

2 Cor 10:13-16

13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us – a sphere which especially includes you.

14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ;

15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere,

16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles.

He was effective & successful because he worked within his calling to ministry.

Are you doing what the Lord has called you to do?

The Lord has given you a special ability, special gifts that only you have.

You may say to yourself, well, I'm not sure where God has me or what He has for me.

Good, I'm glad you feel like that.

- Now let me tell you what He has for you.

He has within you if you're a Believer, the Spirit of the Living God

- He will empower you,
- Guide you, give you strength in your weakness.
- He will give you boldness when you are fearful,
- and peace in your fear.

And if you're wondering what it is the Lord wants you to do,

- He wants you to be faithful to Him.

To the corrupt church of Thyatira, Jesus said to hold fast what you have till I come.

- In other words, hold on to the faith!

17 But "he who glories, let him glory in the Lord." 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

Another reason for Paul's success,

- His glory or his boast was in Christ alone!

Ps 70:4

4 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
And let those who love Your salvation say continually,
"Let God be magnified!"

- People boasting in themselves become proud.

John said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

It won't be anyone on this earth that will tell us,

- "well done good and faithful servant."

To commend is "to present as worthy." So Paul is saying, don't present **yourself** as worthy, but let the Lord present you as worthy!

As we enter chapter 11 let's keep in mind that having authority can corrupt a person.

Jesus never abused His authority.

- He gave people free will.

Paul was addressing the false apostles who were attempting to malign him

- in hopes of drawing people to themselves
- and to their false doctrine.

In Acts 20 Paul reminds the church that he spent 3 years watching over them night and day.

- A good shepherd watches his sheep.

Ps 23:4

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

A staff was used to guide sheep, and the rod was used to fight off wolves.

Jesus said, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

2 Cor 11:1-4

1 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly – and indeed you do bear with me.
2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed (**harmozō - to fit or to join**) you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3
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. 4 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!

When we love someone we will protect those relationships.

We are going to protect our loved ones from harm

- and from any others that may attempt
- to infiltrate and destroy those relationships.

The picture Paul is painting here is that of a father's daughter

- who is engaged to be married.

Paul is protecting the Corinthians from

- the false apostles who were bringing in a different Jesus,
- a different spirit and a different gospel.

2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed (harmozō - to fit or to join) you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Paul was jealous for the Corinthians as God is jealous for His church.

Paul's encouragement: to remain spiritually pure before the Lord, hence he says

- he has betrothed her to one husband.

Colin Kruse said the following about the betrothal contract:

Marriage among the Jews of Paul's day involved two separate ceremonies, the betrothal and the nuptial ceremony which consummated the marriage. Usually a year elapsed between the two, but during that period the girl was regarded legally as the man's wife, while socially she remained a virgin. The betrothal contract was binding, and could be broken only by death or a formal written divorce. Unfaithfulness or violation of a betrothed girl was regarded as adultery and punishable as such.

Isaac and Rebekah: Abraham wanted a wife for his son so he sent his servant out to find a suitable bride for Isaac.

- The servant met Rebekah.
- She willingly went with the servant to become Isaac's wife.

At that point she knew

- she was leaving her family,
- and everything she knew
- and she was on her way to starting a new life
- in a strange place to her.

In a sense just like the Corinthians, we are engaged to be married to Christ.

That marriage will take place when Jesus returns for His bride, Rev 19.

2 Cor 11:3

3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived (to lead out of the right way into error) Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Satan is the master of deception. Don't become complacent thinking to yourself, **"I can never be deceived."**

Matt 24:21-24

21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. 23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

This will be during the great tribulation

The serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field. **Genesis 3**

- he was more crafty and shrewd.

Compare **Genesis 2:16-17** to **Genesis 3:2-3**

- Eve abandoned the pure word of God for a paraphrase.

She made mistakes

- when quoting what she thought she remembered.

Gen 2:16-17

16 And the Lord God commanded the man (Adam), saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Gen 3:1-3

1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" (In other words, there may be SOME trees you can eat from)

the conversation begins with Satan questioning God. He plants a seed of doubt in the mind of Eve.

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

Eve does not mention "every tree" or "all trees."

She said, "we may eat the fruit of the trees."

- God's goodness in giving all of the trees
- is being dimmed in her mind.

She was beginning to feel that God's command was too strict.

- "neither shall you touch it."

God never said that. He simply said, "you must not eat of it."

That's how sin begins, by harboring suggestive thoughts.

Paul feared the Corinthians would be deceived by the craftiness of Satan.

He feared as the serpent deceived Eve, their minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Here **simplicity** means **singleheartedness**.

- He wanted them to be devoted to Jesus alone.

Paul was concerned for the Corinthians that

- they would be persuaded by the lies of the false teachers.

2 Cor 11:4

4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached (allōs - another numerically but of the same kind), or if you receive a spirit which you have not received, (héteron - another of a different kind. This is not the spirit of God), or a different gospel which you have not accepted — you may well put up with it! (héteron - another of a different kind. This is not the gospel of Christ)

When a person thinks that it's not enough that Jesus died in their place,

- they diminish the importance of the cross.

1 Cor 2:2

2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

William Barclay tells the story of a group of people at a dinner party who agreed that each should recite something after the meal. A well-known actor rose and, with all the art of effective public speaking and dramatic art, recited the Twenty-third Psalm. He sat down to tremendous applause.

A quiet man followed him with his own recitation of this psalm. At first there were a few snickers. But by the time he had ended, his hearers had fallen into a stillness that was more eloquent than any applause.

When he sat down, the actor leaned across the table and said, "Sir, I know the psalm, but you know the shepherd" (Barclay 1954:247).

You will not recognize the false Christ's unless you know the real Christ.

John 10:4

4 And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

Abraham knew the truth, and he believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

God changes people from within, not from without like the law of Moses.

2 Cor 11:5-15

5 For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles.

2 Cor 11:5

5 Yet I don't feel that these marvelous "messengers from God," as they call themselves, are any better than I am.

TLB

6 Even though I am untrained in speech, yet I am not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested among you in all things. (in other words, we've been well known among you in all things.)

- Paul was not trained as a public speaker

He was however very knowledgeable in the message he brought to the Corinthians.

After Paul was saved, he went to the desert of Arabia

- where he was instructed by the Lord in the scriptures.

After his training he when he went from city to city

- explaining the scriptures, OT and NT

7 Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge?

Paul was a tent maker,

- he earned money by working,

The false teachers wanted the Corinthians to believe that

- the reason Paul didn't charge them was because he was a babler.

8 I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you.

Paul used a military metaphor in this verse when he says that he robbed other churches.

- This was a military term depicting how a first century soldier
- would "strip bare" his enemies.

Paul wanted them to know that

- in order to serve them,
- he had to plunder the churches in Macedonia for his wages.

9 And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows!

12 But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast.

A true test would be to stop supporting the false teachers, then see how long they'd stick around. They weren't shepherds, they were hirelings.

John 10:11-13

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

They transform themselves. They wear a mask. Jesus called them wolves who come to you in sheep's clothing.

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

We have visuals of Jesus and of Paul. But we also have visuals of Satan, the devil. We picture him as this red person with horns and a pitch fork and fire around him.

But Satan was an angel of light in the beginning, beautiful and splendid. God didn't create the devil, He created an angel of light. But he chose to rebel against God.

So Paul says:

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

These people weren't apostles, they were imposters.

- They were energized by Satan.

Three times in verses 13-15, Paul used the word *transform*

- in referring to their work.

This Greek word simply means "to disguise, to masquerade."

2 Cor 11:16-21

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. 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. 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.

The false profits showed up in Corinth uninvited. We don't have to go out to them, Jesus said, they will come to you in sheep's clothing.