

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 30TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

DECEIVED (2 CORINTHIANS 11:1-15) PUT UP WITH ME!

Paul wants them to know that he deserves to be heard. Like a father, he had wanted only the best for the church at Corinth and desired them to be a pure bride for Christ. His love for them was real, and he only wanted to protect them from the deception of false prophets.

PAUL'S FEAR

Paul knew that the church was once devoted to Christ but feared that they could be easily seduced by those who sought to undermine the true word of God. Paul knew that they were still immature in their faith, and so did Satan.

- **Do we know where our "soft spots" are? Are we seeking protection?**

DIFFERENT

Paul starts speaking the parental language. He points out that it only took a few lies to deceive them, and they were BIG lies. It was a different Jesus, Spirit, and Gospel.

- **The modern church still falls for this kind of deceit. It is religion with self-interest and flattery shaped by charismatic leaders and cliché.**

THE SOURCE

Since Paul knew that the church sincerely desired to follow Christ, he challenged them to consider the source of their "new understanding." He was ready to compare his motives to theirs.

- **We must always consider the motives of the ones we listen to. Ultimately, do they genuinely align with God's word?**

STYLE

Paul refuses to believe he is "less" than those "super-apostles." His public speaking may be weak, but his message is based on the knowledge of Jesus.

- **Eloquent ignorance is dangerous. It is fake, superficial, attractive to the ears, and brings applause. The truth is directed to the heart, mind, and will, related to eternal issues, and brings people face-to-face with God.**

WHO'S PAYING FOR THIS?

Paul reminds them that he didn't demand anything from the church. He presented himself as a servant and other churches supported his mission to Corinth. The false teachers said Paul's message was worth what they paid.

- **The message isn't valuable because of what we pay, give, and sacrifice; it's priceless because of what Christ paid.**

DISGUISED

Paul loves the church and will continue to tell the truth in love. He will expose the deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles. Their false message was no accident; they chose to deceive and would be judged for it.

- **False teachers may not always look like false teachers, and sin will try to look like virtue. We expose those disguises with the true Jesus revealed in His Word.**

FOOLISH (2 CORINTHIANS 11:16-22) PAUL IS NOT A FOOL

Paul called the false teachers fools, and the church was listening to them. So, Paul decided to (sarcastically) speak to them like a fool so they would listen to him. But before he begins his "boast," he points out what listening to fools has already cost them.

VICTIMS

They had allowed themselves to be spiritually enslaved, taken advantage of, exploited, belittled, and even physically abused. Then Paul (sarcastically) admits he had been "too weak" to treat them like that.

- **Paul's strong love for them looked more like 1 Corinthians 13. The weakness of fools will be seen in the way they abuse others.**

PEDIGREE

Paul addresses their heritage and pedigree with his own. Qualifications mean nothing to Paul, but he joins their foolishness by claiming the same credentials.

- **Too many are impressed by boasting, confidence, and power. When we praise outward appearances, we judge according to the "flesh" and become susceptible to control and abuse.**

DEVOTION (2 CORINTHIANS 11:23-33) SERVICE

Up to this point, Paul has been exposing their boasting with some foolishness of his own. Now, he will compare his weakness to their "strength." Were they servants of Christ or their desires? Paul knew who he served and what he would endure to serve faithfully.

PHYSICAL PAIN

Reading this passage is painful, but we must appreciate what Paul shares. He suffered and was starved in prison. He received beatings because of his message. He floated in the sea alone after shipwrecks. He was willing to be tortured for the opportunity to share the gospel with others. **His body bore the marks of his devotion to Christ.**

DAILY PRESSURE

Beyond the physical pain, Paul endured psychological trials. He didn't just walk into a town, share the gospel, and walk out. He was concerned about every person he met and every church he planted. His heart was broken when they fell into sin, and he desired to help. **He didn't abandon or ignore the weak; he identified with them.**

HUMILIATING

Paul takes the last few verses to boast about his weakness. He shares that he once fled in a basket to escape arrest after his conversion—a humiliating retreat. He spoke when his voice was weak. He stood when his body was broken. He stayed devoted when his past was exposed.

- **He may have looked like a fool, but he was a fool for Christ!**

FOOLED

- We don't like to be tricked.
- **Foolishness isn't the same as fooled.**
- **When we follow the foolishness of men, we may be deceived into a life of unfaithfulness. We have the Holy Spirit and the Bible as our guide. How could we be so easily deceived?**

IMAGE

- What looks good to us, inspires us.
- **What sounds good and looks good may not be so good for us.**
- **What are we looking for? The culture tries to convince us that what we really desire is what we can see. Following Christ means seeing Him first and knowing He is good for us.**

RETURN

- We may have turned our eyes away from Christ and looked for something better.
- **This is called unfaithfulness.**
- **Our weakness isn't the end. Christ calls us to turn and see Him again; this is called repentance. However foolish it may look to the world, we follow Christ; this is called salvation. Who will we follow?**