glory, in what we have done, but only in the Lord and what He has done.

Perspective is everything and Paul rightly understood that if we are to glory it is only in the Lord!

It is as Hughes tells us, “In the Christian Church, indeed, self-commendation should be viewed with suspicion as a mark of disqualification.”

Not only that but this is also important. We tend to beat ourselves up because of our failures or what we think are failures.

We need to remember that God is looking for our *FAITHFULNESS* because it is the Lord who brings forth the fruit in our lives.

Think about the ministry of Jeremiah and many would say that he was a failure! Why is that? Because there was not a lot of fruit, in fact there were not many people listening to him!

Some forty plus years of ministry and nothing!

And yet, God saw the work of Jeremiah as good because Jeremiah was faithful in the work that God called him to do!

You see, what is important is what the Lord says, that is what truly counts!

Listen to the charge to Solomon by his father David in I Chronicles 28:9-10. We are told, **“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it.”**

You see, God knows our hearts, He knows our thoughts, and do we really think we can fool Him by boasting in what we have done?

Absolutely not!

Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up.

Don't touch His glory or He will bring you down!

Listen to these words from Psalm 24:7-10 where we are told, **“Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.”**

Lift up your head, open up your heart and let the King of glory come in and once you have, make sure you don't take that glory away from Him for **He is the King of glory!**

As we move into II Corinthians chapter 11, we see the heart of Paul for the believers in Corinth. He is their spiritual father and thus, look at how this chapter is divided up:

II Corinthians 11:1-4 - His jealousy for them.

II Corinthians 11:5-11 - His generosity towards them.

II Corinthians 11:12-28 - His anxiety towards them.

II Corinthians 11:29-33 – His example for them.

## **II CORINTHIANS 11**

### **VERSES 1-4**

We see here Paul's jealousy for the Corinthian believers!

Now, when we hear the word, "**jealousy**" we tend to think of it as being bad. But that is not always the case. Just like with anger, there is a righteous anger.

Now, in regard to jealousy, let me give you this example to show you that jealousy is not always bad.

I am jealous over my wife in that I would come against anyone or anything that would threaten our love for each other.

Now, think about the idea that God is jealous towards us. In other words, He feels the same way, He does not want to share us with any false God.

Of this Redpath tells us, “God’s jealousy, therefore, is a concern for the holiness, integrity, purity of ethics, and Christian standards for His people. Because of this, He will refuse to brook a rival in our affections for Him, not because of a selfish greed which wishes us all for His own possession, but simply because He knows that His great purpose for us of purity and holiness of life depends on our personal surrender and submission to His purpose.”

And here in II Corinthians Paul, as their spiritual father, is jealous towards them.

And to show this love for them, Paul paints this picture of a loving father whose daughter is engaged to be married and he is keeping her pure so that he can present her to her husband with joy and not with sorrow.

You see, one day the Corinthians would stand before the Lord and Paul wanted to present them as pure, as holy.

If someone was unfaithful, even during the engagement period, it was considered adultery and the engagement could be broken by divorce.

What was Paul so concerned about?

False teachers with their false doctrine being brought into the church!

The enemy, the Devil, deceived Eve. And he was crafty, he was slick, and he corrupted her mind just like the Devil tries to do with our mind!

In fact, Paul says they are being deceived by these same lies, half-truths that are taking them away “**from the simplicity that is in Christ**” or the “simplicity in the sense of single-mindedness.”

You see, false teachers were seducing them with “**another Jesus**” and a “**different gospel.**”

And what Satan did back then, he continues to do today. He deceives us with another Jesus, not the Jesus of the Bible but one that is made in the minds of men.

He brings to us another Gospel, not the Gospel of Grace but of works, you have to do this, you can't do that!

And they were crafty with their deceptions. They taught that you were saved by grace but then you must also keep the Law to maintain your salvation.

Foolishness. If we could be good enough to be saved, then why did God have to become flesh to die for our sins?

Make no mistake about it, the Law has no power to save, it only shows we are sinners, that we have broken the Law.

Only Jesus can save and as Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

You see, we are saved by Grace through Faith and not by the Law through works!

And today, we see this false Jesus and different Gospel being preached all over the place. It is a social gospel, it is this, it is that. And I am sorry, but I really don't care what you or anyone else thinks.

But I do care what God thinks and has told us in His Word! Don't put up with the false teachers with their false Gospel! Don't accept these things!

Don't be deceived, have a single-mindedness towards Christ according to the Scriptures!

VERSES 5-11

In these verses we see the generosity that Paul had towards these Corinthian believers. And we will look at this closer, but he did not force them to pay him, even though they should have taken care of Paul. He spent a long time there teaching them and loving them, caring for them!

Now, as we read this, we need to understand what Paul is saying here, who he is referring to.

When Paul says that he is not inferior to these “*super-apostles*” or these false teachers, even though he might not be able to speak in a sophisticated way, able to articulate things like these false teachers were able, he has the truths of God and that is what is important!

It wasn't that Paul didn't speak powerfully but his speaking was not polished, it was not entertaining like the Greeks like it.

But that truly was not the concern of Paul; his desire was to take the knowledge of God he had and bring it to the people, the Gospel message, as I have said.

Let me explain it like this.

Asked to quote Psalm 23, the famous Shakespearean actor articulated each and every phrase perfectly.

Then the host of the party asked his pastor, who was also in attendance, to quote the same Psalm.

The pastor lacked the rhythmic cadence, the powerful voice, and the smooth speech. All he had was a tear rolling down his cheek. “I know the psalm,” said the actor. “But this man knows the Shepherd.”



That is what God desires of us. We must continue to grow, to know our Savior and as we do, we might not speak in a polished way, but we know the Shepherd, we know Jesus and we bring people to Him, the One we love!

Now, and some are confused by this, when Paul speaks of robbing other churches, they assume the worst.

And yes, in the Classical Greek this word was used for someone who stripped a dead soldier of his armor.

But as you read through this you can clearly see that Paul is saying that the churches in Macedonia were supporting him and the work he was doing in Corinth while the Corinthians themselves should have been supporting this work, supporting him, they had the resources and yet they didn't use them.

So, in a sense, the Macedonian churches were being robbed, not really by Paul, but by the Corinthians and their refusal to support Paul in the work.

And thus, Paul was not a burden to the Corinthian Christians; they could not place that upon him.

And Paul wants them to know that he did not force them to pay him. Now, why did Paul boast about not taking money from the Corinthian Christians?

Paul loved them and he is using sarcasm to expose these false teachers, these false apostles.

You see, these false teachers boasted in their wealth, in their easy lifestyle and Paul is exposing them, that they are not on the same level as he is. Sound familiar today? It should!

As we read on, and we will break this section down, we will be looking at Paul's anxiety towards these Corinthian believers. Why?

Again, it is because of the false teachers with their false doctrine that was deceiving these believers by giving them a different Jesus, a different Gospel! Look at what Paul says next in regard to his anxiety towards them.

#### VERSES 12-15

First of all, Paul says that he wants to “**cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity . . .**”

He could be speaking of the Corinthian believers supporting him and he did not want them to do that because he did not want to be like the false teachers who were getting paid for what they were doing.

And I also think that Paul wanted to *CUT THEM OFF*, not give them an opportunity to share their false doctrine and if they did, because Paul spoke forth the truths of God found in the Word of God, it would set these Corinthian believers free from those lies of the Devil!

Today, these false teachers and teachings are embraced by the church, shame on us!

And think about this. How many today would dare call these teachers “**deceitful workers**”?

Not many, in fact, like I have said, these false teachers are embraced and supported while the true servants of God are looked down upon.

Why is that?

Paul tells us in II Timothy 4:2-5, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

You can go and find for yourself teachers that will tell you what you want to hear, but if it is not of God, if it is not found in the Word of God, you are being deceived by people who look like believers, but are not!

Don't be fooled by outward appearance, by fast talking, by a charismatic personality, hold all things to the light of God's Word and you will not be tricked, you will not be deceived!

And these guys are good. They are slick. They will tell you that they know Hebrew, they know Greek, they found secrets in God's Word that many have missed, and yet, when it comes to the ABC's of Christianity, the basics, they don't share that because they don't believe it!

Hughes tells us that “an individual has only to make the most preposterous claims for himself in order to gain an enthusiastic and undiscerning following.”

How true that is today! I have seen it and, I think like Paul, it breaks my heart!

Now, when we think of Satan, we get this picture in our mind of this ugly monster running around in his red underwear, a long-pointed tail, a sinister smile and a pitchfork in his hand.

Notice what Paul says of Him, that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, he looks like a teacher of righteousness, but he mixes the truths of God with subtle errors that will lead people to damnation and not salvation!

And not only does Satan do this, but so does his workers, these false teachers that were in Paul's day and continue on today working their deceptions, their lies and many fall prey to them.

Let's be wise, let's pay attention, let's bring everything to God and lay it alongside the Word of God to see if it is true or not because the angel of light and his ministers are working hard to confuse people and lead them astray!

One writer summed it up like this and he hits the nail on the head. He wrote,

We shouldn't be surprised when false teachers seem to live so righteously, when their standards seem to be so moral, when they stress the importance of family and separation from the defilement of the world. We shouldn't be surprised that their TV commercials sound so right and look so warm and fuzzy, nor that their temple in Salt Lake City glows with light -for Paul says Satan himself transforms into an angel of light.

You see, Satan will go either way with people. If people want to be dark and devilish and heavy, he'll meet them there. But if people want to be exemplary and upstanding, he'll meet them there. As an angel of light, he'll say, "You don't need to admit you're a sinner and need a Savior. Just live morally.

It's interesting to me that so many who talk about near-death experiences report seeing a warm, bright light beckoning them - the implication being that if we are "good people," regardless of the route we choose, we'll all make it to the bright light at the end of the tunnel.

But wait. That bright light may not be the Father of Lights. It may be the one who transforms himself to appear as an angel of light. It might be a train barreling down the track in your direction. Because Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, we should be wary about the conclusions of those who write about such experiences.

- Source Unknown

Be alert, be warned, and cut off those workers of deceit, don't allow them to confuse you with their false doctrine, their false teaching, I don't care how good they sound, I don't care if they are your friend or not. The fear of God should cause you to draw close to the Lord no matter what!

#### VERSES 16-21

Paul didn't like to talk about himself, to boast about himself, but these false teachers loved to boast about the things they were doing and so Paul is going to give a defense, “**not according to the Lord**” or not focusing on the Lord but upon himself, and like I said, he didn't like to do that.

In II Corinthians 4:5 Paul said, “**For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.**”

And Paul, being a little sarcastic here towards the Corinthians, tells them that they listen to fools gladly, these false teachers, and you would think that they could at least hear what he had to say.

Now when you compare what the false teachers boasted about and what Paul boasted about, they are worlds apart.

From reading these verses it would seem that these false teachers were legalists who tried to put the Corinthians back into bondage, back under the Law that Christ set them free from.

Instead of leading the sheep like a shepherd does they were beating the sheep, driving the sheep like cattle and the people just accepted it.

Darby tells us, “It is wonderful what people will suffer from what is false – very much more than they will endure from what is true.” How tragic.

And this is interesting to me. Paul talks about these teachers and their teachings, that they were bringing them into bondage, devouring them, these teachers were fleecing the flock, they exalted themselves, and they even struck some of them on the face. What is that about?

According to rabbinical tradition, it was the right of the teacher to strike the student who didn't listen to him or agree with him.

My pastor gives us this perspective, he wrote,

This is a strange but all too common thing - I've seen it in my own ministry.

I have seen over the years that the people I have been there for the most seem to love and appreciate me the least.

Yet when they go to another church where the pastor is arrogant and harsh with them, they absolutely love him!

- Pastor Phil Ballmaier

### VERSES 22-28

As you read this you can see that Paul is coming against the Judaizes, who came in with Jesus and keeping the Law.

And Paul shows them, that if you want to be legalistic about it, he has the legal right to be an apostle. Here is the proof.

Paul says that he is a Hebrew, that he spoke the Hebrew language.

He says that he is an Israelite or a descendant from Jacob and not Esau.

He is of the seed of Abraham, in line to receive the promises of God.

Now does blood ancestry mean anything?

Not at all and yet these false teachers, probably Jewish, held onto that and Paul is saying it is foolish.

It is not your lineage from where you are born, but are you born again, for it is then you are a child of God, a descendant of Abraham by faith as Paul tells us in Galatians 3:29, “**And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.**”

And here is the problem for these Judaizers. They were professors of Christ, but they were not possessors of Christ and that was the difference between Paul and these false teachers.

We see that even today, many who profess Christ, but it is another Jesus, it is a different Gospel, and thus, they don’t possess Him, they are not saved!

Paul preached Christ that flowed from the truth; they preached a Christ that flowed from their hearts, which are desperately wicked!

And Paul shows them what a true apostle of Christ is all about. The things that he suffered for Christ! And he is not boasting, he is just showing them the difference between the false teachers and a true teacher of Christ!

Paul was beaten for his faith in Christ. He was stoned for his faith in Christ. He was thrown in prison for his faith in Christ. He traveled many dangerous miles for Christ. He was shipwrecked.

All these things Paul went through, why?

Because the love of Christ compelled him or constrained him to go forward for Christ and that should also be what moves us, the love of Christ. (II Corinthians 5:14)

Now let me say this because some will take this to the wrong conclusion. It was not just that Paul lived a hard life and that made him a minister of Jesus Christ, not at all! Think about all the people that are living hard lives or have lived a hard life and in no way are they ministers of Jesus Christ.

Paul could have lived anyway he wanted to but he freely choose this life of servanthood, of surrender and all the hardships that came with it. It is as Paul said in Galatians 2:20, **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”**

And I don’t know about you, but my life does not even come close to all that Paul went through.

And, if all those things were not enough, Paul adds this; **“besides the other things . . .”** You have to be kidding? Even more?

Yes, even more but notice that Paul’s concern is not for himself and what he was going through.

Paul was not some *Sour Sally*, or *Bitter Bill*, or even *Depressed David*, because he was focused on others instead of himself, he was interested in how the brethren were doing.

And I will tell you this, if that is your heart, you will not have time to focus on all you are going through.

Let’s face it; if each of us spent a day focusing on all the wrongs, all that we are going through, we would all be depressed!

But we are to be others centered and if we are then as we minister to others, God will minister to us and He will refresh us for God is a debtor to no man!



And now we will look at the last section here in this chapter, Paul's example to them.

### VERSES 29-33

Make no mistake about it, Paul had passion for the brethren, he wanted them to grow, he watched over them, he didn't want these false teachers to come in and rob them of the joy they had in the Lord!

And what did Paul boast in?

What were his credentials?

The scars on his body!

The illnesses he suffered in his life!

The hardships he went through!

It is as Clarke said, "I will not boast of my natural or acquired powers; neither in what God has done by me; but rather in what I have suffered for Him."

That was Paul!

That was not these false teachers though!

And Paul says that God knows that he is not lying, that this is the truth for those who might doubt or try to discredit him, not believe him and all he has gone through for the Lord. He did this because God's love compelled him to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost!

As you look at II Corinthians 11:32-33 Paul may be referring to his first real encounter with hardships, sufferings for Christ.

This story is found in Acts 9:20-25 where we are told, **“Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, ‘Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?’ But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.”**

The Lord spoke through Ananias and warned Paul after he was born again, after he was saved, **“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.’”** Acts 9:15-16.

The suffering had begun for Paul!

Also, Paul tells us that Aretas was the King in Damascus. That would date this event somewhere between 37-39 A. D., which would then make Paul’s conversion somewhere between 34-36 A. D.

Let me close with this.

In a world that is biblically illiterate, may God give us a passion for His Word as Jesus said in John 8:31-32, **“... ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”**

Truth, God’s truth leads to freedom. The Devil’s lies lead to bondage. Don’t fall prey to the angel of light and his false teachers but expose the darkness with the light of God’s Word!