

Intro: In these next 3 chapters of 2 Corinthians Paul’s letter here seems to take a turn. If you’ve been with us you may remember that Paul has been dealing with many different topics concerning this church in Corinth. One of those amongst many in that 1st letter was this constant attack from his accusers.

It’s been said Judaizers we’re following Paul around from place to place trying to undermined Paul’s ministry and fill these new believers with false doctrine and attempts to even deny or change the gospel Paul taught.

The church in Corinth was a wonderful group of believers but a tempted group as well. Tempted in carnal behavior mixed in with much of their spiritual growth. Tempted in their old ways of life having to be set aside for a new way of living life. Though they were a spiritually gifted group, they were also easily influenced and impressed by other so called teachers that were comparing or commending themselves and measuring themselves with themselves. Paul called them in Ch 11:13 “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ”. These are those who came in stealth like and began to tell the Corinthians “Paul’s not an apostle at all. Well, just take a look at him! He doesn’t look like the others (short, funny talking, quiet when he’s here but very bold when he writes.) And what about how the other churches support the “real” apostles ministries. Peter, James, Philip , all the disciples of Jesus, no one has a problem supporting them but Paul, he has to work making tents to support his ministry.”

This began to seep poison into the church and cause many to begin to refuse Paul’s apostolic call and when you do that you look for others to follow. They seen the articulate, persuasive speech of Apollos and claimed him their guy; some would only receive a real apostle like Peter and still others received these false teachers as their apostles.

This was dangerous not because Paul had to be the first Pope but because this was an attempt at undermining the Lords work and was actually an attempt by Satan to

disrupt their faith. If Satan can't attack from without he'll join the church. (So Paul wrote his 1st letter and 2nd severe letter to try n straighten a lot of this out)

Now in the first 7 chapters of this 2nd letter Paul expressed thankfulness to the Lord that most of them repented. There was a small minority that didn't, he'll deal with them in a minute; but he also defended his heart for ministry.

Then in Ch 8-9 He reminded them of the offering they were excited to be a part of. And exhorted them to stay focused on it.

The way 9 ends some have come to think maybe that's the end of the letter and 10-13 is either the severe letter or another letter all together added later.

- We don't know
- 9 doesn't seem a proper closing nor 10 a proper opening.

But what's interesting is just how much it changes after hitting them up for an offering! Because in these next 3 chapters Paul is going to go hard! Pulls no punches. He deals with those false apostles – deals with those following them and it seems to get more intense as it goes.

So it's going to get a little hot under the collar but don't think Paul is getting all flshly on these Corinthians. And don't think he's defending his reputation or even himself per say. He's defending the ministry and assignment Christ gave him. Something he never wanted to do and shouldn't have had to. (He was put in an uncomfortable position) (bare with me in a little folly..... speak as a fool)

In these first 6 verses of Ch 10 he begins by laying out all this is a spiritual war and he doesn't handle things in the flesh.

Then he begins to warn them about getting all caught up in physical appearance or ways of handling things.

Then things will get warmed up and when we get to Ch 11 things will get pretty serious!

- We first want to understand Paul's heart and how he's seeing things first so we don't misunderstand how he's dealing with this.

1-6 I. IT'S A SPIRITUAL BATTLE

1-2 A. Pleading Not To Have To Come Boldly

So Paul here begins by "pleading" with them to not have to come to them in this bold confidence just because others are in the flesh.

1 1. He says **"Now, I Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ –"** Up until now Paul has been saying, us, we, our ministryetc. but here he now says **"I, Paul myself"**

a. I believe because they began to attack Paul "personally". In vs 10 you'll read that they were saying his letters are strong but his body is weak and speech contemptible.

b. "So the attacks are getting personal? Let me personally take lead here ."

i. I can just imagine those who were traveling with Paul getting offended for him.

ii. Paul takes leadership

c. Paul leads in humble leadership. In the **"meekness and gentleness of Christ"** The rest of this letter does get strong but their claiming Paul only writes strong but won't do much when present. (Paul's pleading with them not to have to do that)

d. Remember who Paul was. Saul , Rabbi, Pharisee. Strict adherence to the law. Had no problem straightening people out in person. In fact he locked them up. (Aren't you glad Paul got saved?)

i. Some of you may be getting tested right now! Paul didn't revert back to Saul to get some respect!

ii. "Don't they know who I was?"

iii. Go to Eph 4:17-24

iv. Ps 37:5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.

e. What happened? I believe the same thing that happened to Peter. And the rest . **Go to Lk 22:24-34** (expound)

f. Jesus was calling all of them to lead in this servant hearted "Christlike" meekness.

i. What is Meekness? Like a horse. (a horse is useless unless it's broken)

ii. Power under restraint

iii. Paul has all the power and authority of an apostle under the reigns of Christ.

iv. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

g. Warren Weirsbe pg 531

And he wants to try to appeal to them in the meekness and gentleness of Christ and not in a way others falsely accused him of.

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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"*** Paul was darned if he did and darned if he didn't. When he wrote sternly they claimed he was fleshly; but then they said he was only weighty and powerful in letter.

a. But here he's pleading and even begging through the meekness and gentleness of "Christ"; not Saul, not the old man. Not even in the new man's strength but through Christ.

b. Begging & Pleading. That may not seem to many people to be the correct posture for a leader.

But Paul doesn't want a bad visit when he gets there but like he said he intends to be bold if he has to, but he's gonna fight to go low first.

i. Gal 6:1-3 6 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

ii. Rom 15:1-2 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

c. We think leadership requires a boldness of taking control of things. I think we definitely need to lead, but no where are we told in scripture to lead with an insensitive, arrogant heart. Even when we have to correct or stand against attack.

i. We do it with Christ like character.

(read vs 2 again)

3

B. Boldly Does Not Mean Fleshly

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh." Ok Paul what's this whole walking and waring in the flesh thing? What's he mean by we walk in the flesh but don't war in the flesh?

1. We are made up of 3 parts. Body, Soul & Spirit.

- Body – shell
- Soul – mind will & emotions (That's who we are)
- God breathed into man and gave him a spirit. The spirit will go on to live forever.
- We've been born again. (finger illus)

a. So as those who have been “born again” we’ve been made free to live our lives in submission to the Spirit. Not the flesh.

b. We have to deal with this flesh! Though we live in this body, we’re not governed by this body. We are governed by the Spirit of God. And the Spirit of God uses the word of God to conform us into His image.

i. And that’s what Paul’s beginning to touch on here in this verse.

2. Though we walk in the flesh, though you see me in this body ... This is not how we “war”.

a. Ok Wens now your talking about another thing. Now your talking about “war”. What is war?

b. Well, we are in a spiritual battle. Paul said ...Eph 6:11-12
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.

c. There’s a spiritual battle going on. We are not wrestling against; waring against... what we see in the flesh... it’s a spiritual battle.

i. Though we walk in this body (flesh) that’s not how we are to conduct the war.

3. For the Christians the battle has been won Christ has defeated sin and the grave. “Oh death where is your sting? Oh hades where is your victory?”

a. Jesus has won it all at the cross!

b. But there’s still a battle for the souls of those who aren’t saved.

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- c. Satan war's and fights against us so that we would be an ineffective church. If we are a carnal church we are an ineffective church.
 - d. So when we fight this battle, if we war in this battle by the flesh we get nowhere.
 - i. Because we're not leaning on or depending on the Spirit of God "as He uses the Word of God"
 - e. The word of God is very powerful. It trumps my emotions and it trumps my feelings and it trumps the lies and philosophies of the world.
 - f. And "though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh". That's not the weapons we use.

4-6

C. Our Weapons Are Not Carnal

1. "For the weapons of our warfare; Paul says *are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds*" We are in a war and no soldier is expected to fight in a war without a weapon. Neither are we. But the weapons we have are not carnal (or of the flesh) but their mighty.
2. What are some carnal weapons or carnal ways of fighting in a war?
 - a. For some people it could be **financial**. They feel if you throw enough money at a situation they can get what they want.
 - i. Some people war that way.
 - b. For some maybe it's **attitude**. "if I make this person feel sorry for me....."
 - c. **Looks. Beauty.** (get the attention I need to sway things my way)

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- d. To some maybe it's their **carnal way of speaking**. Maybe their threats their ability to word things in a way that shuts others down. (Imma tell them off!!!)
 - e. To some it may be physical. Beating on a woman or muscling another man around to intimidate.
 - i.. That's your weapon
 - ii. To try to turn peoples hearts or turn a situation around. Get control.

Paul says the weapons of "our" warfare are not any of those things but I tell you what , they're mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.

- 3. **"strongholds"** That's something that's been fortified to defend against attack. Or an area or place that has been won over then fortified to defend against attack.
 - a. In so many ways Satan comes to steal kill and destroy and he sets up these strong holds in our lives.
 - b. Seeds dropped in the soil of our hearts since childhood.
 - c. Drug addiction. Sexual immorality. Pornography. Stealing. Lying... etc.
 - d. (Like a knife stuck in you)
- 4. Paul says the weapons we have to battle and win over these "strongholds"are not words or money, or outer appearance, or attitude or emotional sway – influence or physical muscles or physical at all.
 - a. But they're mighty in God for pulling them down.
- 5. **"casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God**

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- a. What are these weapons? Prayer , fasting, The word of God.
 - b. The Spirit of God uses the word of God as one of our most powerful weapons
 - c. Heb 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

2 Tim 4:2-5

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

2 Tim 2:15-16

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

6. **Bringing every thought into captivity**

a. **When we feel overcome** – Jesus said in this world you will tribulation but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world.

b. **When we're facing a situation with someone in power over us. (Judge etc)** Kings heart is in the hands of the Lord & like the rivers of water he turns it any which way he chooses.

c. **When we have those imaginations that our children will always live in disobedience to the Lord** the bible tells us that when you train up a child in the way he should go when he is old he will not depart from it.

d. When we're looking for direction and we don't know which way to go and we're in darkness The Psalms tells us God's word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.