

2 Corinthians 10

Jesus

God so loved the world that He gave
Thank God for His Indescribable Gift of Jesus!

- Paul is now planning a visit to Corinth...

I. Spiritual Warfare w/in the Church

10 Now **I**, Paul, myself am **pleading with you** by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but **being absent am bold toward you**.

Paul implores the Church of God in Corinth
Those accusing him of being Tough when away/Timid in their presence

Paul applies Jesus Meekness; i.e. Strength under control
Holy Spirit enabled/empowered Self-Discipline

Proverbs 14:17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of wicked intentions is hated. [Knee jerk reactions are foolish]

Ecclesiastes 7:9 Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry For **anger rests in the bosom of fools**.

James 1:19 ... let every man be **swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath**; 20 for the **wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God**.

Proverbs 16:32 He who is **slow to anger** is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

Proverbs 17:27 He who has knowledge **s pares his words**, And a **man of understanding is of a calm spirit**.

Paul is not moved by provocation
Paul does not *react*/Instead Paul *acts* on the Holy Spirit's leading

- **I plead w/you for your sake:** I am not timid **but restrained...**

2 But **I beg you** that when I am present **I may not be bold** with that confidence by which **I intend to be bold against some**, who think of us as if we **walked according to the flesh**.

I don't want to come to Corinth in boldness
At this point it looks like I may have to. Why?

Some are saying we walk according to the flesh
That God is not the power behind the Ministry He has given us

- **These have No Fear of God.** Believing...

1. They can *say what they will*
2. They can *act as they will*...and nothing will come of it?

Masquerade w/a Form of Godliness. Yet...
Deny the Power/Willingness of God to Discipline the Self-Serving/Rebellious

2 Timothy 3:1 But **know this**, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 **having a form of godliness** but denying its power. And from such people turn away! **...9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all...**

It is Jesus' Church. Jesus will protect His Church
Accusation: Paul walks in the flesh not the power of God

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

You say we walk in the flesh?
You will find out we War in the Power of the Spirit

- **Sad Situation:** Paul is dealing w/those who say then know Christ

Philippians 3:18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the **enemies of the cross of Christ**: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

Are there Enemies of Christ in Churches Today?

Context of Ch. 10: I am coming to Corinth in the Power/Authority of Christ
To separate humble/teachable believers from proud/arrogant make-believers

- **Apostle Proper Credentials** [12]

1. Seen/Sent by the risen Christ
2. Performed miracles in His Name

Miracles of Paul Validating His Apostleship

1. **Blindness of Elymas:** Paul temporarily blinded the sorcerer Elymas (Bar-Jesus) in Paphos because the magician opposed the Christian faith (Acts 13:8-12)
2. **Healing of the Crippled Man:** In Lystra, Paul healed a man who had been lame from birth, causing the local crowd to briefly mistake him and Barnabas for gods (Acts 14:8-10).
3. **Exorcism of a Fortune-Teller:** In Philippi, Paul cast out a spirit of divination from a slave girl who was making money for her owners (Acts 16:16-18).
4. **Miracles via Clothing:** In Ephesus, God performed "extraordinary miracles" through Paul. Handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched his skin were taken to the sick, resulting in diseases leaving them and evil spirits being cast out (Acts 19:11-12).

5. **Raising Eutychus from the Dead:** While Paul was speaking late into the night in Troas, a young man named Eutychus fell asleep, dropped from a third-story window, and died. Paul embraced him, and the young man was brought back to life (Acts 20:9-12).
6. **Surviving a Viper Bite:** Following a shipwreck on the island of Malta, Paul was gathering sticks for a fire when a venomous viper latched onto his hand. He shook the snake into the fire and suffered no harm (Acts 28:3-6).
7. **Healings on Malta:** While on the island of Malta, Paul healed the father of Publius—who was sick with fever and dysentery—as well as many other diseased residents on the island (Acts 28:8-9) **[Earthquake in prison?]**

Paul was an Apostle: Sent by Jesus Himself

2 Corinthians 10:10 [Later] “For his letters,” they say, “are weighty and powerful, but **his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.**”

When I deal w/the Enemies of God in Corinth
I will not War *According to the Flesh* but in *Accordance w/the Power of God*

2 Timothy 2:5 ...if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes **according to the rules.**

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 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, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the **power of His might.** 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand** against the wiles of the devil. 12 For **we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.** 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, **to stand.**

Our Weapons in the Arsenal of God are Mighty
Empowered of the Spirit of God

Zechariah 4:6 'Not by [your] might nor by [your] power, **but by My Spirit,**' Says the Lord of hosts. [Angel armies]

Context: Paul dealing w/False teachers/False doctrine Corinth has allowed
The Spirit will pull down all that rises up in pride against the LORD

- **Pulling down Strongholds:** Fortifications of Arguments/Reasonings contradiction the Word of God. IOWs Using Scripture to demolish any/all rationale for falsehood.

1 Peter 3:15 ...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always **be ready to give a defense** to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...

- **Casting down Arguments:** Carnal/Worldly thinking derived from the imaginations of men/Hostile to the Christian Faith. IOWs Wisdom of God vs Wisdom of the Flesh

Nehemiah 6:8 [Nehemiah accused of treason by enemies] “No such things as you say are being done, but **you invent them in your own heart.**”

- **Casting down High Things:** Pride elevating self above God/His Word.

They think of themselves as smarter, more sophisticated, more effective, more powerful than God's ways. Carnal, worldly minds think they know more than God does! [Guzik]

1 Corinthians 1:19 "I will **destroy the wisdom of the wise**, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

The Battleground of Spiritual Warfare begins in our Minds
Our enemy the Evil one who sows/plants thoughts

Mission: Capture/Interrogate every thought that enters our minds

On the Ground in Corinth

To those willingly yielding to the Evil one? Paul will be ready to throw down

1 Corinthians 4:21 What do you want? **Shall I come to you with a rod**, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

2 Corinthians 13:2 [Later] I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again **I will not spare ...10** Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use **sharpness**, according to **the authority which the Lord has given me** for edification and not for destruction.

Rebels in Corinth are about to discover that a true Church is God's Church
Not a Grange. Not a Playground. Equipped in God's Word/By God's Spirit

2 Corinthians 6:7 [We come to you] ...by the **word of truth**, by the **power of God**, by the **armor of righteousness...**

Jeremiah 1:10b [The LORD to Jeremiah] "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. 10 See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, **To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant.**"

Paul is ready to punish all thoughts/philosophies disobedient to Christ
Giving time for the people used by the Evil one to repent before he comes

II. Paul's God-Given Authority

7 Do you look at things according to the **outward appearance**? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's. 8 For even if I should boast somewhat more about **our authority**, which the **Lord gave us** for **edification and not for your destruction**, I shall not be ashamed— 9 lest I seem to terrify you by letters. 10 "For **his letters**," they say, "are **weighty and powerful**, but his **bodily presence is weak**, and his **speech contemptible.**"

2 Corinthians 11:6 Even though I am **untrained in speech**, yet I am not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested among you in all things.

- Untrained in speech/Physical problems...

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, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. ... you would have **plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.**

- Galatia was gracious unlike Corinth...

Paul's letters are Weighty/Powerful
In-Person he's Weak/His Speech Contemptible

How does God view disrespect of His representatives?

2 Kings 2:23 Then [Elisha] went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and **mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!"** 24 So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the Lord. And two female bears came out of the woods and **mauled forty-two of the youths.** 25 Then he went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

Seriousness Consequences of Disrespecting God's Representatives
The Proud/Arrogant in Corinth did not realize Who they were dealing with...

11 Let such a person consider this, that **what we are in word** by letters when we are absent, such **we will also be in deed when we are present.**

III. Danger of Spiritual Competition

12 For we **dare not** class ourselves or **compare ourselves with those who commend themselves.** But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

It is foolishness to compare ourselves w/ourselves or w/others
It is Wisdom to see ourselves in the Light of the Word of God

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and **receive with meekness the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls. 22 But **be doers** of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

Romans 12:3 I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly...**

Proverbs 25:27b ... to seek one's own glory is not glory.

We may commend ourselves/Find others who agree
But are we only validating our own self-deception?

Spiritual Competition is never Wise...

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**.

Paul: Called by the Authority of Jesus to be His Apostle to the Gentiles
That was the road Jesus set him on...which included Corinth

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.

Romans 15:20 And so I have **made it my aim** to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should **build on another man's foundation....**

Paul sought to plant churches where no one had been
That your faith would increase/That the Gospel might proceed from you

There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he does not mind who gets the credit. [Ronald Reagan]

- **Accusation:** Paul was overextending himself for his own glory

17 But "**he who glories, let him glory in the Lord** [2x to Corinth]." 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but **whom the Lord commends**.

Context: Infighting/Contentions
Lifting themselves up for having Special knowledge/Special teachers

Truth? Whom the Lord commends is truly commendable
God commends those who know Him/Give Him all the glory

Jeremiah 9:24 ...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.**

We must not Commend/Defend ourselves w/self-validation leading to pride
But as Paul must learn to be satisfied w/the approval of God alone

Genesis 15:1 Do not be afraid, Abram. **I am your shield**, your **exceedingly great reward**.

Next Week...This Immature Infighting/Competition/Intellectualism/Pride
Culminates in acceptance of False prophets/False doctrine/Different Jesus