

2Corinthians – Week 42

I. Review:

- A. 1Peter 3:15 (ESV), *“but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”*
- i. Be familiar with the popular arguments and opinions out there that are against the knowledge of God.
 - ii. Some common strongholds include:
 1. Secular strongholds that claim the Bible is a myth.
 2. Jewish strongholds.
 3. Denominational strongholds.

II. Continuation

A. Before we continue, let's briefly look at two verb moods:

- i. Indicative – this is when a verb is used to indicate or express a fact or making an inquiry:

1. Charlie CLOSES the window.
2. Did Charlie CLOSE the window?

- ii. Imperative – this is when a verb is used to express a command:

1. CLOSE the window.

- iii. Sometimes, Bible translators cannot tell if a phrase is in the indicative or imperative mood, so depending on the translation, certain phrases will appear different...

B. 2Cor. 10:7 (ESV), *“Look at what is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.”*

- i. NIV 2011 translates this sentence as indicative: *“You are judging by appearances.”*

1. This goes in line with what Paul said earlier about his critics, who boast about outward appearances:

- a. 2Cor. 5:12 (ESV), *“We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart.”*

2. With this understanding, Paul is exposing a major spiritual problem with the Corinthian church: they only see things superficially (they judge books by their covers).

- a. They were easily impressed by appearances and oratory skills.

- b. And because of this, the false apostles -- who serve the master of disguise, Satan (cf. 11:13-15) -- have bewitched and confused them.

- ii. KJV translates this sentence as indicative, using an inquiry: *“Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?”*

1. Pretty much, saying the same thing as the NIV but in question form.

- iii. ESV translates this sentence as imperative.

1. This goes in line with how Paul uses the Greek word *“blepo,”* which means, *“look on; look to; take heed”* in his other letters – all imperative:

- a. 1Cor. 8:9 (ESV)... *“But TAKE CARE that this right of yours...”*

- b. 1Cor. 10:18 (ESV)... *“CONSIDER the people of Israel...”*

- c. 1Cor. 16:10 (ESV)... *“When Timothy comes, SEE that you put him at ease...”*

- d. Other passages include Gal. 5:15; Phil. 3:2; Eph. 5:15 & Col. 2:8; 4:17.

2. With this understanding, Paul is telling the Corinthians to look at the evidence before your eyes!
 - a. He wants them to see that his calling from God is legitimate, which, apparently, his critics have called into question.
 - b. He goes on to say if anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, then he should remember that Paul and his companions belong to Christ too!
 - i. If anyone doubts that Paul belongs to Christ, then how did Corinthian church come to be? Was it not by Paul's preaching?
 - ii. Their existence as a church should primarily serve as evidence that Paul was a true servant of Christ and that the Spirit of God worked powerful through him.
 - iii. And no one can question the fact that he personally nurtured the newly formed church and lived among them for 18 months.
 - iv. But what about his critics? What have they done? Haven't they weakened the church by their negative talk?
 - c. What does "*he is Christ's*" mean?
 - i. It could refer simply to being a Christian, but it is unlikely that those in Corinth were saying that Paul and his companions were not Christians.
 - ii. Most likely, this is pointing to having a special relationship to Christ that comes with some kind of distinct authority.
 1. This understanding would go in conjunction to what Paul says later on in chapter 11, making reference to apostles and servants of Christ.
 - iii. The following verse would support this idea, since apostles do have authority...

C. 2Cor. 10:8 (ESV), "*For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed.*"

- i. Apparently, some took issue with his authoritative demands in his severe letter.
 1. His critics are trying to dislodge him from his rightful role of spiritual leader of the church by challenging his authority and belittling his adequacy as a speaker.
- ii. Paul did not believe that he boasted excessively or too freely because his boasting was not beyond limits of his God-given assignments (cf. 10:13).
- iii. He did not boast in the labor of others but in his own (cf. 10:15), which includes the Corinthians.
- iv. And his boasting was in the Lord, not in himself (cf. 10:17).
- v. He would not allow himself to be put to shame for speaking of the authority God has given him.
 1. Paul cared little what men thought of him, for he knew that God would judge him and at the end, he, along with all men, will stand before the throne of Christ to be judged (cf. 1Cor. 4:4; 2Cor. 5:10).
 2. He believed that he would not be condemned or dishonored by Christ for boasting of his God-given authority.
- vi. Paul states here that his authority, especially expressed in his earlier severe letter to them, was not designed to destroy them, but to build them up.
 1. Paul had nothing to do with the problems that were occurring at Corinth.
 2. It was his critics who were destroying the church.
 3. Paul's letter was designed to dismantle what his critics were doing!
 - a. Even if it means dealing harshly with some of them when he arrives personally.
 - b. He will do it if it will repair and revitalize the Corinthian church.

vii. Special note:

1. It is good to realize that critics...

- a. Tend to brag about themselves and their accomplishments and talents.**
- b. Tend to draw people to themselves by criticizing the leading brethren.**
- c. Tend to cause problems in the church.**
- d. Tend to be un-evangelistic.**
- e. Tend not to be disciple-makers.**