

Bogus/Sincere

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to 2 Corinthians or 2 Corinthians. If you're visiting with us, go to the back of that Bible.

It's a black Bible in the chair in front of you. If you pull that black Bible out and go towards the back of that black Bible, find page 140, 2 Corinthians or 2 Corinthians chapter 1.

We're going to study verses 12 through 22. Chapter 1 verses 12 through 22.

Page 140 in the black Bible. Let me read and then we'll study. For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience.

That in sincerity and godly purity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world and especially toward you.

[1:10] For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end. Just as you also in part did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud, to boast, as you also are ours in the day of our Lord Jesus.

And in this confidence, I intended at first to come to you, that you might receive a double grace, and to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you to be helped on my journey to Judea.

Therefore, verse 17, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or that which I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yes, yes and no, no?

But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us, by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yes and no, but is yes in Christ.

For as many as may be the promises of God in Him, they are yes, wherefore also by Him is our amen to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

[2:44] A Plymouth couple is accused of making more than \$15 million selling bogus business opportunities and coaching services to unwitting entrepreneurs.

This happened in Minneapolis. Jesse Connors Taiva and Matthew Taiva falsely claimed their products, marketed under the name Seller's Playbook, could help customers earn hundreds of thousands of dollars by selling items on Amazon.com according to civil complaint filed July 30th in U.S. District Court in Minneapolis.

The name of the company Seller's Playbook, which was launched in early 2017, touted Connors, Connors Taiva's credentials as an apprentice from that TV show, The Apprentice, an apprentice contestant and serial entrepreneur in pitching free two-hour seminars to potential customers.

Those who attended these free seminars would be offered a three-day workshop for between \$500 to \$1,000 according to the complaint. At these workshops, more intensive training and mentorship would be pitched for as much as \$48,000, the complaint said.

Hmm. Hmm. Appearances can be deceiving. You can't judge a book by its cover. The old adage, if it's too good to be true, it probably is.

[4:26] And yet, it's those very things, appearance, that this church was fixated on. Here's a church founded by Paul that based things on looks, appearances, worldly success, particularly in leaders.

And we started this last week. If the theme of 2 Corinthians is boasting in our weakness, boasting in the Lord.

And it seems to be a contrast, seems to be, these don't go together. But what you would think is weakness, it's actually strength. What you think would be feeble, it's actually strong.

Because when you boast your weakness, that's when you're gonna boast in the Lord. God's great strength is seen in our great weakness.

Or other ways that I put it. We walk by faith, not by sight. So that God may be glorified by our dependence upon Him. It's always about God's sufficiency, God's power, and God's provision seen in our insufficiency, our weakness, our deficiency.

[6:01] Newsflash, we are insufficient, we are weak, we are deficient. All of us are. But that's why what will happen with God is that He will always put us in hard positions and hard places so that He can give Himself glory by having us cry out to Him in total dependence because He loves to show His great strength in our great weakness.

That's what He's gonna do in our lives. He's doing that in your life right now. He's doing that in my life. And, I mean, that's how God works.

I mean, He showed His glorious strength by the glorious weakness of the cross. Jesus suffering and dying for us. The great paradox of Christianity is that God's grace, His power, His salvation is seen most clearly not in the best of things, but in what seems to be the worst of times, the worst of circumstances.

that's when God is gonna make Himself known. That's when God is gonna make His power known because He did that with the despicable, horrible, we talked about this last week, shameful, naked God-man on the cross and people would look at that and say, you are absolutely crazy and you're ridiculous to believe in that because it's weak.

Exactly. That's the point. What you think is weak and foolish is strength and wisdom. The gospel is seen gloriously in weakness, poverty, feebleness, and affliction.

[7:50] In it, God shows His power, riches, strength, and comfort because the gospel is found in Christ alone who suffered and died foolishness in the world's eyes. And the Corinthians were losing sight of this.

So Paul sought to show that his apostolic authority was based on weakness, a concept that conflicted with the church who had become enamored with power, charismatic appearance.

They thought those were the central marks of an apostle. So it was a personal issue because Paul was an embarrassment to them. But actually, it was a doctrinal issue because the gospel was at stake.

The opponents of Paul, really the church as a whole, believed that authority was measured by standard of power, charisma, success, and oratory. The gospel was at stake.

We must understand this as a church. We must proclaim, admit, and confess our weaknesses.

We're all in this together. And the Corinthians would not grasp this gospel truth without first grasping that it's given through a weak, suffering, loser apostle, not the super apostle.

[9:23] I thought of, remember the old school Superman, the Clark Kent, you know, the black and white? I thought of that this past week, you know? Dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun.

I thought of that, yeah. All you like 35-year-olds on down, you're like, what? What's he talking about? I know. I know. I know. I just showed my age.

And this weakness included his concern for them, which paralyzed Paul at crucial moments. So remember, as they came to embrace him as their apostle, they would really be embracing the gospel.

He called them to share in the sufferings of Christ, which means they will embrace him as not just a true apostle, but their true apostle. Embrace Paul and embrace Christ.

Thus, it was out of love and concern for them that he decided not to visit them, though he promised to do so.

[10:29] To them, he was inconsistent, uncaring, unreliable, bogus. You're not for real.

No. He had unswerving love and care for them. Which leads us to this section here that what looks like a contrast, but it's not.

Boasting in our weakness, boasting in the Lord, here we're going to see bogus slash sincere. What we would think is bogus, untrustworthy, is actually the opposite because you have to consider the source.

Paul wasn't bogus. He was for real. Paul, but, because of his broken promise to visit, he had to answer their suspicions and definitely their hurt feelings.

Most likely, his opponents took advantage of this failure. They sowed doubts about his integrity. Well, yeah, he's covering up his weaknesses. He's got ulterior motives.

[11:57] The accusations were flying. Somebody raised questions about Paul's supposed lack of commitment to them, along with his alleged insincerity.

He acted shamelessly, deviously, insincerely. This guy is bogus, not like the super apostles, you know, the capes waving in the wind and the hairs.

Just pretend I have nice, beautiful, slick hair and combats. Just pretend. Okay? I know that's hard. In his letters, he's shrewd.

He's evasive. He writes one thing, but he really means something else. Paul wasn't proclaiming to be perfect.

He knew he was weak, but this weak guy was called by God. Pastors are weak, but we're called by God to shepherd God's people. We're weak.

[13:06] And you should trust them unless otherwise noted. So notice how it moves into this, the bogus slash sincere, verse 12 through 14.

How he begins, there in your New American Standard, he said, for our proud confidence, the Greek word is just literally boasting. For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience.

Through the gospel, Paul and the Corinthians were bound together, and so in what did Paul and his companions boast?

The testimony of their conscience. We have no reservations. We did things with loyalty to Christ and to you. Why would we want to do things to harm you?

How are we going to gain from this? Paul will actually bring this up later on in chapter 10, chapter 11. You deal very well when people insult you, take advantage of you, and slap you.

[14:19] He says, we've done this with you. We haven't done those things. We've done this with you. Notice the next part of verse 12, that in, a better translation is simplicity.

I'll talk about that in just a moment. And godly purity, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, especially toward you. Three aspects in their conduct. Simplicity, sincerity, the grace of God. Simplicity, a better translation.

There's different translations here from different manuscripts. It seems like more of the evidence weighs in instead of holiness. It's simplicity. But either way, however you take that, the idea is purity, wholeness, and then the next word, which is godly sincerity, means transparency.

So he's saying, he's spoken all purity and transparency. I have dealt honestly and openly with you under the power of the gospel because it's all about Christ. How can we better proclaim the gospel?

[15:32] That's what it's about. And yet, here's the paradox. The Corinthians were more interested in a show of skill, power, performance, than purity and heart, which was the very thing in which Paul boasted.

He boasted. He boasted in God and what he had done because that's what we do when we boast. We boast in that which we believe and trust because the mouth speaks from that which fills the heart, Luke 6, 45.

So Paul boasted in the gracious, saving work God had done in his heart. So by his good conscience, by living a transparent life before the Corinthians, he says, our conscience is clean, man.

He didn't act in fleshly wisdom. Notice, when he says fleshly wisdom and yet he contrasts that with God's grace, which means God's wisdom is found in the grace of Jesus.

Well, that reminds us of chapter 1 of 1 Corinthians when he says the cross is foolishness to the world but yet it's foolishness to them but it's the wisdom of God, right? God's grace in Jesus Christ, that's wisdom to the world.

[16:43] It's ridiculous foolishness. He says, no, we didn't come to you like that. We came to you in the gospel. God's wisdom is found in that which humans would never bother to look, the suffering and death of Christ because human wisdom looks to the visible, powerful, outward performance.

I mean, just talking to these two guys in Jerome on Friday just blew off, right? Just blew off the gospel. Just, pfft.

It's like, that's stupid. Why would God do that? Exactly. What you think is stupid.

It's actually wisdom. You just don't get it, do you? In other words, the basis of Paul's boasting was God's work in Christ in the gospel and that's what drove him.

In contrast to the Corinthians boasting the superior gifts, the super apostles, souls. He boasted in pure motives, total openness. I'm laid bare before you guys.

[18:13] We're bonded together. I'm weak, he says, but guess what? So are you. I'm your pastor.

I'm weak, but so are you. We're in this together. Notice verse 13 now. For we write nothing else to you than what you read, understand.

The Corinthians were suspicious of Paul not just because he failed to come to Corinth, but because of his letters, the question of his motives. He asserts, I have no hidden motives or agendas.

I have no hidden meanings. They're saying he's claiming to hide something. I'm not hiding anything. Nothing beyond what you read or recognize, that's what the word means, understand, and recognize could mean an approving knowledge, but even more, a recollection of something they already knew.

They should have known Paul's motives. He says, our letters are just like our conduct.

[19:21] Simple, sincere, and God's wisdom and grace. Guys, we're not trying to take advantage of you. You might think this is bogus, but it's not.

We're for real. And notice he says, and I hope, that's not, well, I hope this is going to happen, which is factual. He hoped factually they would recognize or approve what he had written until the end.

And what's he talking about? The end of the age? The coming of Jesus? That's when it's going to be made clear. His motives are going to be made clear at the end when Jesus comes back, then all the motives, your motives, my motives, everyone's motives are going to lay bare and open, right?

That's what's going to happen. And then notice what he does here in verse 14. Just as you also, in part, did understand us that we are your reason, it's the same word from verse 12, to boast.

And you also, our reason to boast. What's he saying? What's he doing? Paul's inviting them.

Remember when we talked about this last week, how Paul would invite them in his letter?

[20:38] He's inviting them again. And this time, to share in his boasting. Recognize or approve of me as your apostle. Boast in their apostle who passed through suffering and through whom they've received the gospel.

If you embrace me as the apostle, you're going to embrace the gospel. But the Corinthians were the boast in this? That sounds kind of creepy. The Corinthians were his boast?

Why? They are the proof and demonstration that he is a true and faithful apostle. which he'll bring up later on.

They were the reason he boasted and he should be the reason they boasted. It's all about Christ and it's all going to be made clear at Christ's coming. That's why he says it's here in the day of our Lord Jesus.

It's all centered upon the Lord Jesus Christ. You are our boasting. We are your boasting. We're boasting together. Because the fact that they believed upon Christ was a demonstration of his integrity, sincerity, and simplicity.

[21:57] Guys, I'm not trying to swindle you, he says. I'm not trying to take advantage of you. I'm not trying to get something out of you. It's ridiculous. So I say to you, consider the source.

Consider the source. It's hard when our feelings get hurt. But consider the source. That's why we read Philippians chapter 4 verse 8. That's why we read that.

Because the automatic reaction when feelings get hurt is to think what? Evil. You're bogus. You're being insincere. I can't trust you. Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Right? That's the first knee-jerk reaction that we have. That's why Paul is trying to tell the Corinthians with him and with them, consider the source.

I love you as a church. Which leads us into the next part. The whole no-show thing.

[23:01] That's what I called it. Like that title? He didn't show up. He said he was going to visit. He doesn't show up. So this whole no-show thing verses 15 to 22.

Now he's going to deal with the failure to visit Corinth which obviously made the Corinthians unhappy. They reconciled with Paul by a letter.

He sent them this letter, another letter instead of visiting. But it wasn't so easy. Look, when our feelings get hurt by others, especially those in leadership, it's hard to let things go.

It is. When your feelings get hurt by somebody else, when your feelings get hurt by those in leadership, it's hard to let things go.

Their wounded feelings remain along with their suspicions about Paul. they didn't trust him. Now, I'm not likening all the times that leaders hurt our feelings to who Paul is and what he did.

[24:06] I'm not saying that. But when leaders are ready to admit their failures and weaknesses as well as their concern for Christ's body, that's where they're like Paul because he did all for their benefit.

Notice verse 15 and 16. And in this confidence, confidence, what confidence? That is the confidence of the work of the gospel which bonded them together.

I'm confident of this, he says. I intended at first to come to you that you might, and how it's translated here in the numeric standard, twice receive a blessing. Literally, it's a second grace and to pass your way into Macedonia and again from Macedonia to come to you and by you to be helped on my journey, et cetera, et cetera.

So he's saying, it's not about me, it's not about me being careless or self-interested. He was consumed with what was good for them to give you grace. Receive grace and I'm gonna give you grace.

And then to give them to them, receive from them, but also help him in his travels. Help him to get to Judea because from Judea, he's gonna go to Judea, he's gonna give them, the people that were suffering there in Judea, a contribution.

[25:22] He's gonna bring that up in chapter eight and chapter nine. There's a contribution he was gonna bring to them. So to help me get to my travel and for you to help these people who are suffering, that was my intention.

That's what I was intending to do. But once again, the accusation's flied. He's arbitrarily changing his travel plans. He's motivated by self-interest.

He has no concern for his broken promises. He made plans by impulse. He says yes one time, then the next day he says no. Look at verse 17. Therefore, and here's sarcasm.

Paul, in all the letters throughout the New Testament, this is the one letter where you're gonna see sarcasm big time. Here's the first instance.

And I read it like that, didn't I? Just a few moments ago when I first read the passage. So I'll do it again. And therefore, I was not fascinated when I intended to do this, was I?

[26:26] Or that which I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh? That with me there should be yes, yes and no, no. That's sarcasm, folks. I'm laying in, I'm pretty thick here.

Yeah. Do I plan carelessly? He's saying. Do I plan according to the flesh? Or really?

Paul was trying to get them to see that his entire life was an expression of the gospel and God's work in Christ as one writer. Based on powers, abilities, inclinations of our fallen human race, that's hypocrisy.

That's bogus. That's bogus. That's duplicity. He's hiding his self-interest. That was something the Corinthians believed he was doing.

He's trying to hide his weakness, his lack of being a qualified apostle. With me, there's yes, then yes and no, then no. He's being sarcastic.

[27:35] It reminds us of Matthew 5, verse 37, when Jesus says that your yes be yes or your no be no. James 5, verse 12.

Paul was talking about his fidelity and commitment. They denied his reliability. He had severation and ambiguity, which showed his fickleness.

He's inconsistent to them. That's how Paul looked. They're accusing him of talking out of both sides of his mouth for his own self-interest, for his own benefit. This is one of the worst accusations a church can bring upon a pastor who is truly caring for God's church.

It's very easy to question leadership. Remember, consider the source. you know what's interesting? Apart from the good news of the gospel, this is how God appears in the crucified Jesus. What seemed to be bogus, ambiguous, unreliable in Jesus' death was just the opposite.

[28:51] Because when you look at the death of Jesus, you're thinking God's saying no. You're thinking God is unreliable. You're thinking God is bogus.

You're thinking God is not trustworthy because somebody died on the cross. Right? No, it's just the opposite. What you think is bogus, what looks shameful, what looks horrible is actual beauty, real, trustworthy.

Or as we sang just a few moments ago, faithful. Which is why he says in verse 18, but as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no.

Because it's not about the certainty of his word, but God's faithfulness. So their word is not yes and no. It's not just his preaching. His whole life was the outworking of God's work in Christ, which

included his failure to visit them.

One writer says, yet God hides his yes and no, drawing the Corinthians away from themselves and their own wisdom to his, God's wisdom in Christ.

[30:18] So then verse 19, for the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us, by me, and Silvanus, and Timothy, was not yes and no, but is yes in him.

God's yes comes in Christ. When you think he's saying no, when you think God is saying, I'm not gonna put up with this, when you think God has failed, when you think God is bogus, he's actually for real and sincere, and he's faithful.

This gospel, the Son of God, Messiah Jesus, was the basis of all that Paul did, and they had forgotten in their lust for power that God's work takes place in suffering and weakness.

God was faithful to bring Christ. And that's why he says, yes in him, the end of verse 20, you see that?

But is yes in him that is in Christ. God brought Christ, weakness and all, through Paul and his coworkers who were mere vehicles of God's work in Christ.

[31:30] They were the vehicles by which they proclaimed this weak gospel of power. And it was the very faith of the Corinthians that manifested God's yes in Jesus because it marked the presence of the weak yet risen Christ among them.

God showed his yes by faithfully resurrecting the weak, crucified Christ. Because when you see his death, you think that God's saying no. How do you know God's saying yes?

Boom! When he resurrected him from the dead. That's how you know. He says yes, not no. So Paul's focus was upon the resurrection of the weak Christ and the prompting of the faith of the Corinthians by his proclamation of this gospel.

And the faith of the Corinthians manifests that yes. So he has no claim to fame.

He has no claim to fame. I'm just a vehicle, man. Notice what he says in verse 20. For as many as may be the promises of God in him that is Christ they are yes.

[32:49] Wherefore also by him is our amen to the glory of God through us. What's he saying? All of God's promises have come to fulfillment in the crucified and risen Jesus in whom God's yes has become a reality for the Corinthians because they have said yes to Jesus the resurrected Christ.

All the promises have their yes in God's son. So God's faithfulness is seen in the resurrected Jesus and in the faith of the Corinthians.

And this faith was prompted by the very proclamation of Christ by Paul. That's the reason they should boast. And it's the same for you. Put yourself in that.

God's faithfulness is seen in the resurrection of Jesus and in the faith of the people of Cottonwood Bible Church. and this faith was prompted by the very proclamation of Christ by Paul too from this word.

Praise God he faithfully brought Jesus to die and he rose. God's yes is to you this morning if you're here and you're not a follower of Jesus.

[34:07] His yes is to you. He says yes come I will save you. Yes come I will forgive you. Yes come and I will love you and I will shower my grace upon you.

God's saying yes to you not no. He says yes come. once again he's telling them this is their response.

That's why he says this is our amen. This is the verbal response of those given the gift of salvation. In other words amen should be the verbal response of the Corinthians not just my mother because Paul brought them the message of salvation.

Thank you mom. that's another \$20 I owe you. Their worship can only happen as they thank God for bringing Paul.

They should be thanking God for bringing Paul and yet what are they doing? You're unreliable you're not trustworthy yeah yeah yeah yeah right?

[35:16] Really? I mean hello consider the source. Like he's gonna gain from doing any of this from the Corinthians. If you read ahead into chapter 11 early part of chapter 11 Paul says I didn't take any payment from you guys.

I was working another job and then proclaiming the gospel to you because I didn't want to take advantage of you. And now you're questioning my motives? Are you crazy?

Grasp the gospel by grasping Paul as their apostle. And it was their amen to the gospel that validated his apostleship and then notice what he does verse 21. Paul he's gonna direct all the

attention off of himself really off of the Corinthians off of himself onto God verse 21.

Now he who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God. God confirmed the apostle together with the Corinthians.

God anointed Paul to be their apostle. God was the one who sealed and gave them the spirit in their hearts the spirit who is the down payment of their inheritance. It's all God. He established Paul.

[36:33] He alone made Paul's preached message and word and life trustworthy in spite of their suspicions. Paul was the vehicle by which God brings his yes in Christ and that's why it bonds them together.

Establishes means validated to make certain or true. Give stability. Interesting. These are all the things that Corinthians are doubting about Paul weren't they?

As opposed to the super apostles. They are established together for Christ. they belong to Christ. They're indwelt by Christ.

They share individually and corporately together the resurrected life of Christ. It's Paul and the Corinthians. It's us. We're bonded together and we're together. Does that not go the same for the pastor and the church that he pastors?

They share in salvation as they share in the sufferings of Paul. He is their boast in the day of Christ and they are his. And notice he says not just established but also anointed us.

[37:47] Us. Remember us is not us, you the Corinthians. He's not saying that us is the apostles. Paul commissioned was commissioned by God for his apostolic calling.

Him and his co-workers. And what else has God done? Look at verse 22. Who also sealed us.

Again us the apostles. And his co-workers and gave the spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

In other words God confirmed us as an apostle by the sealing and Paul associated it with the down payment of the spirit who brings the new creation. You'll see that in chapter 5. And notice he says in our hearts.

Not the appearance. The commendation they sought was not found in outward or superficial evidence. It rests in the work of the spirit in their hearts.

So that's why we must look to the heart not the outward experience. Not the outward appearance. The way God distributes Christ's saving comfort is through the new life of the spirit who was given to Paul in his heart.

[39:05] Interesting. He started out this section about his conscience and he ends here about the spirit being put in his heart. The spirit created faith in the apostle as well as those who heard this message and God is the means by which Paul stood firm in his integrity.

Last part. How do we do this? How do we live like this as a church?

We walk by faith not by sight. Not by appearances or hurt feelings. But according to the gospel look we are all weak and it's high time we admit it we confess our weakness and we display spirit directed change.

We're all in this together. There's no ulterior motives that I have. I'm on your side. I'm not against you.

Church do you understand what I'm saying? Members I'm on your side. I'm not against you. I never have been and I never will be.

[40:23] You should look at my life and how it proclaims to you and integrity you should do that you should question that my character absolutely but consider the source I've been here for 12 years why would I want to take advantage of you?

What what would I gain in all this? We're in this together. look I'm weak I'll respond poorly to you and guess what you're weak you'll respond poorly to me and guess what you're weak you're going to respond poorly to each other but is that not the glorious display of grace?

It is. Let's pray. Father it looked like you were saying no it looked like you were defeated it looked like you failed with Jesus hanging on the cross and yet that's how you glorified your name and that's how you made it so that you will validate it by resurrecting him from the dead and you validate it not just by that factual truth but then the change of life that happens in us as your people so do that in us we admit our failures we admit our weaknesses we admit our fickleness and feebleness we admit all those things and yet thank you because that's when you'll shine your grace take a few moments if you would to think ponder pray through the passage that we looked at and after a few moments of silence we'll do some responsive worship actions we'll respond by giving we'll respond by singing to songs and we'll pray we'll pray for the Jamesons take this time just a few moments

between you and the Lord admit your weakness and how much you need the gospel the me don't
do and we'll and there
Thank you.