

I. REVIEW: 2Cor. 11:26-28

A. Paul continues his foolish speech (boasting)

- i. He speaks of the dangers he faced in his travels...
 1. In danger from rivers (threats of drowning and other harmful things that could happen while crossing rivers)
 2. In danger from robbers (road bandits)
 3. In danger from his own people (Jews) – some even followed him and incited the crowds against Paul and his friends.
 4. In danger from Gentiles
 5. In danger in the city, wilderness, at sea (everywhere Paul went for the sake of the gospel was a dangerous adventure).
 6. In danger from false brothers.
- ii. He speaks of the difficult life of being an apostle...
 1. Sleepless nights
 - a. Caused by his concern for the churches, sometimes preaching all night long and working day and night so as to not be a burden to the church.
 2. Sometimes going hungry, thirsty, cold and exposed (poorly dressed).
 3. Daily concerns for the churches he planted.
 - a. All the previous hardships that Paul listed were temporary, but the pressure of his concerns for all the churches always remained with him!

II. CONTINUATION

A. Paul elaborates on the pressure he feels on behalf of the churches under his care by way of two questions...

- i. 2Cor. 11:29 (ESV), “*Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?*”
 1. *Who is weak, and I am not weak?*
 - a. Paul’s concern for the churches was such that if anyone was experiencing human weakness, especially due to hardships, he would identify with that person, feeling his pain.
 - i. And he certainly understood the emotional difficulties of dealing with trials and tribulations as a fellow human being!
 - ii. Paul’s sympathy for the church was so great that if they suffered, he suffered.
 - b. A faithful minister of Christ must sympathize with those under his care as if he himself stood in their position.
 - i. We see this in Jesus, who became like us in order to identify and sympathize with our human weakness, although he never sinned (cf. Hebrews 2:17; 4:15).
 2. *Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?*
 - a. It is also true that a minister of Christ should not casually accept any member under his care falling into sin or be lead into it.
 - b. Paul’s concern for the churches, expressed by divine jealousy (cf. 2Cor. 11:2), sometimes lead him into a godly anger.
 - i. Paul hates sin with a passion!
 - ii. In this chapter, we see Paul’s indignation when he lashes out at the false apostles, deceitful workers and Satan’s servants, who caused some under his care to stumble.
 - c. Paul reflects a spirit of a true minister in that his indignation was not against those who tried to harm him, but against those who caused God’s children to stumble!

- ii. **2Cor. 11:30-31 (ESV), “If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.”**
 - 1. Now Paul states what he has been doing from verses 21-29.
 - a. Yes, he was boasting, but not as one would normally do!
 - i. The people of the world never boast on things that are painful, humiliating, harmful or depressing! But Paul did!
 - b. What Paul boasted on would be considered by the Greek culture of his day as someone part of what we call “the hall of shame!”
 - i. However, these weaknesses that Paul listed served as evidence that God had supernaturally sustained him through countless discouraging circumstances (cf. 2Cor. 1:8-10; 12:5-10).
 - 1. Paul's boast was that his life was like that of Christ.
 - 2. Paul called God as his witness that his claims, which probably seemed incredible to those who did not know him, were true.
 - c. But Paul’s point to the Corinthians, who allowed themselves to be taken in by his critics, is this...
 - i. Honor in serving Christ is not based on self-glory or self-achievements, but in giving oneself totally for others as Christ did for us!
 - d. Paul now gives an example of his first, memorable experience of humiliation and weakness as a new disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ...
 - iii. **2Cor. 11:32-33 (ESV), “At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me,³³ but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.”**
 - 1. According to Acts 9:1-4, Paul was on his way to Damascus to round up Jewish Christians.
 - a. It was at this time that Paul saw a vision of Jesus Christ and became a disciple.
 - b. The trouble that Paul describes here is found in Acts 9:20-22.
 - i. His debates with the Jews in the synagogues proving that Jesus is the Messiah caused trouble.
 - ii. The governor, who is not mentioned in Acts 9, perhaps because he too, didn’t like Paul’s evangelizing, empowered the Jews to watch the gates of the city and kill Paul.
 - iii. In order to escape the hands of his enemies, he was let down in a basket through the city wall.
 - iv. This is the reason why Paul brought this up: to emphasize on the manner of his escape!
 - 1. Hiding in a basket is not something someone with power would do.
- B. Paul now goes from sharing his first humiliating experience to his most exalted experience...**
- III. INTRO TO CHAPTER 12**
- A. Verses 1-6:
 - i. Paul boasts of a time when he was allowed to visit Paradise!
 - B. Verses 7-10
 - i. Paul was given a physical problem to keep him from getting a swelled head!
 - C. Verses 11-13
 - i. Paul reflects back on his boasting and calls it foolish.
 - ii. He reminds them of the miracles that he did while among them.
 - D. In verses 14ff
 - i. Paul discusses his pending visit to Corinth.