

# My Favorite Thing About 2<sup>nd</sup> CORINTHIANS

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:16-18

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2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians differs from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians in that it deals with personal attacks leveled at Paul rather than doctrinal issues.

Around 56/57 AD, Paul was in Macedonia when Titus finally brought word regarding the church in Corinth.

**Good News!!** The Corinthian believers had received Titus with open arms and the majority had accepted Paul's counsel.

**Bad News!!** The hostile opposition to Paul from the **Judaizers – A group/groups who mixed Jewish traditions with the Christian Gospel and insisted that righteousness by faith in Jesus was not enough to be saved and used any method to discredit him – remained.**

Not only did Paul have to fight against traditional paganism threatening the church, he also had to fight against the active jealousy, malice and slanderous accusations coming from converted Jews who professed to be Christians.

These **Judaizers** of Corinth were boasting about themselves while at the same time discrediting Paul – accusing him, in part, of being a coward, having no apostolic authority and lacking charisma.

These opponents of Paul were not misguided saints. They were servants of Satan. Their motivation was self-promotion and financial gain. They were not concerned about the health of the church and Paul had a real concern that the people were being led away from the truth.

He had to say something.....

Which brings us to **My Favorite Thing About 2<sup>nd</sup> CORINTHIANS – Paul would go anywhere - endure anything - for the hope of winning one person to Jesus and he believed the eternal reward completely exceeded anything he had to suffer here on earth.**

Saul's {Paul} life had been great. He was an up and comer in the Jewish religious world, until..... he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. From that moment, Paul's life was in peril from every side.

- **2 Corinthians 1:8-10** - We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself. **10 He who rescued us from so deadly a peril will continue to rescue us; on him we have set our hope that he will rescue us again.**
- **2 Corinthians 4:6-18** - For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. <sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in **jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. <sup>8</sup> We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.... <sup>15</sup> All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. **16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**
- **2 Corinthians 6:3-10** - We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup> but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup> beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup> by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup> truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup> in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup> as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see -- we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup> as sorrowful, yet **always rejoicing**; as poor, yet making many **rich**; as having nothing, and yet **possessing everything**.
- **2 Corinthians 7:2-4** - Make room in your hearts for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. <sup>3</sup> I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. <sup>4</sup> I often boast about you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with consolation; I am overjoyed in all our affliction.

Paul's confidence in the care and love of God was unwavering. Despite every painful experience, Paul was able to rejoice because his eyes were fixed, not on what he went through, but on Jesus, who walked beside him every step of the way.

Now we come to chapter 11. Paul has already spent a lot of time reflecting on what he has endured and now in the final few chapters, he covers nearly every accusation brought against him.

I don't believe Paul wanted to prolong the conversation, however, the **Judaizers** of Corinth had spent a lot of time boasting about themselves, so Paul chose to deal with them on their level. Basically put – you want boasting? Okay let's go!!!!

You might not expect boasting from an Apostle of Christ and it might even be off-putting, so before we start, let's remember who Paul was fighting against:

- A group of false teachers who were into personal loyalty. They were showy and more concerned about power than they were about preaching the truth and leading people into a mature relationship with Jesus.
- The Corinthian church had been or was being won over by this group and Paul was desperate to reverse the damage and he was not above irony and sarcasm to accomplish the goal.
  - **2 Corinthians 11:1 - 12:10** - I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that. <sup>2</sup> I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. <sup>3</sup> But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. <sup>4</sup> For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. <sup>5</sup> But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." <sup>6</sup> I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. <sup>7</sup> Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? <sup>8</sup> I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. <sup>9</sup> And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. <sup>10</sup> As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. <sup>11</sup> Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! <sup>12</sup> And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. <sup>13</sup> For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. **<sup>16</sup> I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. <sup>17</sup> In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. <sup>18</sup> Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. <sup>19</sup> You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! <sup>20</sup> In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face. <sup>21</sup> To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that! What anyone else dares to boast about -- I also dare to boast about. <sup>22</sup> Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. <sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ? I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, <sup>26</sup> I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. <sup>27</sup> I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. <sup>28</sup> Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. <sup>29</sup> Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? <sup>30</sup> If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. <sup>31</sup> The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. <sup>32</sup> In Damascus the governor had the city guarded in order to arrest me. <sup>33</sup> But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands. .... To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. <sup>8</sup> **Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. <sup>9</sup> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. <sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.****

Paul had endured more than most for the Cross of Christ. He put himself in harm's way regularly, why?

- His absolute gratitude for what Jesus had done for him personally.
- His unwavering desire to introduce as many people as possible to Jesus and the lifesaving relationship that results – regardless of the cost.
- His supreme goal of glorifying Jesus in everything.

Ultimately Paul cared more about doing what God had asked him to do than he cared about the earthly consequences. The beatings, the stoning, the imprisonments, the hunger.... Whatever it was he must endure for the cross of Christ was nothing compared to the eternal reality of life with God.

**2 Corinthians 4:7-18** - But we have this treasure in **jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. <sup>8</sup> We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.... <sup>15</sup> All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. **<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

That's My Favorite Thing About 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians.