

Wrongly Accused: Part One

Paul answers the specific accusations of his detractor at Corinth

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?)

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- Paul was accused of being a coward because he was bold in his writings, but meek when he was with the Corinthians face to face. His detractor misjudged his meekness for weakness. It seems certain that Paul's detractor would have preferred to draw Paul into a fight, and without regard for the impact on the Lord's church. How did Paul's refusal to act carnally, his fatherly response, and his meekness in addressing the issue demonstrate a true inner strength in God that his detractor lacked? How does being meek demonstrate an inner strength that rage and fighting can never achieve?
- Paul taught us that every attack is a spiritual attack. Therefore, our battle tactics are spiritual tactics. He spoke about the weapons of our warfare being mighty for tearing down strongholds, casting down arguments and high things that puff themselves up against the knowledge of God, bringing our thoughts into captive obedience to Christ, and punishing the renegade moments of rebellion that sometimes flare up even after we are saved. From our study and discussion, what are the weapons of spiritual warfare, and how do we deploy each of them in our own spiritual battles? What happens when we release each of these spiritual weapons?
- In the eyes of the world, the Apostle Paul was not a commanding presence. His physical appearance was unimpressive, his public speaking ability was dreadful, and he had that weird eye thing going on. The Corinthian detractor called attention to all of Paul's weaknesses...insisting that an Apostle should be more commanding, polished, and debonair. Honesty time: how do we sometimes fall into this same trap of making incorrect judgments based on outward appearances, and what can we learn from this situation?
- Paul's detractor suggested that he should sell himself to the church, touting his accolades and trying to win them over by impressive self promotion. Of course, Paul rejected this as ungodly, and reminded us that true servants of Jesus are not self promoting politicians, but men who are humble, appreciate their calling and influence, and always try to glorify God in everything that they do. What does the Bible say about

self promotion, versus letting God advance us in His proper time and way? What are the implications of these truths for individual christians, and for a church?

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- Matthew 5:5, Psalm 37:11 The beatitude of meekness.
- Ephesians 4:1-2 Be gentle with one another.
- Romans 12:2 Transforming the mind is the key to personal renewal.
- 1 Samuel 16:6-7, 12 Don't judge by outward appearance.
- Proverbs 3:34, James 4:7-10 Resist pridefulness and be humble.

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

- Is there a situation in your life where you have been tempted to lash out in the flesh? After studying and discussing this together, what would the Lord say to you about addressing your detractor in a more Godly manner?
- It is easy to become distracted by the world's definitions of power, strength, and might. We might think that eloquent speech, being handsome, having lots of likes on social media, or being wealthy is what matters the most. How would God have us to redefine these qualities in light of what we have read this week?
- Every Christian who tries to live for God will encounter spiritual warfare. What specific battle tactics would God have you to employ this week in order to have immediate spiritual success on your personal battlefield?