

STUDY ON THE BOOK OF CORINTHIANS

Second Corinthians – Chapter 10

Paul's Pleading

“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.” (v1)

Paul takes to pleading to the church in Corinth to listen, abide and follow his instructions for their spiritual growth. He is pleading by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Perhaps, another way of appealing as we have seen in Romans 12:1-2. In the presence of the believers in Corinth, Paul is lowly, meek, and humble among them but that should not be confused as if Paul is not bold towards them if necessary.

“Now I plead with you that when I come, don't force me to take a hard line with you (which I'm willing to do) by daring to confront those who mistakenly believe that we are living by the standards of the world, not by the Spirit's wisdom and power.” (v2 TPT)

Taking v1 further, Paul is pleading with this church not to force him to take a hard line with them when he arrives because some of the church members believe Paul is carnal, fleshy, and not living by the Holy Spirit's wisdom and power. Do we not see the same today?

Let us be careful that we do not place ourselves too highly than we ought to. This same church thought Paul was carnal or living by the standards of the world. It would not be surprising if some are behaving like the church in Corinth.

Spiritual War

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 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, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” (vv3-6)

- The Aramaic word for strongholds can also be translated “rebellious castles.”
- Arguments mean “citadels of argumentations,” which include fantasies against the purposes of God.
- Bringing thoughts into captivity means “every scheme.” Paul is using the concept of taking prisoners of war, but in this case the prisoners held captive are faulty patterns of thought that defy God's authority.

In this passage Paul describes four arenas of our warfare:

1. We are empowered by grace and with the gospel to dismantle strongholds.
2. We demolish arguments, opinions, theories, and philosophies.
3. We take captive every thought to insist that it become obedient to the mind of Christ.
4. We stand ready and willing to wage war and defeat the enemy (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Reading from the Passion Translation:

“For although we live in the natural realm, we don't wage a military campaign employing human weapons, using manipulation to achieve our aims. Instead, our spiritual weapons are energized with divine power to effectively dismantle the defences behind which people hide. We can demolish every deceptive fantasy that opposes God and break through every arrogant attitude that is raised up in defiance of the true knowledge of God. We capture, like prisoners of war, every thought and insist that it bow in obedience to

the Anointed One. Since we are armed with such dynamic weaponry, we stand ready to punish any trace of rebellion as soon as you choose complete obedience.” (vv3-6 TPT)

These 4 arenas of our spiritual warfare will be:

- We are energized with divine power to effectively dismantle the defences behind which people hide.
- We can demolish every deceptive fantasy that opposes God.
- We break through every arrogant attitude that is raised up in defiance of the true knowledge of God.
- We capture, like prisoners of war, every thought and insist that it bow in obedience to the Anointed One.

Pride

“You seem to always be looking at people by their outward appearances. If someone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should remind himself of this: we belong to Christ no less than he does.” (v7 TPT)

Anyone who makes another look less “in Christ” is walking in “spiritual pride”. There are those who makes other feel as if you are not worshipping, praying, or quoting scriptures like they do, you are inferior. We should be careful to avoid this.

“... God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)

“Likewise, you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:5-7)

Paul was probably referring to the Jewish Christians and Leaders that think they are “something” thereby affecting the church in Corinth. He affirmed that “we belong to Christ no less than anyone does”.

Paul’s Authority

“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— lest I seem to terrify you by letters. “For his letters,” they say, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.” 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.” (vv8-11)

If Paul’s authority seems to be coming across strongly, it is for the edification of the church and not for its destruction. There is power in proper correction. The bible speaks of a “teachable spirit” and “whom the Father loves He chastises” ...

“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”” (Hebrews 12:5-6)

There is the perception in Corinth that Paul’s letters are weighty and powerful but in person, he is weak and not eloquent in speaking. Perhaps, this is true that Paul is not eloquent, and he is not an orator like some other leaders influencing the church in Corinth, but he is an apostle of Christ and appointed by God.

Let us not judge by outward appearance and natural gifts but by the Spirit.

Foolishness

“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.” (v12)

Q: Why is it foolishness to measure yourselves or compare yourself with others?

Boasting in the Lord

“But we are those who choose to limit our boasting to only the measure of the work to which God has appointed us—a measure that, by the way, has reached as far as you. And since you are within our assigned limits, we didn’t overstep our boundaries of authority by being the first to announce to you the wonderful news of the Anointed One. We’re not trying to take credit for the ministry done by others, going beyond the limits God set for us. Instead, our hope soars as your faith continues to grow, causing a great expansion of our ministry among you. Then we can go and preach the good news in the regions beyond you without trespassing on the ministry sphere of other laborers and what they have already done. For: The one who boasts must boast in the Lord.” (vv13-17 TPT)

- Paul’s boasting is limited to the measure of work committed to him by the Lord
- He affirms this point by saying: “The one who boasts must boast in the Lord”.

Paul is making it clear to the church in Corinth that his jurisdiction of apostolic ministry covers Corinth because through Paul’s ministry, many of them gave their hearts to the Lord. Therefore, as their faith grows, Paul sees his ministry bear fruit to the glory of God.

The Real Commendation

“For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.” (v18)

Selah.

