

## 2 Corinthians 20 - 10:1-18

Bruce Pike

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This week

Paul's readiness 10:1-6

Paul's defense 10:7 - 12:13

Paul's authority 10:7-11

Proper commendation 10:12-18

Warnings and justification 10:1 - 13:10

- Last major section of the epistle
- Distinct change in tone
  - Much disagreement among the commentators. Some say the section was from another letter either before or after 1 - 9. Some say the section was originally part of the epistle and have various reasons for the change.
  - This study assumes
    - The epistle was originally written as is.
    - Paul changes his tone because he is addressing holdouts in Corinth who are not boasting in him (1:14). Likely the last remnant from the sorrowful visit.
    - The holdouts are being influenced by false teachers from outside the church. These are Judaizers who boast of their Jewish pedigree (11:22). They speak well and have a strong personal presence (10:1), present themselves as true ministers of Christ (11:23), bear letters of commendation (3:1), boast of their signs and wonders (12:11) and spiritual experiences (12:1-4), and are paid for their teaching (11:7; 12:13).
- Outline
  - Paul's readiness 10:1 -6
  - Paul's defense 10:7 - 12:13
  - Paul's return to Corinth 12:14-21
  - Warning about possible severity 13:1-10
  - Ending 13:11-14
- This week
  - Paul's readiness 10:1-6
  - Paul's defense 10:7 - 12:13
    - Paul's authority 10:7-11
    - Proper commendation 10:12-18
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Paul's readiness 10:1-6

Plea 10:1-2

2 Corinthians 10:1–2 (LSB)

1 Now I, Paul, myself plead with you by the gentleness and forbearance of Christ—I who am humble when face-to-face with you, but courageous toward you when absent!

2 But I beg that when I am present I need not act so courageously with the confidence that I consider to daringly use against some, who consider us as if we walked according to the flesh.

- Now I, Paul, myself plead with you by the gentleness and forbearance of Christ.
  - Very personal.
  - Emphasizing who is speaking: the apostle to the Gentiles by the will of God (2 Cor 1:1) , their father in the gospel (1 Cor 4:15)
  - plead with you. Come alongside as their fellow worker in the gospel (2 Cor 1:24)
  - by the gentleness and forbearance of Christ.
    - As God showed in Christ: gentleness of attitude, longsuffering
    - No desire for revenge.
- I who am humble when face-to-face with you, but courageous toward you when absent!
  - Repeating one of his opponents accusations
  - humble. Meek and of low status. What Christ was on the earth. Meant as a rebuke.
  - The opponents are questioning his competency as an apostle: although he is strong in letters he is weak in person.
    - Paul intentionally came to Corinth not in superiority of word and wisdom but in weakness and fear and much trembling so that the Corinthians' faith would not be in him but in God (1 Cor 2:3-5)
    - He threatened discipline (1 Cor 4:18-21) but then during the sorrowful visit he retreated rather than challenge his opposition.
    - He then sent a severe letter through representatives rather than coming himself.

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- But I beg that when I am present I need not act so courageously
  - On his upcoming visit to receive the collection (2 Cor 9:5)
  - He wants the holdouts to repent so that he can be gentle rather than severe
- with the confidence that I consider to daringly use against some
  - confidence. In God who appointed him as apostle
  - consider. Reckon after consideration.
  - daringly. Bold to challenge opposition.
  - some. Plural. The holdouts and the false teachers
- who consider us as if we walked according to the flesh
  - consider. Reckon
  - The holdouts are not looking at Paul as a new creation (5:16-17) but are evaluating him by the standards of the culture.
  - Here is their incomplete understanding (2 Cor 1:14). Paul hopes that they will read this epistle (2:14 - 6:18) and come to better understand apostolic ministry so they can boast in him (2 Cor 1:14).
- Paul is in God's victory parade to manifest the odor of Christ (2:14). The Corinthians should be there with him as his children. Most have repented of their earlier misbehavior and are with him but some are still out of line. They need to either repent and get back in line, or get a spanking.

Warfare 10:3-6

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (LSB)

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

4for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the tearing down of strongholds,

5as we tear down speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

6and are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is fulfilled.

- Paul uses an illustration from siege warfare: The holdouts are inside their fortified city resisting the gospel. He will destroy strongholds, take captives, and punish the remaining resistance.
- For though we walk in the flesh. Paul lives as a mortal man in the world.
- we do not war according to the flesh.
  - In one's own strength
  - With no divine resources
  - Using the weapons of the world
  - Pr 26:4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you yourself also be like him.
- for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh
  - The enemy is not people
    - Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
  - weapons of the flesh
    - 2 Cor 1:12 For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.
      - Unholiness
      - Deceit
      - Fleshly wisdom
    - 2 Cor 1:24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.
      - Power (lording it over)
    - 2 Cor 2:7 so that on the contrary you should rather graciously forgive and comfort him, lest such a one be swallowed up by excessive sorrow.
      - Guilt
    - 2 Cor 4:2 but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
      - Shame
      - Craftiness
      - Adulterating the word of God
      - Lies

- Paul's weapons
  - 2 Cor 1
    - v1 Apostolic authority
    - v2 Desire for grace and peace for the Corinthians
  - 2 Cor 6
    - v1 Pleading
    - v2 Scripture
    - v3 No offense
    - v4 Perseverance
    - v6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in unhyprocritical love
    - v7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,
    - v8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true;
    - v9 as unknown and yet well-known, as dying and yet behold, we live; as punished and yet not put to death,
    - v10 as sorrowful but always rejoicing, as poor but making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things.
  - Ro 12
    - v19 no revenge
    - v20 Be kind to enemies
    - v21 Do not be overcome with evil
  - Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.
  - Eph 6:14-18 Armor of God: belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit (the word of God), prayer, on the alert with perseverance
- but divinely powerful for the tearing down of strongholds
  - Divinely powerful. Relying on God's power
  - tearing down. Destroying
  - strongholds
    - Enemy fortresses
    - Described in v5
    - Used in Stoic philosophy for a fortress of ideas by which one kept from being affected by their life situation and events.

- as we tear down speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God
  - Speculations.
    - False and deceptive reasoning with evil intentions
    - Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, and not according to Christ.
  - every lofty thing raised up
    - Something lifted up
    - Pride, arrogance, conceit
  - against the knowledge of God
    - 1 Cor 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing...
    - 1 Cor 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the depths of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually examined.
  - Paul intends to destroy false reasoning and expressions of pride which oppose true knowledge of God.
- and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,
  - By our nature we are always captive either to sin or to righteousness (Ro 6:16)
  - The holdouts' thoughts are now held captive in strongholds of speculation and pride. Paul intends to destroy those strongholds, free their thoughts, and take them captive to Christ.
- and are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is fulfilled
  - your obedience is fulfilled. The holdouts have repented and are obedient to the gospel and to Paul.
  - Disobedience. Continued denial of the gospel and of Paul.
  - Punish.
    - Avenge; give what is rightfully deserved.
    - Consequences not specified. Holdouts: church discipline. False teachers: humiliation and expulsion.

### Paul's defense 10:7 - 12:13

- Paul defends his apostolic authority against the charges of the false teachers.

### Paul's authority 10:7-11

Look 10:7

### 2 Corinthians 10:7 (LSB)

7You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.

- You are looking at things as they are outwardly
  - You. The holdouts
  - Grammar possibilities
    - "You are looking at things as they are outwardly" (NASB, LSB) or "Do you look at things as they are externally?" (KJV). You are judging by external appearance.
    - "Look at what is in front of you." (ESV). Look at the evidence in front of you.
- If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.
  - Christ's. Christ's apostle. Paul is answering a charge from the false teachers that they are true apostles of Christ and Paul is not.
  - consider this again within himself. Think again.
    - By the standards of the false teachers Paul does not look like an apostle of Christ.
    - However he was appointed by God (2 Cor 1:1) and acknowledged as the apostle to the Gentiles by the leaders of the Jerusalem church where the false teachers are from (Gal 2:10). Also, the church in Corinth owes its existence to Paul's ministry.
    - If the false teachers were truly apostles of Christ then they would work with Paul, not oppose him.

Manner 10:8-11

2 Corinthians 10:8–11 (LSB)

8For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be put to shame,

9for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters.

10For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is weak and his words contemptible.”

11Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present.

- For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority
  - boast somewhat further. Excessively for someone of apparent low status. As Paul instructed and rebuked.
- which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down
  - Parenthesis describing Paul’s authority
  - Given by the Lord
  - For building up
- I will not be put to shame
  - Paul will not be discredited either before men (he will accomplish his purpose) or before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10) (his actions will be approved by the Lord).
- for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters.
  - Paul does not intend to cause fear by his strong letters.
  - This is what the false teachers would do.
  - Not appropriate for an apostle of Christ.
- For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is weak and his words contemptible.”
  - Accusation by the false teachers to discredit Paul: he writes big from far away but in person he is a nothing so he can be disregarded. The holdouts are believing them because they are judging by external appearances and ignoring the evidence before them.
- 11Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present.
  - Paul’s reply: what I am in word I am also in deed.
  - The holdouts should read his description of true apostolic ministry (2 Cor 2:14 - 6:10) so that they can recognize him as a true apostle.



Commendation 10:12-18

Wrong commendation 10:12

2 Corinthians 10:12 (LSB)

12 For we do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves, but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

- For we do not dare to classify.
  - classify. Reckon as among.
  - Paul being sarcastic: he would not dare to number himself among such exalted people, especially in view of his supposed shortcomings.
- or compare ourselves
  - The false teachers adopted the practices of the culture. Honor was seen as in short supply. A person sought honor for himself by taking it from others by exalting himself and putting the other down. Self-promotion and put downs were considered honorable and a sign of strength.
  - Their criteria for a real apostle: Jewish pedigree (11:21-22), strong personal presence and impressive speech (10:10), spiritual experiences (12:1-6), signs and wonders of an apostle (12:12), show of power and authority (11:20), charging for their teaching (11:7). Did not include weakness, suffering, affliction.
  - Paul refused to do this because it was not worthy of a minister of Christ.
- themselves by themselves
  - Their true standard. God is not in the picture.
- they are without understanding.
  - True diagnosis of their condition
  - Ro 1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Right boasting 10:13-16

2 Corinthians 10:13–16 (LSB)

13But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the area of influence which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you.

14For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach you, (for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ),

15not boasting beyond our measure in other men's labors, but having the hope—that as your faith grows—to be enlarged even more by you within our area of influence,

16so as to proclaim the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the area of influence of another.

- But we will not boast beyond our measure
  - The false teachers were seeking to take over the Corinthian church.
- but within the measure of the area of influence which God apportioned to us as a measure
  - Paul does not try to take over another's ministry.
  - He restricts himself to the sphere apportioned to him by God: Gentiles who had not yet heard the gospel. (Ro 15:20)
- to reach even as far as you. For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach you, (for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ),
  - God brought about the Corinthian church through Paul's ministry so they are within his sphere.
- not boasting beyond our measure in other men's labors
  - The false teachers were putting Paul down and taking credit for his work in Corinth.
  - Note that Paul had no problem with Apollos and Titus working with him for the gospel and building on the foundation he had laid (1 Cor 3:10, 2 Tim 8:23). They did not take credit for his work and were working for the gospel, not against it.
- but having the hope—that as your faith grows
  - Having the hope. Confident expectation
  - as your faith grows. As the holdouts come to understand real apostolic ministry and they go from opposing Paul to boasting in him (1:14)
- to be enlarged even more by you within our area of influence, so as to proclaim the gospel even to the regions beyond you,
  - Paul would be able to go further in his assigned sphere if he didn't have to deal with problems in Corinth and if they would support him in his missionary efforts.
- and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the area of influence of another.
  - Paul rejects boasting in another's achievements.

Right basis 10:17-18

2 Corinthians 10:17–18 (LSB)

17But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD.

18For it is not the one who commends himself that is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

- Quoting Jer 9:23-24
- Proper boasting is about what the Lord has done, not about what the person has done or about what another has done.
- Proper commendation does not come from self or from men but from the Lord

Application: Rescue

2 Tim 2:24-26 And the Lord's slave must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may give them repentance leading to the full knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

- About correcting those in opposition
- What should one not do? Be quarrelsome
- What should one do: Be kind, be able to teach, be patient when wronged, correct with gentleness
- Who does the rescue? God

## References

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