



**Dr. Jimmy Stewart | July 27, 2025**  
*Sermon | Godly Sarcasm*

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 11:16-33 (NLT)

**Spotlight:** Godly sarcasm may expose worldly pride and exalt gospel humility.

**Summary:** In this powerful and emotional passage, Paul continues his defense of his apostleship by employing sharp irony and righteous sarcasm. He exposes the folly of the Corinthians who have been seduced by false apostles who parade strength, eloquence and self-promotion. Paul insists that if boasting is what they want, he will boast in weakness, hardship, and suffering—not to elevate himself, but to magnify the sufficiency of Christ.

His "foolish" boasting flips the world's values on their head. Instead of power, Paul highlights beatings. Instead of credentials, he offers suffering. Instead of honor, he tells of being lowered in a basket to escape for his life. His point is clear: The true servant of Christ does not boast in himself but in the grace and power of God that sustains through suffering.

Paul's "godly sarcasm" is not petty or bitter; it is purposeful. He seeks to wake the Corinthians from their spiritual slumber and realign them with the gospel of humility, sacrifice, and authenticity. The local church is greater than the broken world when it values integrity over image and weakness over worldly strength.

## **I. Foolish Boasting and a Sarcastic Rebuke (vv. 16–21)**

### **2 Corinthians 11:16-21**

16 Again I say, don't think that I am a fool to talk like this. But even if you do, listen to me, as you would to a foolish person, while I also boast a little. 17 Such boasting is not from the Lord, but I am acting like a fool. 18 And since others boast about their human achievements, I will, too. 19 After all, you think you are so wise, but you enjoy putting up with fools! 20 You put up with it when someone enslaves you, takes everything you have, takes advantage of you, takes control of everything, and slaps you in the face. 21 I'm ashamed to say that we've been too "weak" to do that! But whatever they dare to boast about—I'm talking like a fool again—I dare to boast about it, too.

- Paul addresses their tolerance of abusive leaders and sarcastically says he too will act like a fool. Fighting Fire with Fire.
- There are strategic ways to confront those who do not believe or those who say they believe but their actions indicate otherwise. Paul wanted the church in Corinth to clearly see the difference between his servant leadership and others false authority.
- *Illustration:* Comparing two resumes: one is polished and prideful; the other is humble and real.

## II. A Resume of Suffering (vv. 22–28)

### 2 Corinthians 11:22-28

22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. 24 Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. 26 I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. 27 I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. 28 Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches.

- Paul lists beatings, shipwrecks, dangers, hunger, and the daily pressure of concern for the churches.
- *Illustration:* A modern missionary's journal that tells of hardship, rejection, and perseverance.

## III. Boasting in Weakness (vv. 29–33)

### 2 Corinthians 11:29-33

29 Who is weak without my feeling that weakness? Who is led astray, and I do not burn with anger? 30 If I must boast, I would rather boast about the things that show how weak I am. 31 God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, who is worthy of eternal praise, knows I am not lying. 32 When I was in Damascus, the governor under King Aretas kept guards at the city gates to catch me. 33 I had to be lowered in a basket through a window in the city wall to escape from him.

- When we boast about our accomplishments, we are drawing attention to ourselves. Paul uses sarcasm and his own weaknesses to point out the blatant boasting of false teachers.
- Paul climaxes with a humiliating escape—being lowered in a basket. This is his boast.

- *Illustration:* WWII, the greatest generation, rarely discussed their service. A wartime hero recounting not the medals earned, but the failures endured.

### ***Next Steps:***

1. Why do you think Paul used sarcasm to address the Corinthians? What tone do you hear in his words? How can sarcasm be used redemptively rather than destructively in our culture today?
2. What does 1 Corinthians 11:16-33 teach us about the difference between worldly leadership and gospel-centered leadership? How do we discern whether a leader is truly serving Christ or themselves?
3. Paul boasts in weakness, not strength. What weakness or struggle has God used in your life to reveal His grace? How might your honest testimony minister to others in your church or community?
4. Paul's concern for the church was constant and heavy. How can we share that same burden for the church today? What are practical ways we can support and strengthen one another in a world that celebrates appearance over authenticity?
5. How does Paul's list of hardships challenge our own view of discipleship and success? What are you willing to endure for the sake of the gospel?
6. **Reflect:** Write down ways God has used hardship in your life to deepen your faith.
7. **Encourage:** Thank a church leader who models humble, Christlike leadership.
8. **Speak Up:** Use your voice (with grace) to challenge worldly values in your circles of influence.
9. **Testify:** Share your story with a group or an individual when God met you in weakness.