

## 2 Corinthians 11 Pt 2 vv 16-33

Jesus

**2 Corinthians 11:12** ...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. 13 For **such are false apostles, deceitful workers**, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 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.**

Paul continues to warn the Corinthians  
*Be Discerning or Be Deceived...*

### III. Reluctant Boasting

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!** [1 Cor. Kings] 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.**

You've become so Intellectually Superior/So Tolerant you gladly put up w/fools  
Fools who want to use you for their own ends...

- E.g. Shepherding Movement 1972-85. I don't do *anything* unless...
- **You gladly put up w/teachers who seek to...**
  1. Enslave you
  2. Devour you
  3. Rob you
  4. Exalt themselves by demeaning you...
  5. **Strike you on the face** if you do not understand?

You say we're weak because we didn't do those things? *I'll show you weak*  
Yet Paul is fighting for them...Paul is compelled to give his BC Testimony...

### IV. Suffering for Christ

22 [These teacher...] 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:

- **Minister:** gr. *diakonos* Humble servant
- Are they ministers of Christ? Servants?

Have they served you? Have they suffered for you?

I sound like a fool but...I've served you more

**Acts 9:16 [Jesus to Paul] ...I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.**

**23b ...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. 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**; 26 in journeys often [18+ journeys as sea], 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**— 28 besides the other things, what **comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.**

Paul's Commitment to Present the Betrothed Corinthians to Jesus as a Chaste Virgin  
Willing to Suffer for Jesus and His Bride...Saul, Saul...

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

*I was made weak ...that I might minister to the weak  
I was provoked ...that I might minister to those tempted*

IOWs God uses the pain/hurt in our life for the good of others

**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.**

God knows I'm not boasting of my own strengths  
I'm boasting in Jesus strength...Who uses my weakness, even humiliation for His glory...

**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.**

So what? So it was humiliating...I can now help those who have been humiliated  
Jesus was in all ways tempted/Able to sympathies in our weakness  
Do the fancy false apostles do that/ Or are they busy counting nickels/noses?

From 2 Cor 11:30 – Ch 12

Paul rejoices in both His Weaknesses and Revelations/Humbling and Miracles  
Concludes w/his Love for the Bride of Christ/Desire to Present her to Him Undefined

## 2 Corinthians 12 Pt 1 vv 1-10

Jesus

Paul's non-boasting re. his experiences vs Super-Duper false apostles

### I. Vision of Paradise

1 It is doubtless **not profitable for me to boast**. I will come to **visions and revelations** of the Lord:

It is absolutely unprofitable for me to boast about me so...

2 **I know a man in Christ** who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was **caught up** to the **third heaven**. 3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 how he was **caught up into Paradise** and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Visions are Real in OT/NT [12+]

- *Not asleep* but awake as Peter of Roof
- *Never contradicts* the written Word of God
- *Never exalted* above the Authority of the Word

I know a guy who actually went to Heaven  
Lived to talk about it..

- **Caught up to the Third Heaven**
  1. Atmosphere: Blue Sky
  2. Space: Starry Sky
  3. Abode of God
- **Caught up to Paradise:** Persian. Park, preserve, enclosed garden, forest
  1. *Heard* inexpressible words
  2. *Conversation* Unlawful for any man to try to repeat

*Caught up* to Heaven

**Isaiah 6:1** In the year that King Uzziah died, **I saw the Lord sitting on a throne**, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

**Revelation 4:1** *After these things* [gr. *meta-tauta*. i.e. After the church age of Ch 1-3] I [John] looked, and behold, a **door standing open in heaven**. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "**Come up here**, and I will show you things which must take place *after this* [meta-tauta]." 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. 3 And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

1. **Isaiah** was caught up
2. **John** was caught up
3. **Paul** was caught up
4. **We will be caught up...**

**vv 2,4 Caught up:** The Greek verb *harpazō* [ἁρπάζω], which means "to seize, snatch, or carry off by force", translates into Latin primarily as *rapiemur* [lit. "we will be caught up") or the verb *rapio* (meaning "to seize or snatch"). This is the exact root of the English word "rapture"

**1 Thessalonians 4:16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds **to meet the Lord in the air**. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore **comfort one another with these words.**

*The Rapture is in the Bible. We will be Raptured*  
We will be Caught up to meet the Lord Jesus in the air to take us home

**John 14:2b ...I go to prepare a place for you.** And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.**

- **We will be caught up meta-*tauta*:** I.e. *After* the church age

**Romans 11:25b ...blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.** 26 And so all Israel will be saved...

- Paul didn't hesitate speaking of his weakness/afflictions
- But of his Visions/Revelations, **Paul says...**

*So I know this guy...*

5 Of such a one I will boast; yet **of myself I will not boast**, except in my infirmities. 6 For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. **But I refrain**, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.

Caught up to the Third Heaven

- **When did this occur?**
  1. **Saul:** Guilty of stoning innocent people to death
  2. **Stephen Testifies of Jesus...**

**Acts 7:57** [Pharisees inc. Saul] ...cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they **cast him out of the city and stoned him**. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a **young man named Saul**. 59 And they **stoned Stephen as he was calling on God** and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Saul gets saved on his way to Damascus/Becomes Paul  
Jesus says *I will show you how many things you must suffer for My name's sake*  
[Acts 9:16]

- **1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey: Paul testified of Jesus....**

**Acts 14:18b** ...Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, **they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city**, supposing him to be dead. 20 However, when the disciples gathered around him, **he rose up** and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, **"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."**

- Is this the time Paul is speaking of?
- What did Paul hear in Heaven?
- Did he also see? It was a vision.
- Did what he hear come out in his letters?

Point: 14 yrs previous Paul had a vision he chose NOT TO boast about  
I know a guy...

I myself will not boast...I will refrain  
Lest you change your opinion of me: My Weak Appearance/Contemptible Speech

## **II. Thorn in the Flesh** This Thing

**7** And **lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations...**

- The I know a guy, guy revealed **v7**: Paul himself

But...So I did not get big head because of what God revealed to me...

**7b** ...a **thorn in the flesh** was given to me, a **messenger of Satan** to buffet me, lest **I be exalted above measure.**

- For 14 yrs. Paul has been humbled by God using Satan.

Even the devil is God's devil. [Luther]

- *Humbled lest I be exalted above measure* **2X**. Was Paul tempted by pride?

God gifts Paul a *Humilifyer*: Thorn in the Flesh to keep him humble after vision  
Not a little thorn: A Messenger of Satan to Buffet...

- **gr. kol-af-id'-zo** To strike with the fist, give one a blow with the fist w/insult
- **rt. kol-ad'-zo** lop or prune, as trees and wings. Chastise, correct

Israel was told to wipe out drive out their enemies...

**Numbers 33:55** ...**But if you do not drive out** the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain *shall be irritants* in your eyes and **thorns in your sides...**

God Utilizes all things in His Sovereign Economy...

**Judges 3:1** Now these are the nations which the Lord left, that He might **test Israel** by them [thorns in the flesh] ...this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel **might be taught to know war...** **4** And they were left, that **He might test Israel by them**, to know **whether they would obey...**

The OT is a Physical Representation of NT Spiritual Truths  
Here: God will teach us to war by leaving an irritant/thorn causing us to turn to Him

**Psalm 144:1** Blessed be the **Lord my Rock**, Who **trains my hands for war**, And **my fingers for battle...**

**Psalm 18:34** He teaches my hands to make war, So that **my arms can bend a bow of bronze.**

He Trains. He Teaches. How?  
Gifts us a Humilifyer to Keep us Useful/On our toes

- God gives us a personalized perpetual. That thing again?
- That we might Receive **His strength/ability** to go out/Help others who also hurt

At first Paul didn't understand why God allowed Pain

## 8 Concerning **this thing...**

Concerning *this thing!* God sent *a thing*  
A thing we are so tired of we don't even name it anymore. Just thing.

God gives us a Personal Trainer to spar with  
I was given *this thing* so my head doesn't look like Grapefruit on a toothpick

- **God sent this thing...**

**8b ...I pleaded with the Lord three times** that [this thing] might depart from me. **9** And He said to me, "**My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.**"

**God:** I'm leaving the thing. **Us:** Why?  
Because only when I deplete all *the human strength you think you have...*  
*Can My supernatural strength* be made complete in you

**Supernatural Strength:** You don't have it because you don't believe in it. You don't believe in it because you haven't experienced it. You won't experience it until *in your pain* you resolve to relinquish your desire to *escape the pain* and trust God *in the pain to accomplish His Eternal Purpose* in this, your **temporary suffering**. [NJC]

- The thing helps us keep an eternal perspective. For now...

My Grace will be sufficient in the Pain and...  
My Strength made Perfect in you as you yield your Strength to Mine

Paul prayed 3X not understanding the Purpose in the Pain  
Jesus also prayed 3X...

**Matthew 26:44b ...and prayed the third time, saying the same words...Not My will but Yours**

We can pray to avoid pain if it is God's will  
We must be ready to accept His answer which may be *My grace is sufficient*

My Grace *toward you will be* sufficient in the Pain  
My Strength in you will Shine through your Weakness/Cracked pot for My Glory

**9b ...Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

Attitude: I no longer see my weakness/pain as a burden to be lifted, but...  
An opportunity for God to display His strength to others

As we decrease and He increases  
Only then will the Power of Christ rest Upon us

- What was *Paul's thing*...

I generally find that each expositor has selected that particular thorn which had pierced his own bosom. [Spurgeon]

- Job/Relationship
- Tragedy/Hardships
- Mental/Emotional
- Spiritual/Physical...

**Galatians 4:13** You know that because of **physical infirmity** I preached the gospel to you at the first. 14 And my **trial which was in my flesh** you did not despise or reject **...15b** I bear you witness that, if possible, you would **have plucked out your own eyes and given them** to me.

God uses the enemy for His purpose [E.g. Job]  
God gave Paul a messenger of Satan while remaining completely Sovereign

- Corinth made fun of *the thing* in Paul's life, yet...

Paul became settled *w/the thing* God gave him  
He knew the thing was key to his humility/Thus the power of Christ in him

**10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake.**

- **For Christ's sake and our growth...**

**Romans 5:3 ...we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance** 4 and perseverance, **character**; and character, **hope**.

**10b ...For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

**v10 Amplified:** So I am well pleased with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, and with difficulties, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak [in human strength], then I am strong [truly able, truly powerful, truly drawing from God's strength].

There is Purpose in the Pain God allows:  
Humility. Strength. Growth. Usefulness to God and others