

2 Corinthians 10

The Measure that Matters

The Book of 2 Corinthians is divided in to 3 sections

A)The three sections are in response to the report Paul received from his friend Titus of what was going on in Corinth.

B)Paul had met up with Titus in Macedonia – and Titus was reporting to Paul how the church was fairing

1)And how they had responded to Paul's previous letter.

C)So Paul responds to the report in writing what we know as 2nd Corinthians – divides his response into 3 sections

1st section is Chapters 1-7 – we have seen that those chapters are full of great comfort, gladness, and exaltation

A)Paul was STOKED that the church was doing so well. – They had for the most part responded well to Paul's first letter – (hard one)

B)In 2nd Section Chapter 8-9 Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to follow through on their previous commitment to help the church in Jerusalem Financially

C)We looked at that in our previous two studies prior to the passion week.

Well Chapter 10-13 make up the final section and Paul ends by dealing with a major problem in the Church.

A)One thing a careful study of the NT makes clear in our minds is that Church of Jesus is not perfect.

B)Heard the saying – there is no such thing as a perfect church –

1)and if you ever find one don't join it – you'll ruin it.

C)True – The church is not perfect because it is full of sinners – broken people.

1)I always remind you – The church is full of broken people who are being transformed by a loving redeemer.

I will be honest I used to struggle with that idea. I had what I would call an idealistic view of what the church should be.

A)The Church should be full of people who were desiring to be Christ like.

B)Full of people who are trying eagerly to follow the Bible.

C)What I have discovered is the church is full of people who want to do the right thing –

1)but who constantly struggle in their flesh

Who Struggle with the old nature

D)The Church is a mixture of a wide array of people who are all in different stages of maturity in their walk with Jesus

1)Who are in different stages of their learning to walk in grace – the bigger the church the more diverse the levels or maturity are.

E)And thus – We who make up the church need to SHOW a lot of grace and patience with each other because we are all a work in progress.

Another thing that has been surprising about the Church is that there will always be people in it with wrong motives and agendas

A)There will always be false teachers and people who are seeking to take advantage of God's people.

B)Once again that shouldn't surprise us – Jesus used this analogy that there would be Tares among the wheat

1)Paul told the Elders of the Church in Ephesus to beware of savage wolves that would seek to infiltrate the Church

C)Wolves are easy to spot – Wolves eat Sheep – wolves prey upon the Sheep.

D)Well it is the false teachers and wolves that Paul is addressing in this 3rd section Chapter 10-13

1)Paul comes against them in a strong way!!!!!!!

The language in these chapters is strong – so strong at times it feels like someone else is speaking.

A)But Paul's harsh tone should not surprise us – because we see the same thing modeled by Jesus.

B)The only people that Jesus was harsh with were the false religious leaders in Israel who were laying burdens on God's people.

C)The Problem in Corinth was this: These false teachers in Corinth were challenging Paul's apostolic authority

1)See if they could undermine Paul's authority then they could undermine the message of the gospel that he preached.

D)So for the sake of the true believers in the Church of Corinth Paul is going address – the accusations

He begins by giving insight into the spiritual battle that was taking place.

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. 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.

³ For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war** according to the flesh.

A)Paul says – we are Human – we walk according to the flesh like everyone else

B)But the Battle is spiritual!

C)the attack might be coming from people but behind that are spiritual forces –

1) seeking to undermine the work of God – in your life, in a church, in a city.

D)Since the battle is spiritual it is important that we realize that are weapons are spiritual.

³ For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war** according to the flesh.

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ 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, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Strongholds in ancient times were the most fortified of places.

A)Covered by massive stone walls that made them almost impossible to penetrate.

B)Built within the Stone walls were these high towers they would use as a look out –
1)to see the oncoming enemy!

C)So by using this word Strongholds Paul is identifying the strongest of fortresses in society that were currently holding people captive.

In V. 5 Paul identifies what is behind these Strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing {high tower} that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,

A)The strongholds are a result of arguments or reasonings – philosophies that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God.

B)Please would you notice these fortresses are not demons.

He is talking about Ideological fortresses, philosophical fortresses, religious fortresses that directly seek to undermine the Knowledge of God

A)Philosophies and ideologies and false religions that are yes inspired by demons

B)It is these very ideologies that create strongholds that put people in bondage.

1)Judiazers – works –

For nothing is more opposed to the spiritual wisdom of God than the wisdom of the flesh, and nothing more opposed to His grace than man's natural ability." (Calvin)

C)What are some of the strongholds that people are in bondage to today? Religion

1)Materialism, Sexual perversion/ Pride / Greed / Abortion/ Bitterness/ Anger.

D)Behind everyone of these strongholds is an ideology or philosophy

1)that has distorted the Biblical view of Man's existence, His origins, the existence of God.

E)People buy into the lie = Bondage!

What are our weapons?

A)The Word of God – the gospel –

B) Hebrews 4:12-13 ¹² 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. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account. Hebrews 4:12-13

C) Linda in Yugo – not a Scholar or an apologist –
1) Your words were Haunting me

The Holy Spirit – John 16:8

⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me:

bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

As Carson points out, Paul's language of destruction here is not merely about winning arguments or debates. "He means something far more: his weapons destroy the way people think, demolish their sinful thought patterns, the mental structures by which they live their lives in rebellion against God.

The Holy Spirit is working through the word of God to completely transform the way we think!

A) This is what is meant in Romans 12:2 having our minds transformed and renewed by the word of God.

B) Our 3rd main weapon his prayer – Prayer aligns our heart with the heart of God

C) Sometimes the best thing you can do for a person is to pray for them –

So Paul was not about to get into a fleshly battle of a war of words with these false religious leaders.

A) You could sum up the problem that the false teachers had with Paul in one sentence

B) HE DIDN'T MEASURE UP

C) He didn't measure up in his Authenticity

- 1) He didn't measure up in his Authority
- 2) He didn't measure up in Appearance

D) For the sake of the believers in Corinth who were susceptible to be swayed by these false teachers

1) Remember – if they can undermine Paul's authority then they can undermine his message – gospel

E) So that is what Paul is concerned about –

1) So he is going to address the concerns in the rest of the book.

#1 It is not what People think of us that matters V. 7-11

#2 It is not even what we think of ourselves that matters – V. 12-16

#3 But Ultimately what matters is what the Lord thinks of us. V. 17-18

What Matters #1 It is not what people think about us that matters.

7 Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.

We are convinced that we are Christ – that sounds funny!

A) But it seems that there were those among these false teachers in Corinth who considered themselves to be some sort of **spiritual elite** –

B) Paul you don't measure up to us!

C) Now Paul could have been tempted to get into a verbal – **sparring match with them** – over who was more authentic.

D) Paul doesn't do that – Paul emphasized not who he was – but **Whose He was!** – He belonged to Christ

The question posed here in v.7 really frames this whole discussion on how we measure things.

A) We could paraphrase it this way: **Are you going to measure things by the container or the contents?**

B) Easy thing to do – sometimes container looks amazing – outward looks incredible.

1) Person / Church - Underneath – shallow

C) Also there can be someone – outside – container is not very attractive – underneath – deep / beauty

Samuel made that mistake focused on the outward appearance.

A) God told Samuel to go to the house of Jesse – anoint one of his sons as the next King -

B) First guy Eliab – tall handsome strong – Wow!

C) No! – “Man looks on the outward appearance – but I look on the heart.”

Our Problem: We can't see a person's heart – like God can / like God does

A) **But there are indicators !**

B) Jesus said in Luke 6:45 *For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*

1) Listen to someone enough – you can tell where their heart is at.

The things we make priorities in our lives also reveal where their heart is at.

A) Jesus also said: Matthew 6:21 **Where your treasure is your heart will be also!**

B) A person's priorities can often reveal where their treasure is –

1) reveals a certain aspect of where their heart is at.

C) So there are indicators -

Paul is saying: Don't focus on the outward appearance – don't focus on the container – focus on the Contents

A) Take a closer look - it would reveal that Paul was definitely the real deal he belonged to Christ,

B) His life and witness screamed authentic

So they didn't think much about Paul's Authenticity

A) They also didn't think much of His Authority RD V.8-9

8 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 — 9 lest I seem to terrify you by letters.

B) One of the biggest problems in the Church today is that we are allowing the culture to shape the church

1) Instead of the church shaping culture

C) Church is becoming more liberal

They were having the same problem in the Church in Corinth

A) Especially as it related to leadership

B) Commentator R. Kent Hughes offers this helpful insight

“In Paul's day, his enemies in Corinth had so effectively read their Greco-Roman culture back into their Christianity that they interpreted the gospel in terms of their values.” R Kent Hughes

C) One of the biggest areas where this manifested itself was in their view of leadership

1) They boasted in the leaders presence and bearing;

D) they boasted in rhetorical eloquence;

1) they flashed their resumés and endorsements and letters of commendation;

E) They bragged of their large honorariums; they boasted of their connectedness who they knew

1) Who they shared the platform with.

Today we do a similar thing: “Rock Star pastors who are admired for their Speaking ability

A) Their social media platforms – who their celebrity friends are

B) The Church today holds these men and

sometimes women up as ICONS – until they fall

1) We bail on them

C) In V.1 Paul described his leadership traits –

1) **Meekness** – Meekness is not weakness - power under control –

D) Stallion that is tamed – power under control

Jesus was that! -He had all power

A) Submitted to his father –

B) Paul also described his leadership with the word **Gentleness** { Being kind and fair with people.

C) **Lowliness** –Humble - Jesus humbled himself

The False religious leaders in Corinth were not impressed by those traits –

A) They admired leaders who were more forceful, who lorded their authority over others.

B)But Paul knew what Jesus thought about leadership [Matthew 20:25-28](#)

25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.

26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Warren Wiersbe – "It is possible to be too big to serve God, but you can never be too small!"

Paul understood that it was possible to Abuse Authority!

A)With Authority we either will build up or tear down!

B) We see the proper use of Authority in V.8 the word edification

1)that word means to Build up - strengthen

The mentality of Authority in the Church is completely opposite to most of the world.

A)In the world – in the market place they typically use people to build the work

B)The world is cut throat and people become a means to an end

1)In Business they use pp to build the work

C)IN the Church it is the exact opposite – we want to use the work to build the people!

D)Everything we do here is aimed at building up you and your family in Christ! –

E)The goal is Not a bigger church – but bigger people.

So they didn't think much of Paul's Authority They also didn't think much of Paul's Appearance.

V. 10 "For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

They were focused on Externals instead of Internals and Eternals!

A)A second Century historical document – gives this physical description of Paul.

B)He was a small man with bowed legs, who had bushy eyebrows, a bald head, and a hooked nose.

1)It went on to say his back was stooped, his voice high-pitched, and his eyes ran constantly.

C)As far as his speech goes – in Lystra unbelievers were so enamored with his message they thought he was the god – Hermes – great Orator

D)But in Corinth they said he wasn't as eloquent as Apollos

E)So from an outward perception – Paul wasn't much too behold

Paul answers that accusation in this way:

11 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.

A)As Paul is exhorting them to look past the container to the contents –

B)If they do there is one thing that He knows will show up loud and clear CONSISTENCY!

B)Paul was Consistent – What he was in letters was what he was in Person and would continue to be!

C)Paul's ministry had withstood the test of time!

D)But the basic lesson that Paul is teaching here is to know who you are in Jesus / belong to him

1)Doesn't matter what people think about us

#2 It is not what we think of ourselves that matters either!

12 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.

It is foolish to compare ourselves among ourselves – 3 reasons

A)#1 You are Unique your gifts and talents

B)#2 You can always find someone who is doing worse than you are

C)#3 Other men are not the standard – Jesus is

D) We are always and forever going to be in need of growth.

Paul did not have an inflated view of himself – He knew who he was.

A) Which allowed Paul to stay grounded – doing exactly what God had called him to do.

13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us — a sphere which especially includes you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; 15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

Paul uses an Interesting Phrase here

A) The limits of the sphere may refer to the lanes that were allotted to runners in a race. { Each runner has a Lane to Run

B) The Corinthian Christians would recognize this because they loved races and held the famous Isthmian Games in Corinth.

1) Paul is saying, "I'm running in my own lane and not in someone else's."

D) Each of us has a lane to run in – appointed by God – A SPHERE OF influence

E) I need to worry about my lane – my calling / my sphere of influence

God is looking to see if we have been faithful running in our lane running in our sphere of influence. Don't over step boundaries

A) If our view of ourselves gets inflated we can try to widen our lane outside of God's will

B) Climbing corporate ladder – Bigger salary – more jobs

1) Senior Pastor – called to be an assistant - or vice versa

C) How are you running?

Listen the measure that matters is not what People think – Not even what we think about ourselves

The measure that matters is what does God think? 17 But "he who glories, let him glory in the Lord." 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

The term that Paul used the most to describe himself – was that he was a servant of Christ. – Underower

A) Ben-Hur – Ships slaves galley slaves – rowing –

B) Job of the galley slave is to work underneath the boat –

1) behind the scenes to get people to the destination

C) When the ship arrives in the port – they don't take all the galley slaves and bring them up on deck

1) so everyone can applaud them – thank them

D) They thank the captain – He gets applause

Paul says the measure that matters is what does God think – Is God getting the glory

A) Does God approve ?

B) The word Approve means – by testing –

C) Gold silver precious stones – wood, hay, stubble

The question that we all need to ask is –

A) Are we doing what God has called us to do –

B) Are we thinking rightly about ourselves and our relationship to Him

End with the story of the Violin Student – Applause

A) kept looking to the balcony where an old man was sitting

B) He was playing for an audience of one !

C) One day we will all stand before Jesus – hope to hear well done –

D) Run, serve, everything for an audience of one