

2Corinthians – Week 17

I. Review: 2Cor. 5:6-11

- A. Paul's whole life is spurred on by the confidence, knowing that the Lord has a glorious destiny for him!
- B. The Christian's life is governed by faith, not by what is seen!
 - i. He hears and acts upon the word of God!
 - ii. He lives with the confident expectation of being clothed with a new body and being present with the Lord forever!
 - iii. He makes it his goal to please God: whether in or away from the body!
 - 1. A true Christian does not live a duplicitous life!
- C. When all is said and done, everyone will stand before the judgment seat of Christ!
 - i. All will be judged by what he or she has done while in the body!
 - ii. Paul, as an apostle and ambassador of Christ, knew his life, too, would be scrutinized by the Lord Jesus!

II. Continuation

- A. 2Cor. 5:11 (ESV), "*Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.*"
 - i. "*Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.*"
 - 1. The fear of the Lord relates to what Paul just said: that everyone will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for what he or she has done while in the body!
 - a. The fear of the Lord directs the way one should live:
 - i. Prov. 8:13 (ESV), "*The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.*"
 - ii. 2Cor. 7:1 (ESV), "*Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*"
 - b. But in the immediate context, the fear of the Lord denotes the terror that comes from knowing that:
 - i. Christ will decide the final destiny of the soul!
 - ii. Christ will require of us to give an account of all we have done!
 - iii. The wrath of God will be shown in the condemnation of the guilty!
 - 1. It will be a day of weeping and wailing!
 - 2. It will be a day where the condemned will be thrust down into eternal hell!
 - 2. Knowing this fear motivated Paul and his companions to persuade others to...
 - a. Flee from the wrath to come!
 - b. Grab hold of the abundant mercy that God offers through the gospel!
 - c. Be prepared to stand before Christ's judgment seat!
 - 3. An example of this is found in Acts 26:24-29...
 - a. Acts 26:24-29 (ESV), "*And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, 'Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.'*²⁵ But Paul said, 'I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words.'²⁶ For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner.'²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.'²⁸ And Agrippa said to Paul, 'In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?'²⁹ And Paul said, 'Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.'"

- i. Paul did not hide the fact that he wished that all he spoke to regarding the gospel would become a Christian!
 - ii. Paul knew the fear (terror) of the Lord!
 - 4. It is good to keep in mind that Paul did not “*persuade others*” by using adulterating the truth of God’s Word so that he may please his hearers!
 - a. Earlier, Paul said in 4:2 that he did not practice cunning (i.e., use deception) nor did he tamper with God’s word!
 - ii. “*But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.*”
 - 1. Paul knew that God knows everything about him – his motives, his desires, his thoughts, etc.
 - 2. Paul hoped that the Corinthians would also know and understand what he was all about!
 - a. That he was about pleasing God!
 - b. That he was about soul winning!
 - c. That he was about encouraging others to live holy lives unto the Lord!
 - d. That he was not a man of deception nor was he a man who lacked integrity!
 - e. That his life was an open book before God and man!
 - i. Question: Do you live your life as an open book?
 - ii. Is your life transparent before God and man?
- B. 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.*”
 - i. Paul was not trying to re-introduce himself as an apostle to them:
 - 1. He wants the Corinthians to boast in the Lord’s work in them as he boasted of them to the Macedonians (cf. 2Cor. 9:2).
 - 2. The context would suggest that he wanted them to value his genuine self-involvement in the ministry as described in 2Cor. 4:8-12 and 6:4-10, which describes his:
 - a. Afflictions, hardships, endurance, beatings, kindness, genuine love, truthful speech, etc.
 - ii. His opponents boasted on outward appearance, something that man tends to do (1Sam. 16:7)
 - 1. When humans make judgments on the basis of appearance, they are likely to make false judgments, as in the case of Samuel assuming Eliab to be the Lord’s anointed king (1Sam. 16:6).
 - iii. Paul urges the Corinthians to make their judgment from the Spirit’s vantage point rather than looking at such things as earthly status, worldly honor and physical appearance.
 - 1. It seems that Paul’s critics were calling him crazy...
- C. 2Cor. 5:13 (ESV), “*For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.*”
 - i. It is not uncommon for false teachers to present themselves as sober-minded and those on fire for Jesus as being out of their minds...
 - 1. Festus called Paul crazy in Acts 26:24.
 - 2. Even Jesus’ relatives thought he was crazy in Mark 3:21.
 - ii. Paul’s object was this: however we may appear to others (crazy or not), everything is done for the Lord and His people, the Church!
 - 1. It is the love of Christ that drives him to do what he does.... (cf. 2Cor. 5:14)