

Lowly / Boldly

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[0:00] please take your Bibles and go to 2 Corinthians 10.

2 Corinthians 10. If you're visiting with us or forgot your cell phone at home, you can pull out that black Bible in the chair in front of you.

Go to the back and find page 144. 2 Corinthians 10. Page 144 in that black Bible. Chapter 10, we're gonna do all of chapter 10 this morning.

All 18 verses. Continuing on with what we have started back in August. Going through the book of 2 Corinthians, this letter.

Let's read and let's do our study. Again, I'm gonna be mixing English, New American Standard with some Greek translation that I did on my own. As I'm reading.

[1:01] Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I, weak when present with you, but bold when absent.

I ask, not being present, that I may be bold with the trust with which I want to be courageous against some who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh.

For though we walk according to the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. Verse 4. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but powerful to God.

For the destruction of fortresses, destroying speculations and every lofty thing, raised up against the knowledge of God, and taking every mind captive to the obedience of Christ, ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience has been completed, has been fulfilled.

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

[2:17] For even if I should boast further about our authority, which the Lord gave unto your edification, and not for your destruction, I will not be put to shame, as if I were to terrify you by my letters.

Verse 10. For they say, Oh, his letters are weighty and strong, but his presence is weak, and his word despised. Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons also indeed when present.

We're not so bold as to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves, but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they don't understand.

Verse 13. But we will not boast beyond measure, but according to the measure of the standard which God assigned to us as a measure, to reach as far as you.

For we're not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach you, for we came as far as you in the gospel of Christ, not boasting beyond measure, in someone else's labors, but having hope, as your faith grows, we shall be according to the standard enlarged even more by you, so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, not to boast in the things prepared in the standard of another.

[3:41] Verse 17. But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord. For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

This is a book by R.C. Sproul called The King Without a Shadow. Story time. No, I'm not going to read the whole thing.

But I'll give you some excerpts. This is for my introduction. So there's this king, and he was sitting on his throne. He had this glorious robe, and he had this thing on his head.

What's it called? The crown. Thank you. Right. So one of the palace guards came to the king and said there was a little boy visiting the palace. He asked if he could meet the king.

The king frowned. A little boy? What does a boy want to see about me? I'm busy. I don't want to be disturbed. What does he want? The guard said, well, I'm not sure, your majesty.

[4:44] He said he has a very important question to ask you. He seems very concerned. He said it would only take a few minutes. The king said, his frown grew deeper. I don't have time to be talking to children. I have a kingdom to take care of.

Well, yes, your majesty. I'll send them away. But the little fellow will be disappointed. The king thought for a moment. His heart changed. Oh, well, all right then.

I'll see him, but only for a few minutes. The guard left the room, returned with the lad. He was plainly dressed in simple clothes and had no shoes on his feet.

His hair was messed up. His face was beaming with a big smile. The boy was holding a small puppy in his arms. When the king saw the boy and his puppy, he lifted a scepter, which signaled for the boy to come near to the throne.

So the boy walked right to the front steps and almost looked up at the king. He tried to make a polite bow before the king, but he almost fell over because his puppy was wiggling in his arms.

[5:44] Yes, my child, said the king. What's this important question you have for me? He was nervous. He tried to speak, but the words were getting stuck in his throat. The king smiled and said, it's all right, don't be afraid. Go ahead and ask your question. The boy calmed down.

He said, your majesty, it's about shadows I wanted to ask you. Shadows, said the king. What about shadows? Jesus. That's all. Oh.

But where's the punchline? You're just gonna have to buy the book. Tell you what, it's a Christmas present. It's a commercial for Amazon. Do I get a kickback for this or something? I don't know. But the point I wanted to make, the reason why I read this, which struck me about this part as I was doing my study this past week, is it reminded me of that story because we've read that story to our children.

What struck me was this lowly boy came boldly before a mighty king. That's the paradox.

Lowliness, boldness. How do you be both of those at the same time? But that's exactly the paradox that we see in our passage today.

[6:55] You know, the paradox that you're supposed to boast in your weakness, which means you're boasting in the Lord. And you think that those contradict each other, they conflict with each other. No, they don't. They go together.

And so as we will see today, the theme for today in chapter 10, lowly, boldly. Or if you want to put lowliness, boldness, you can do that too.

If you need an is at the end of your word. Lowly, boldly. And you know, I like to give you statements at the very beginning to kind of tell you what I'm about to say or to sum up the message.

So that way, if you need to fall asleep, you can. Kalen, who is up from one o'clock to like four o'clock this morning on a call, thank you, Unisource Man. We appreciate you. He has his get out of church service card.

He's gonna be sleeping later. So anyways, I'm just kidding, brother. You can wake up now. I mean, you can go to sleep now. So the statement is this.

[7:55] It's not about you. It's about the gospel. It's not about you. It's about the gospel. It's not about me. It's not about us. It's about the gospel.

That's what the Corinthians were losing sight of. It's not about you or me. It's about the gospel. Longer statement. With all lowliness, boast in your weaknesses.

Don't waste time comparing yourself to others. What she has, what he has. I don't have that. Why does he deal with that? Why don't I have to deal with this? It's not about you.

God wants to further the gospel through you. He wants to further the gospel through this church. Which will we obey? That's the question. That's what Paul is trying to say.

This is a battle for our minds. I'll have the statement later on in the message. Ministry is a battle for your mind.

[8:57] I'm battling for your mind. That's the point. I'm going after your mind. That you would think, that I would think like this.

That we would think biblically. To have lowly boldness when it comes to our weaknesses. So that we walk by faith.

Not by appearance. We boast in Christ. Who assigns us some measure of standard. We're tempted. To judge things by appearance. We're tempted to do that.

It's the biggest temptation. And I could even argue the biggest temptation that we have in our American culture. Instead of boasting in our human wisdom.

We boast in weakness and feebleness. With all lowliness and yet boldness. And the Lord will commend us in our weakness. As we boast in him. There's a change here in Paul's letter.

[10:04] Starting here in chapter 10. To verse, excuse me, chapter 13. We see what this whole rift between Corinth and Paul was about. It was about them embracing him as a true, legitimate apostle.

He was their apostle. So their pastor. He had that authority. And they should embrace it. Once again you see the theme of weakness versus strength magnified in chapter 10.

And there's going to be magnified again in chapter 11. Magnified again in chapter 12 and 13.

Weakness was the defining term of his apostolic claim and mission.

Which is why the Corinthians struggled so bad with Paul. I mean they cherished. Here's some P words for you. Power, prestige, persona, privilege. That's what they cherished.

That's what was important to them. And all those things are contrary to the gospel. It's contrary to Christ. We could even say our American culture glamorizes power, prestige, persona, and privilege.

[11:21] And Christians, we get so caught up into that. Christ is shown powerful and prestigious in the shameful, horrible cross.

In all its weakness. Something the Corinthians rejected. Thus they rejected Paul. And therefore they were rejecting the gospel.

And they've gone after the opponents. The loyal opposition. All true pastors.

Ministers of the gospel. Are the very embodiment of the gospel. In all their weakness. In all their feebleness. In all our sin. We display the need for grace.

The need that we need grace. And we display the need that you need grace. We're the embodiment of the gospel. And Paul was candid.

[12:21] Because his weaknesses were based on the gospel. The death and resurrection of Jesus. And yet this gospel mission was at stake.

It was at stake with the Corinthians because of their relentlessly cantankerous attitude with Paul. Who carried the treasure of the gospel.

As a suffering, weak apostle. But he knew. He knew he was the test case for the Corinthians.

Regarded the nature of his apostolic ministry.

And if he was legit. Their response to Christ through him. It was the proof of the truth. Not the proof but a proof. Not just of the gospel but the fact that he loved them.

Pastors are weak. They suffer. They struggle. But guess what? So do you.

[13:20] We all do. In this chapter Paul. He appealed in a lowly manner. Yet at the same time. He boldly asserts authority.

He does both. And he's confronting things head on with grace. And yet he uses. And you can tell as I was reading the passage. Sarcastic irony.

Or ironic sarcasm. Why does he do this? He's trying to win their hearts. He wants them.

So. Let's work through this. First. The lowly. Boldly. Principle. There in verse 1. Notice you see both of those aspects.

I. Paul. Myself. Urge you. By meekness. Boldness. Lowliness. This is.

[14:19] That urge. It continues chapter 9. Because if they participate in this grace. Remember the grace that was going to be given to the Jerusalem church. They would be submitting to his authority as their apostle.

So that's why he says. Now. At this point now. I'm urging you. And yet I do this. By the meekness and gentleness of Christ. He appealed his authority. By the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

I speak to my fellow colleagues. Pastors. For all of us to remember. Pastors cannot force churches to recognize their authority. As hurtful and frustrating it can become.

We just can't. We must not force it. Gentleness means mildness and judgments. Confidence. Look. Again. The issue was not his authority. It was not about his authority. It was about the gospel. That was what was at stake. Meek. So there's the principle.

[15:22] And yet. Notice. Right off the bat. He deals with the accusation. That he's a contradiction. Notice he says. I. And the word there in numeric sentence says meek.

But it's actually the word. Lowly. Lowly when present with you. But bold when I'm absent. He's being sarcastic. He spoke with ironic sarcasm.

He's trying to expose their selfish claims. Oh yes. That's me guys. You nailed it. When I'm present. I'm lowly. But when I'm absent. I'm bold. There's the accusation. He's a contradiction. This has been the problem that Corinth has had with him.

For so long. But notice. The next part. How he confronts the accusation. Look at verse 2. Now it's translated. Interesting. New American Standard. I ask that when I am present.

[16:26] That I may not be bold. It's actually the opposite. I ask. When not being present. To be bold. That's how it should actually be translated. That's actually better. So again.

The ironic sarcasm. He's trying to expose their heart attitudes. He uses two terms to convey boldness. Then he uses another term to convey trust or confidence.

We'll look at that. But notice. I request. To be bold. When do people ask to be bold? They just think that's weird. People don't ask to be bold.

They're just bold. Right? Right? If someone's going to be bold. They're going to be. Right? They're just bold. They don't ask. Can I be bold with you? Well I guess some people do. If they're not rude. But notice how he does this. He just goes. Can I be. Can I be bold with you guys? He's confronting their argument. See it all depended on their response to him.

[17:25] Did they take him seriously? Or would they be flippant in how they treated their apostle. Their pastor. Were they going to have a gospel response?

Will you as a church. Will we as a congregation have a gospel response to his word? And notice what he says. That I may be bold.

With the confidence. Or another way you can translate it is with trust. He's trusting in something. He's used this word before in this letter. In different places.

There are different places where he uses this word. He's talking about trusting in the gospel. Paul trusted in the gospel to judge. So he says. Excuse me. I ask that I may be bold.

In the trust. Trusting in the gospel. And with this trust. I consider it to be courageous. To be bold. Against some.

[18:22] Against these guys. Notice what he says. Next part there in verse 2. Some who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. What's he talking about?

Oh it's. Those guys. The opponents. The loyal opposition. Or. As we've classified them before. The super apostles.

Oh. The super apostles. One of my kids drew this. A few weeks ago.

Look at how he's. He's waking. Isn't that funny? I thought I'd just throw it up there for you. Just kind of. Wake you guys up. Wake Caitlin up.

Anyway. Hey. The super apostles. These guys. They. Paul wants to. He intends to act boldly against these guys.

[19:21] This. What they were saying. Oh he walks according to flesh. Now. The first thing that we think of. Is. He walks sinfully. Right? No. That's not what they're talking about.

Paul. Oh by the way. I want to put this up first. Paul was trying to drive a wedge between the members and that loyal opposition. He's trying to drive a wedge. So here's what he says. He says. This is what they say.

We walk according to the flesh. Human powers. In other words. Weak in appearance. Being subject to trials. Sufferings and difficulties. If.

If he was really an apostle. Where's. Where's the power? Where's Christ? Where's the. Pff. Right? I mean. If he's really an apostle. He's not going to glamorize in his weaknesses. That's what losers do. And.

[20:19] And there was. Talk about him operating in deception. And self-serving motives. Yes. But more. The emphasis is here. He's a weakling. That's how he walks.

Walks. What a loser. So notice now. What Paul is going to do. From here. Verse 3.

All the way to verse 16. He's going to. He's going to. Battle for their minds. Whose minds? Corinth. And I'm going to give you different points. That he brings up. Okay. But first. Notice. How he begins the battling for the mind. Starting here in verse 3. He's. He says.

Though we walk according to the flesh. We don't walk according to the flesh. That's basically what he's saying. They say we walk according to the flesh. But yes. We walk according to the flesh. But we don't walk according to the flesh. Wait. What? You're like saying two things at the same time.

[21:17] What are you talking about? Yes. I'm subject to weakness. Suffering. Distress. But no. We don't walk according to appearance. We walk by faith.

He's going to mention this in verse 7. You guys walk by appearance. He said this in chapter 5. Remember 5 verse 7. For we walk by faith.

Not by appearance. This is a challenge. To Corinth. But actually. We don't war according to the flesh.

So he's. And he's not talking about. The Christian life. He's. He's talking about. His calling as an apostle. He says. We do not war according to the flesh.

He's saying. He served as a soldier. When it came to how the Corinthians. Judgments. Came upon him. He would fight against those claims. He would battle for their minds.

[22:18] Because remember. What's he after? Their hearts. He wants them. Come. It's amazing to me. How much Paul loved Corinth. Isn't that amazing to you?

He loved Corinth. But he's battling for their minds. Notice how he begins this part here in verse 4. The weapons. Here's our weapons. Our weapons.

The weapons of our warfare. Where am I at? Oh verse 4. For the weapons of our warfare. Are not fleshly. But. And it has their new maker standard. Divinely powerful.

Literally. It's powerful for God. Or powerful with God. Or powerful to God. And what are those weapons? He doesn't tell us.

He doesn't say. But yet you kind of get a glimpse of it earlier on in the letter. Do you remember that? Chapter 6. Verse 3 through 10.

[23:18] Where he talks about weapons for the left hand. Whoops. Left hand on the right. Glory and dishonor. He said. Slander and praise. Regarded as a deceiver yet true.

What were the weapons? His earthly body. Which was a weapon of the gospel. Because. Christ's power is present. Only a weakness.

Since Jesus our Lord. Triumph in his death. On a shameful. Horrible. Cross. We glory in weakness. Because that's where power is found. At the shameful.

Horrible. Bloody. Naked. Son of God on the cross. It's that. That's what we glory in.

That's what Paul did. And notice he says. For. The last part of verse 4. For the destruction of fortresses. The weapon of weakness was used to destroy.

[24:19] Destroy. Fortresses. Fortresses. Practical judgments of human reasonings. Untrue and false statements about walking by appearance. Not by faith.

So that he says in verse 5. Destroying speculations and every lofty thing. Raised up against the knowledge of God. He wants their minds.

And it's anything that's going to glorify appearance versus. Versus walking by faith. Those are things that are against the knowledge of God. Because those are things that are against the cross.

And then notice what he says. The last part of verse 5. And taking every thought captive. Notice I translated that for you. Mind. Mind. Mind. It's the same word used in chapter 3 verse 14.

The same word used in chapter 4 verse 4. And it's translated their mind. What's he trying to do? He's trying to captivate the mind. Whose mind? The minds of the Corinthians.

[25:25] To take their mind captive. But first he had to destroy their false imaginations. Their exalted thinking about themselves. I told you this earlier.

Ministry. What is ministry about? Ministry is really a battle. For the mind of people to think biblically. If you miss anything in this message.

Don't miss this. This is ministry. This is my agenda. I was asked this by deacons when I first came. What's your agenda?

This is my agenda. I'm battling for your mind that you will think biblically. And not just your mind. My mind too. I mean I'm in this with you. Because our natural bent is not to think that way.

Our natural bent is to allow the world to infiltrate our thinking. And that we walk by this. By appearances. By what we see. No.

[26:29] We have to walk by faith. Trusting in the word. As I'll mention earlier. We must be taken captive by God's word. By the gospel.

Well what imaginations and thinking do they have? They live by human wisdom. They live by strength. And you know what their problem was? They relied on this human wisdom and strength. And they believe leaders should do the same.

No trials. No suffering. That shows you're weak. Don't ever let them see you sweat. You must say oh you got it all together. The Corinthians.

Well specifically the loyal opposition. They measured all things by appearance. That's why Paul was suspect in their eyes. But Paul one destroyed this world view. Because that world view is an anti-gospel world view. Do I even dare say this? So many times our American culture is an anti-gospel view.

[27 : 36] And we can be so bent on that. That we lose sight of walking by faith. No. Instead God destroys all human wisdom.

By the proclamation of a weak, feeble, timid, lame, powerless Christ. Who died a shameful, audacious, horrible death. Because in this foolishness comes true wisdom. Lowliness. Boldness. You see. Our faith is not meant to rest in human wisdom. But in the power of God. So that this message comes to you.

Through a loser. A weakling. It comes to you through a powerless. Unimpressive messenger. That's why we must be taken captive by God's word.

Let yourself be taken captive by the gospel. And notice what he says. The last part here. Of verse 5. Taking every mind captive.

[28 : 43] To the obedience of Christ. Notice he doesn't say. Obedience to Christ. Do we obey Christ? No. No. No. It's obedience of Christ. In other words.

The obedience that comes from Christ. Do I have it here? I think I do. Oh yeah. Not obedience to Christ. But obedience that comes from Christ.

And his saving work. Christ captures our rebellious hearts. By giving himself over to weakness. And dying for our sins. That's the heart of the gospel. This is why I mentioned this earlier.

If you're here and you're not a Christian. You're not a follower of Jesus. You must deny anything by appearance. And come with all your weakness.

With all your feebleness. With all your sin. And say God here I am. Please save me. God doesn't want you to get all your life together. He wants you to say.

[29 : 42] My life is screwed up. I need you. That's what he wants you to say. And Paul. He wanted to conquer the Corinthians.

Through the weakness of the cross. That's what he wanted to do. And notice what he does in verse 6. I know I'm spending a lot of time on this.

But I'm trying to set this up for the other things that follow. The battling for the minds. Verse 6. Being ready to punish all disobedience. Or we have in readiness the avenging of all disobedience.

When your obedience has been fulfilled. What do you mean their obedience? When they submit it to the gospel. When they walk by faith not by sight. When they embrace Paul as their pastor.

As their apostle. Paul was prepared to punish all disobedience. In other words. To deal with the super apostles.

[30 : 43] And anyone who was following them. That's what he was ready to do. So now. So this is the whole aspect. Battling for the mind. Okay. Battling for the mind.

Now here's different things he wants to show them. Different thoughts he's going to put in their heads. So to speak. If you want to put it that way. Battle number one. God gives authority.

God is the one who gives authority. Verse 7 and 8. He flat out asserts his authority. He says. Verse 7. You're looking at mere appearance.

That's. I know it has a different way to translate. You're looking at things as they are outwardly. Literally it's this. You're looking at mere appearances. You're being duped by these guys.

Corinth. Hello. Hello. Wake up. These guys are duping you. You're attracted to our displays of power and rhetoric. Notice what he says.

[31 : 44] The next part of verse 7. If anyone is confident in himself that he's Christ. He's talking to these apostolic pretenders. Okay. If anyone thinks that they're of Christ.

They claim to be of Christ. Remember they said. We follow Jesus. I don't follow any man. I follow Jesus. That's what we're claiming.

Think again buddy. Notice he says. Let him consider this again within himself. That just as he's Christ. So also are we.

First. He didn't accept their claim. Trust in himself. Second. Do a fresh inward reckoning.

Bub. So too are we of Christ. And then look. Look what he does here in verse 8. Even if I should boast further about our authority.

[32 : 47] Which the Lord gave. Notice what he's saying here. If I boast about this authority. Which the Lord gave to us. To build you guys up. Not to destroy you. I will not be put to shame.

He is flat out asserting his authority. And it was given to him by God. The Lord gave Paul his authority. It wasn't his own.

His authority was not dependent upon outward powers. It was dependent upon Christ. Who's present in weakness and feebleness. And notice the purpose. For building you up.

Or literally it's like this. Unto edification. To edification. Why does God give you a pastor? Why does God give churches. Pastors.

Elders. Leaders. Shepherds. Why? To build you up. Not to destroy you. It was to edify the Corinthians.

[33:44] Not to destroy them. Remember the phrase we talked about this in weeks past. Consider the source. Consider the source. What have I to gain in anything?

I'm not going to gain anything. I have nothing to gain. Paul had nothing to gain. And then he says. You guys have forgotten who I am.

You've forgotten how much I love you. You've forgotten how much we love God's word. Remember that? Remember the vision that we had for the truth? As I assert this authority.

I have no shame. Why? God gave him this authority. To benefit and grow them. Why does God give authority? Interesting.

You could even. You could even extend this out. To like government. And things like this. Parents. You could. But here Paul is talking about within the church. God gave his authority.

[34:48] To benefit and to grow people. That's the battle for your mind. Because what's the automatic knee jerk reaction when we have authority? What does the bumper sticker say?

Question authority. Right? And there's certain aspects I understand. Why we put that in there.

Okay. There's some disclaimers to that. I know. Keep in mind.

The battling for the mind. God gives authority. Battle number two. Consistent integrity. Verse nine.

And I put this. I transit for you. In a way by which. This is how he meant. As if I were to terrify you by my letters. He's being sarcastic. Oh. I write these letters to terrify you. That's the idea.

Which is why he goes into verse 10. For they say. He said the loyal opposition to the opponents.

His letters are weighty and strong.

[35:51] But his presence is weak. And his word is despised. But they have nothing to fear.

Because he did things to benefit them.

Not to bring them fear. But they listened to his opponents. Instead of repentance. They were stubborn. As if Paul's trying to terrify them. Really? Come on guys. They're trying to drive a wedge between the church.

And Paul. And Paul's trying to drive a wedge between them and the opponents. So he's trying to show a difference. They're trying to show a difference. Between his presence and his letters.

Now. His adversaries. They had an advantage. They're there. Right? Paul wasn't there. So they kind of had an advantage. They displayed their powers. But he openly brought up their arguments.

The weakness of his person. It shows his inadequacy. It disqualifies him to lead. But that's the whole point. His word is contemptible.

[37:01] Worthless. You know what's interesting is that. If the church would just look in the mirror. They would see their apostle. The apostle.

Was the mirror of the church. If they look closely. They would truly see themselves. Because Paul was a follower of the crucified weak Christ. And so were they.

Why would they say something like this? I mean when you look at Paul's letters. Like 1 Corinthians chapter 5. Chapter 10. Chapter 11. Chapter 14. Chapter 15. Paul was pretty strong.

Right? But Paul. Is trying to accentuate his weaknesses. But they're trying to show it.

So that he's unfit to be an apostle. But Paul says. Instead of this. Let's go to the cross. He's going to crush them. With the fact that weakness.

[38:01] Is really the thing when a glory in. Not the appearance. We have consistent integrity.

Notice what he says. Verse 11. Let such a person consider this.

Let these opponents consider. Guess what? What we are in word by letters when absent. In such a way we are. When we're present. What we are in word when absent.

We are by deed when present. Have consistent integrity. All the time? Of course not. We're weak.

But an overall consistent integrity.

May God give us grace to have consistent integrity with each other. Knowing that we glory in these weaknesses. Because we're all weak. We're all in this together. Another battle for the mind.

Human comparisons. What's the first thing we start doing? Well she doesn't have that. Well he's dealing with that. How come I have to deal with this and that? Right? Notice verse 12.

[39:02] We're not bold to class or compare ourselves to some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves. And they compare themselves with themselves. They don't understand. He didn't commend himself the way his opponents had done.

He didn't compare himself with them. That's what they did. They measured themselves with themselves. They compared themselves with themselves.

They said well we got it together. No you really don't have it together. All these comparisons. All these judgments they showed. They were not true followers of Jesus.

They boasted in themselves. They need to be careful. We don't compare ourselves to each other. We're all weak. We're all in this together.

Some of this thought. Some of that. We're going to look at that in a moment. God assigns us a measure of standard. Some of this. Some of that. Some of dealing with this. Some of dealing with that. But that's how God assigns it.

[40:02] To further the gospel though. Because it's not about you. It's not about me. It's about the gospel. Which is the other battle. Another battle.

God assigns a measure. Verse 13 and 14. The measure he used. Paul used to boast. Was the measure of the standard. Of which God had measured to them. That's what he says here in verse 13.

We're not going to boast beyond measure. But within the measure. Or according to the measure. Which God has assigned to us. Even as far as you. Verse 14. We didn't overextend ourselves. It's just not to reach you. For we came even as far as you. In the gospel of Christ. What's he saying? What's he talking about? This measure was the gospel. Because it's always about the gospel.

And it's this gospel that reached the Corinthians. Paul knew that his ministry was in God's hands. It was assigned by God. And he knew he'd be held accountable to the stewardship. The gospel of Christ.

[41:02] Had worked in their heart. God by the spirit created faith in their heart. That is what judges us all. He wasn't overreaching himself.

He came as far as the Corinthians with the gospel. It was what God had assigned to them. It was what God had assigned to him. Which leads to the last one.

The last battle for the mind. It's not about. It's about the gospel. Not you. And your response to it. One writer put it like this with these verses.

Here in these verses. Paul de-centers the Corinthians. See they thought everything was about them. They were so focused on them.

Like how they looked. And how this and that. They were all focused on them. And Paul is saying it's not about you. It's about the gospel. And your response to the gospel. Look at what he says.

[41:57] Verse 15. We're not boasting beyond measure. In someone else's labor. But having hope. As your faith grows. We will be. According to the standard.

Our standard. Enlarged even more by you. So as to preach the gospel. To regions beyond you. Not to boast in the things that are prepared. In the standard of another.

What is he talking about? He's saying by the growth of their faith. Paul would set them free. For a greater mission. They would set him free.

To give the gospel to even more people. Don't you guys understand? God brings us together as a church. To further his work through us.

And as they would benefit in the faith. Oh it's not about the Corinthians. But the gospel. Sorry I didn't put that up there. As they would benefit in the faith. Paul would have the chance.

[42:53] To give the gospel to others. Since they would support him to do it. That would be the idea. Why? Because they're not so focused on them. But they're. Hey how can we reach out to others?

How can we give the others the gospel? Let's support Paul to do that. You see they're thinking beyond themselves. Because it's not about you. It's about the gospel.

And furthering the gospel. Paul wanted to evangelize other regions. That did not have the gospel. He wanted to go beyond them. It's not about them. They were just being selfish.

God is doing his work in them. Through them. For the sake of the gospel. So he comes to all this stuff. He's battling for their minds.

I'm battling after your mind. I want to go after your mind. And then he says. So that. We boast in the Lord. Verse 17. He quotes from Jeremiah chapter 9.

[43 : 50] But he who boasted. And boasts in the Lord. When it's all said and done. At the end of the day. We should boast in the Lord. True boasting.

Rests. In knowing God. And fearing him. In his work. Of mercy. Grace. And love. We're made to be in a relationship. With our creator. And hearing and receiving. So that our boasting is in him.

God works in the heart. God creates faith and trust in him. That's who we boast in. Because it's not about you. His bodily weakness.

His inabilities. They were all vehicles for God. To further the work. Because within human weakness. God's power is present.

And he does his work. And this work operates at the cross of Jesus. Which is why he ends right here in verse 18. For not he who commends himself is approved. But whom the Lord commends.

[44 : 51] Look friends. The Lord gives his approval. It's the Lord who commends. His calling came from God. Who worked in and through the crucified.

Now risen Christ. And it's the faith of the Corinthians. That showed this reality. Even though they were ignoring it. The one who boasts in the Lord.

In the gospel. Enjoys his commendation. That's real. True. Approval. It's not about commending ourselves. The Lord commends.

Lowliness. Boldness. It's not about you or me. It's about the gospel. And God's gonna do things to further the gospel in us.

Which is why with all lowliness. Boast in your weaknesses. Don't waste time comparing yourself to others. What she has. What he has. What you don't have. What he doesn't have. It's not about us.

[45 : 51] God wants to further the gospel through us. He wants to further the gospel through this church. Will we obey? Today. That's the question at hand. Who has to do what you today.

Will you praise him? And so we pray. Spirit of God. As you've created faith in us. So work to change us.

Help us to be mindful. of the temptation to walk by appearance and not by faith.

Help us to de-center ourselves and to center on Christ. Help us to boast in our lowliness to be bold in our weakness to be bold in the gospel.

Use us. Further the work of the gospel through us, we pray. We pray in your name, Lord Jesus.

[47 : 09] If you would take some time and let your mind dwell on these things. Let your heart mull through what we've seen from 2 Corinthians chapter 10.

And after a few moments, we'll do our time of giving. We'll sing our last two songs and do our closing prayer.

But let this time be a time for you to just sit, think, ponder, reflect upon God's word and the impact that it has in your heart and life.

ura's Tip