

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 23RD, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

CARNAL WEAPONS (2 CORINTHIANS 10:1-6)

"NOW I, PAUL, MYSELF APPEAL TO YOU..."

Paul changes gears as he gets near the end of his letter.

- Paul concluded the talk about the collection of funds for the poor in Jerusalem and picked back up the topic of an **individual in the church who has gained influence by falsely presenting Paul as someone with impure motives in ministry.**

"I PLAN TO CHALLENGE CERTAIN PEOPLE..."

Paul said, "I who am humble among you in person but bold toward you when absent," using the words of "certain people" who opposed Paul's authority by claiming he was timid face-to-face, but bold only in writing.

- Paul's issue was not with all and not all required correction, so he **intended on dealing with the problem individually.**

FULL OF BOLDNESS AND SATURATED IN HUMILITY

These claims by "certain people" were false because that is not who Paul was. Additionally, **they presented the idea of someone being both meek and bold as a contradiction of personality traits.**

- **Jesus exemplified perfectly what it looked like to be both humble and meek, and at the same time bold.**

"FOR ALTHOUGH WE LIVE IN THE FLESH..."

Paul admits that he walks in the flesh in the same sense that we all do. Paul is human, like us. Though he is made of flesh and blood, Paul wants to be clear that he "[does] not wage war according to the flesh."

- Paul would **war against the false accusations and defend his apostolic authority**, but he would do so **with spiritual weapons.**

SPIRITUAL WEAPONS FOR A SPIRITUAL BATTLE

The carnal weapons Paul refuses to use are not material weapons like swords and shields, but **the carnal weapons the world uses to fight like words of insults, manipulation, deceit, and intimidation.**

- Paul was unwilling to use the worldly weapons everyone else used to defend himself. **We are not to fight evil with evil but overcome evil with good** (Romans 12:17-21).

"ONCE YOUR OBEDIENCE IS COMPLETE"

Paul is voicing his willingness to address the dissension in the church **once they have followed through with obedience on their part.**

- Paul is either referring to **the collection for the poor in Judea** or that **he hoped these problems would be addressed by the church** to avoid conflict when he arrived.

"WE TAKE EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE TO OBEY CHRIST"

A stronghold is a defensive structure that fortifies a place or building. The strongholds Paul discusses demolishing are **the walls of resistance in people's minds.**

- Through the power of God, the stronghold of **incorrect carnal thinking that contradicts the true knowledge and nature of God** can be demolished.

SEEING THE OBVIOUS (2 CORINTHIANS 10:7-11)

"LOOK AT WHAT IS OBVIOUS."

Paul is urging those in Corinth to **look past superficial and unsubstantiated claims** made by his opposition and see what should be so clear to them.

- Paul followed the example of Jesus in servant leadership, but the Judaizers focused on the exterior and **mistook Paul's meekness for weakness and concluded he had no authority.**

"JUST AS HE BELONGS TO CHRIST, SO DO WE."

Paul wants the Corinthians to evaluate the opposition's confident claim to be of Christ. Their claims were more than just being a Christ follower, but that **they had a higher level of spirituality and appointment by Christ.**

- Paul insisted that they are **all one in Christ** (Galatians 3:28) and that **there are no levels of hierarchy to Christianity.**

THE DESIGN OF AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION

Some abuse and misuse authority, but **authority is given to us for edification**—the building up, and not destruction or tearing down.

- Paul used his authority to build up the church while his opposition used the church to build their authority. **How we use the authority God has given us is an indicator of our spiritual maturity and character.**

HIS BOLDNESS WOULD CARRY INTO HIS VISIT

Paul's intentions were never just to frighten someone with his letters, but he did write with authority to correct when needed.

- Paul said he had no problem displaying his authority in person despite his opponents claiming **all weight was in his letters**, only because his **physical appearance was weak**, and **he could not effectively speak in public.**

COMPARING (2 CORINTHIANS 10:12-18)

A PROPER ESTIMATION OF WHO WE ARE

Paul says, "**We don't dare...compare ourselves with some who commend themselves.**"

- There is no point in comparing ourselves to self-inflated views that others hold of themselves. **We must be careful not to have an inflated view of ourselves but also not to have a deflated view of ourselves.**

WE WERE SINNERS SAVED BY GRACE

When we make ourselves the measure of others and make others the measure of ourselves, we show that we lack understanding of who we truly are (Romans 12:3).

- **When we fall into the trap of self-exaltation instead of drawing near to God in self-examination we miss the transformation through the Holy Spirit.**

"BOAST IN THE LORD"

God has given us all a purpose and a "lane to run in," and like a runner, we cannot be preoccupied with what the runners in the lanes to the left and right of us are doing.

- We all have an important role, but we cannot pridefully overinflate our importance. **While some will plant seeds, and some will water, God makes it grow** (1 Corinthians 3:6-8).

SPIRITUAL WEAPON

- **"Be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil..."** (Ephesians 6:10-17, emphasis added).
- **We do not rely on carnal weapons to fight a spiritual battle. Instead, we must pray, read the word of God, love God and others, and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit.**

TAKING OUR THOUGHTS CAPTIVE

- We cannot claim to be helpless victims or recipients of our thoughts.
- **We must choose to stop impure and incorrect thoughts that are opposed to God** (thoughts of lust, anger, fear, greed, bitterness, selfishness, and every evil thought) **and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**