

2 Corinthians 11:1-15

11:1 – “I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me!”

- A. The false-teachers had been promoting themselves. In chapter Paul had explained how this self-promotion is empty and foolish. The only thing that counts is those whom the Lord commends (10:18)
- B. Now Paul decides the best thing to do for the Corinthians is to drop down to their level and speak as the false teachers do...as fools. This is the advice of Proverbs 26:5 – **“Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.”** (Proverbs 26:4 advises the opposite is the best way: **“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him.”**)
- C. Paul appears to be confident that the Corinthians will keep reading the coming words since they are already deep into Paul’s letter and have not stopped reading and thrown it away is disagreement. Paul has already indicated his confidence in the Corinthians renewed support of his teaching in 7:4; 7:14; 7:16; 8:24 and 9:2
- D. Paul is writing for the benefit of the Corinthians salvation and growth in that salvation. Paul is not writing to glorify himself or bring attention to his ministry. This is stated in 12:19.

11:2 – “For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.”

- A. Paul takes seriously his responsibility in securing the relationship between the Corinthian believers and the Lord.
- B. Paul compares his role to that of a father or older brother responsible for protecting and preserving the bride for the husband.
- C. In the OT Israel was the bride and YHWH (the Lord) was the husband.
 - a. Isaiah 54:5; 62:5
 - b. Jeremiah 3:14
 - c. Ezekiel 16:8
 - d. Hosea 2:19
- D. Unfaithfulness to the Lord’s ways was spiritual adultery:
 - a. Judges 2:17; 8:27
 - b. 1 Chron. 5:25
 - c. Psalm 106:39
 - d. Jeremiah 3:1
 - e. Ezekiel 6:9; 16:15
 - f. Hosea 4:12
- E. The focus of faithfulness is commitment to the truth which will result in proper action.
- F. The false teachers were presenting a false truth which if accepted would cause corruption

11:3 – “But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

- A. The Corinthian church was being seduced with false teaching by the imposters invading the church.
- B. If the false teaching was accepted then the believers would become unfaithful to the Lord.
- C. Satan is the father of all false teaching or “all lies” in John 8:44
- D. In 1 Timothy 2:14 it was the woman who was completely deceived in the garden by Satan.
- E. Satan is the “old Serpent in Rev. 12:9 and 20:2
- F. The false teachers are the representatives of Satan.
- G. The false teachers are skilled in deception
 - a. “Light” = pretty, appearance, friendly, appealing
 - b. “Satan’s Messenger” = lies, deception, false-truth, false teaching, bad information

- H. “Cunning” is *panougnia*. The false teacher who is *panougnia* will do anything necessary to appease and trick the crowd.
- I. The angel of light in this example is going after the “thoughts” or the “mind”. This is confirmed in 2 Corinthians 10:5

11:4 – “For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.”

- A. Paul is an “apostle”. “Apostle” means “the one sent”. Paul is an apostle sent from God.
- B. In this verse Paul is taking about “he that comes”. These are the false teachers that Paul is contrasting with himself (and, the other “apostles”) who are “sent” by God with a message.
- C. These that “come” are bringing a different message, a different Jesus and are coming from a different source than the Lord.
- D. The different spirit that those who “come” could be:
 - a. The spirit of the world, which is “human wisdom and gnosis (1 Cor. 2:12
 - b. A spirit of bondage (Romans 8:5; Gal. 2:4; 4:24; Col. 2:20
 - c. Enslavement to rituals, laws and ordinance which challenge the security in Christ (2 Tim. 1:7; Rom. 8:15
- E. In Galatians 1:6 Paul clearly condemns (“anathema”) anyone, including an angel or Paul himself, if an alternative message is presented.

11:5 – “Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles.”

- A. “Super-apostles” or “etra-super-apostles” is from the word “huperlian” and is found only here and in 12:11 in the NT and only 2x elsewhere. The word seems to be a local word.
- B. These super-apostles are false.

11:6 – “Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.”

- A. The advanced Greek mind expected a demonstration of skill in rhetoric and philosophy.
- B. Instead, Paul brought Truth instead of skill
- C. Rhetoric skill would include crowd persuasion, skillful presentations, and contemporary references.
- D. The Greek word for “crude” means Paul was merely speaking as an untrained, unlicensed layman. Paul was a private individual that in this case is being compared to the public personalities of the trained and skilled false teaching, super-apostles.

11:7 – “Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge?”

- A. Skilled Greek speakers would charge a price for speaking their wisdom. This was expected and indicated the value of the message.
- B.

11:8 – “I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.”

- A. Military metaphors:
 - a. “support” is the Greek word used for a soldiers “money for buying rations”
 - b. “robbed” is the Greek word for “pillage” or “plunder”
- B. Paul was “pillaging” previously conquered territory (Macedonia, Asia, etc.) to finance his siege in Corinth. So, the Corinthians were not “plundered” because they were under attack.

11:9 – “And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way.”

11:10 – “As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia.”

11:11 – “And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!”

11:12 – “And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do.”

11:13 – “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.”

11:14 – “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”

11:15 – “So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.”

11:16-33 - Paul's Sufferings as an Apostle I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool. Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that! But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.