

Wrongly Accused: Part Three
Paul Defends his Apostleship

Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.

- How would you summarize the central idea of this week's message in one sentence? Was there anything significant that stood out to you from the message that you would share with the group? (Hint: What was your personal “aha” moment?)
- We were challenged last week to examine our salvation to make sure that we are trusting in the real gospel. How did we do this week in trusting fully in the finished work of the cross and not in our performance or human efforts? Did anyone encounter a false gospel this week?

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- Paul was accused of being an inferior Apostle because his speech wasn't polished, he often worked as a laborer, and he wasn't trying to make a name for himself. Have you ever been looked down on as inferior in your service to the Lord, or otherwise, because of these or similar ideas?
- Paul sarcastically referred to the false Apostles at Corinth as “Extra Special Apostles.” Truly, the false Apostles had presented themselves as being more important than Paul and his companions and pointed to their accomplishments as proof. What would you say to someone who assigned different levels of ministerial importance to different people, based upon things like speaking skills, appearance, degrees, who was saved first, ethnic identification, or other human points of recognition?
- Paul taught us that messengers of Satan may try to infiltrate the church in order to lead God's people away from truth and into various errors. Many people would expect a Satanic messenger to be obvious from the start, but Paul taught us that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light to deceive God's people. What are some ways that we can know that someone genuinely belongs to Christ, or that they might be an agent of Satan sent to disrupt the church? Remember to keep this discussion Biblical.
- Paul accepted his detractor's invitation to boast, but insisted of boasting in his own accomplishments, he boasted in Jesus. What should this teach us about bragging to others about our accomplishments, or about telling others how important that we are? Why is it important to guard ourselves from this prideful temptation?

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- 1 Peter 5:5-6 Humility and exaltation.
- 1 Peter 2:5-9 Priesthood of the believer...two aspects.
- James 1:5 Darkness and light.
- Psalm 119:9-12 God's Word in our heart.
- James 4:6-10 Humility and pride.

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

- How should we let the principles that we learned this week encourage us to walk in the fullness of the person that God called us to be? How can we avoid being overly confident, or overly humble?
- Have you ever felt like some people were super Christians, and maybe you were just a regular one? Have you ever supposed that some people have a position closer to God than you? How should this week's message challenge us to think Biblically about our standing and calling before God?
- Have you ever been guilty of self promotion or boasting in your accomplishments? What would God say to you about learning humility from Paul's conversation with the Corinthian believers?