

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 22ND–23RD, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

VINDICATION (2 CORINTHIANS 10:1–6)

A DEFENSIVE POSITION

There were false apostles who had infiltrated the church (Judaizers) stating that Paul really had no authority. In these last chapters, Paul defends his position and authority as an apostle of Christ. He recognizes he has no power except that which comes by the power of God, so he appeals to them in meekness and humility.

MEEKNESS ISN'T WEAKNESS

Even though Paul comes in gentleness, he warns those who oppose him he's not afraid to challenge them. Paul knows he's been given divine authority. They had misjudged Paul's outward appearance for weakness. They were more impressed with looks and greater speaking skills than having the anointing of God.

JUDGING OTHERS

There were those who evaluated Paul's leadership by the standards of this world. Paul was a tentmaker who "live[d] in the flesh" but walked in the Spirit. Even though he was educated, they evaluated him by how he looked and what he did.

- **We judge others not by what they do, but by the fruit they bear** (Matthew 7).

DIVINE POWER

We are in the midst of spiritual warfare. Even though we walk in human frailty we don't battle in our own strength. We put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6) and move forward in the power of the Holy Spirit—**insulated, not isolated.**

- **The Word, the Holy Spirit, and prayer are our spiritual weapons for "the demolition of strongholds."**

THE BATTLE FOR YOUR MIND

Paul was declaring only truth will stand against philosophies, religiosity, opinion, and our own thoughts when "raised up against the knowledge of God." **We are not helpless victims or recipients of our thoughts.**

- **The power of God can help us take captive thoughts of lust, greed, anger, pride, etc.** (1 Corinthians 6:11).

REALITY (2 CORINTHIANS 10:7–11)

FOCUS ON THE EVIDENCE

Paul refutes the accusations of the false apostles by calling the Corinthians to look beyond the surface. Anyone can say, "I belong to Christ," but Paul says, "Look at the obvious."

- **The evidence of our lives should be that God has radically changed us from the inside out and His presence changes everything.**

THE FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Paul seems uncomfortable boasting but isn't ashamed because he knows his authority was given to him by Christ to encourage the church. He's also not afraid to confront those who opposed him.

- **When we engage others, it should be for their good, and to present truth. Our battle is not with humanity.**

WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

Paul is not duplicitous. He affirms he is the same in person as he is in his letters. Apparently, Paul was small and unimpressive as a man and communicator. Although intelligent, he didn't use fancy language (1 Corinthians 2). However, Paul possessed the power of the Spirit.

- **Do our works match our words?**

ACHIEVEMENTS (2 CORINTHIANS 10:12–18)

COMPARISONS

When we start comparing, we're headed for trouble. When we compare ourselves with others, we may feel pride because we think we're better. What's the standard? Wisdom understands that apart from Christ there is nothing good in us.

- **Don't worry about others. Determine to be obedient to the will of God.**

SELF-EVALUATION

It's not bad to examine ourselves and our relationship with God (2 Corinthians 13). Scripture tells us to confess our sin, which requires self-examination. The problem is not allowing the Holy Spirit to be part of the process.

- **We examine ourselves in light of the truth and allow God's Word to convict and change us.**

EXAGGERATIONS

The opposers were making wild claims and taking credit for the ministry Paul started. They were interested in recognition and fame.

- We're all called to ministry. We have to be careful we're not seeking recognition but following what God has for us.
- **Are we being faithful to the work God called us to accomplish?**

"REGIONS BEYOND"

The gospel reached Corinth because Paul planted a church there. His desire was to take the gospel wherever Christ led him. Paul understood it wasn't about him. His desire was to exalt the name of Jesus, so He gets the glory, and the church is built.

- **What are we willing to sacrifice so the gospel can reach others?**

LIVING FOR APPROVAL

The false teachers wanted recognition, prestige, wealth, and power. True servants don't live for the applause of men. Motive is as much a measurement of God's work as is growth. Seek God's approval.

- **There can be no greater goal for a Christian than to have God's seal of approval stamped on our lives.**

BOLDNESS

- In the midst of spiritual warfare, we have been given power to demolish strongholds.
- The battle is for our minds. (Philippians 4; Hebrews 12) Spiritual warfare demands spiritual weapons. Are we equipped well enough? Have we taken our relationship with Christ too casually?

EVIDENCE

- **Christianity isn't about behavior modification.** It's about God giving us a new heart and a transformed mind.
- We surrender our own desires, plans, and dreams, and live to the glory of God. It is the sanctifying (daily process) work of the Holy Spirit every day to help us look more like Jesus.
- Where is the evidence of Christ in my life? What is the story of my life?
- When people oppose us, how do we handle opposition and criticism?
- Are we open to the Spirit's conviction in all areas of our life?
- **How does my life measure up to what God wants?**

GOD'S APPROVAL

- We don't live for the applause of men.
- We need to stop the comparison game and be obedient to what God asks of us.
- If we are seeking to glorify and please God, then we can look forward to seeing His face and receiving our reward.
- **What is your goal as a Christ follower?**