

2 Corinthians 11

Playing the fool

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- Previously...
- Step by step...
- Lifework

Previously in 2 Corinthians:

- Chapter 1
 - Suffering for Christ
 - Changes to visit plans
- Chapter 2
 - Forgiveness
 - Living witnesses
- Chapter 3
 - Living witnesses
 - New vs old

Previously in 2 Corinthians:

- Chapter 4
 - Jars of clay
- Chapter 5
 - A view from heaven
- Chapter 6
 - More sufferings & pick the right team
- Chapter 7
 - Good news at last

Previously in 2 Corinthians:

- Chapter 8
 - Finish what you've started
 - Titus
- Chapter 9
 - If you needed some reasons...
- Chapter 10
 - Paul on the defensive

Step by step...

- v1: Being the fool!
- v2: Care & responsibility
- v3: Anxiety



Crazy Fool!

Step by step...

- v4: Is newer better?
- v5: Fighting his corner
- v6: The power of speech?

Step by step...

- v7: Do you get what you pay for?
- vs 8 & 9: Others provided for him

Step by step...

- v10: Boasting
- v11: Love
- v12: Paul on the offensive
- vs13 – 15: The disguisers

Step by step...

- v16: The boasting of a fool
- v17: Disclaimer
- v18: If you can't beat them join them?
- vs19 – 21: Biting satire but real pain?

Step by step...

- v22: Ticking boxes
- vs23 – 27: Suffer well

Step by step...

- v28: A right type of anxiety
- v29: Feeling the pain

Lifework...?

www.hjm.me.uk

- Paul is passionate about the church
 - Are we?
- Suffering
 - What suffering should we endure?
 - What suffering do we put up with that we shouldn't?
- Teachers
 - What do false apostles look like now?
 - Are there teachers in disguise that we miss?

Lifework cont.

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Playing the fool

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<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/2Cor/Paul-Unmasks-His-Opponents>

<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/2Cor/Paul-Matches-Opponents>

Previously in 2 Corinthians:

- Chapter 1
 - Suffering for Christ
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3

Paul has expressed how he has suffered for the Corinthians in what we have as chapter 1. He then describes how he would like to have visited them again but after hearing reports of how his earlier communiques had gone down with the Corinthians, he decided against it (also chapter 1).

In chapter 2 he makes a brief comment to the community to forgive one of them who had upset the others. At the end of chapter 2 and at the beginning of chapter 3 he describes how the Corinthians are a testament to his work for God and how he doesn't need to carry with him letters of recommendation like others do. We'll cover more on this issue in today's chapter but more of that later.

The rest of chapter 3 is taken up with pointing out how much better our relationship (as followers of God) is under the new covenant compared to the old.

Previously in 2 Corinthians:

- Chapter 4
 - Jars of clay
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4

Chapter 4 is where Paul's familiar "treasures in jars of clay" description can be found explaining why life is so difficult when we are under the new covenant. Chapter 5 begins by pointing us towards heaven and commends us to live our lives now in light of what will happen in the future. It goes on to explain that this primarily includes getting right with God. Chapter 6 has Paul revisiting the sufferings he and his team are enduring for the sake of the Corinthians and asks them to be receptive again to himself and this team. The end of chapter 6 has Paul warning them from teaming up with non-believers. Most of chapter 7 describes how Paul is pleased that they had repented after reading one of Paul's earlier letters (that we don't have).

Previously in 2 Corinthians:

- Chapter 8
 - Finish what you've started
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- Chapter 9
 - If you needed some reasons...
- Chapter 10
 - Paul on the defensive

5

The first part of chapter 8 is the beginning of Paul's challenge to the Corinthians to complete the giving that they had initially promised. The second part describes how he's sending Titus to 'encourage' them in this.

Chapter 9 continues his exhortations to encourage the Corinthians to follow through with their giving.

Chapter 10 where we were last time is the start of a section where Paul is putting great effort into defending his ministry with them. Although the church is mostly out of trouble there is still a minority of people who like the message that these other preachers are giving. Last time Paul started arguing over the kind of characteristics that those following Christ should have and pay attention to in others (vs 4, 7, 11, 13). He highlighted the ways in which it is appropriate to boast (vs 8, 13) and which it is not (vs 12, 15).

Step by step...

- v1: Being the fool!
- v2: Care & responsibility
- v3: Anxiety



Crazy Fool!

6

This brings us to chapter 11. I will go through the passage with some comments for each verse and then at the end I will go back over some of the themes that the passage covers and highlight some issues that we can ruminate over tonight and throughout the month.

As we will see later Paul has to take a difficult approach to dealing with the issues that the Corinthians are throwing at him. Paul decides to take what we might understand today as a dry satirical approach. He describes himself as a fool. This has a double meaning. His repetition indicates 2 meanings of the word fool:

Firstly he is describing his approach to arguing his case later;
Secondly he is expressing how he feels his is being treated by the Corinthians. He is no longer being taken seriously by them.

If you are going to treat me like a fool then I'm going to respond to your reactions like one. The word "fool" not used much these days c.f. B.A. Crazy fool!

Looking after the church as a virgin. He feels responsible for the spiritual health of the Corinthians as they are engaged to Christ. Paul is modelling that God is jealous for his people.

He is afraid that they will be led away by the actions of the outsiders just as Eve was by the servant.

Step by step...

- v4: Is newer better?
- v5: Fighting his corner
- v6: The power of speech?

They put up with and accept the different ideas about Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Gospel. They accepted a different fruit to the one that Paul presented.

Although they shifted to what they think is a “better” gospel Paul does not consider himself to be worse (or better) than these “super-apostles”.

Despite Paul’s speech in the Areopagus, he is considered by the Corinthians as not being skilful in speaking. However Paul is arguing that substance should win over style.

Step by step...

- v7: Do you get what you pay for?
- vs 8 & 9: Others provided for him

Paul challenges the Corinthians over their attitude to paying for content. Paul gave the content freely but still considered what he said to be true.

Paul expands upon how others have provided for him when he was serving the Corinthians so that he could not be considered by others outside to be under the influence of the Corinthians. He does care what people think of him because he wants the Corinthians to believe and live out the gospel.

Step by step...

- v10: Boasting
- v11: Love
- v12: Paul on the offensive
- vs13 – 15: The disguisers

v10 Boasting: the emphasis on content i.e. the gospel.

v11 He will continue to take this approach because he loves them and wants the best for them, c.f. v 2.

v12 Paul continues as he means to go on. He wants to undermine those who think themselves equal to Paul and his team. Note that before Paul didn't consider himself to be better than them but now he is claiming that he is legitimate and they are not. He is not claiming that he is better than they are.

v13 These others are fakes. They are deliberately being fakes rather than trying to do the right thing and getting it wrong.

v14 See the original instance of this: Satan.

v15 Back to the pretenders.

Step by step...

- v16: The boasting of a fool
- v17: Disclaimer
- v18: If you can't beat them join them?
- vs19 – 21: Biting satire but real pain?

10

v16 Please take me seriously, (based upon the teaching's יהוה has given me) or alternatively treat me as an idiot and allow me to do some boasting. Paul is accommodating himself like God did with us through Jesus.

v17 Disclaimer

v18 Since others boast I'll do it too. I don't want to do this c.f. ch10 but I will be accommodating like God was with the world.

v19 Wise people bear with fools. Since you think yourselves as wise those you put up with must be fools. Did the Corinthians choose not to see through the apostolic pretenders? Putting up with fools: the false apostles as well as Paul.

v20 Examples of the things they put up with. This 'new' gospel must be pretty good for people to put up with this sort of treatment. It's not clear whether these are literal or metaphorical. Compare this list with what Paul puts up with later on. This costs them something c.f. Stella Artiois "Reassuringly expensive" vs. "wife-beater"

v21 Paul plays upon the weak way that they considered him by saying that he is too weak for treating them badly and then starts his list via another disclaimer.

Step by step...

- v22: Ticking boxes
- vs23 – 27: Suffer well

11

v22 Paul ticks off the categories.

v23 &

v24 &

v25 &

v26 &

v27 Paul lists the things that he suffers. He boasts but boasts about his weaknesses to show that God is great. The false teachers would have nothing to compare with this; c.f. Christ's sufferings with the actions of those that would tempt us away. Link this situation with the comparison between preachers and pastors. Living the life speaks more than clever speeches. C.f. 1 Peter 2:20,21. Paul is modelling God via His suffering.

Step by step...

- v28: A right type of anxiety
- v29: Feeling the pain

v28 He is anxious about the situation the Corinthians might be in. c.f. v2 (Good anxiety c.f. bad anxiety which we should avoid.)

v29 Through these difficult situations Paul is feeling the pain of those in the churches (unlike the “super-apostles”?).

http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/ScriptureIndex/20/295_Is_There_Good_Anxiety/

- Paul is passionate about the church
 - Are we?
- Suffering
 - What suffering should we endure?
 - What suffering do we put up with that we shouldn't?
- Teachers
 - What do false apostles look like now?
 - Are there teachers in disguise that we miss?

1. Paul's passionate about the church (vs2, 7, 8 11, 23-29). He is modelling God's love for us.
 - a. Do we feel that we have some sort of responsibility for the spiritual health of others?
 - b. Are we passionate about those we have some sort of spiritual responsibility for?
 - c. Are we anxious about the spiritual health of these people?
2. Suffering:
 - a. What suffering should we put up with?
 - b. What suffering do we put up with that we shouldn't?
3. Teachers:
 - a. Look out for "super-apostles". What do they look like now?
 - b. Are the only ones who have the authority to teach our church staff workers?
 - c. Who is God using to try and teach us; are we listening?

Lifework cont.

- Click to add an outline

children in ministry?
c.f. Ezekiel 14