

DESTROYING STRONGHOLDS AND EXPANDING THE KINGDOM

2 Corinthians 10

Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent! ²I ask that when I am present I *need* not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. ³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵*We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, ⁶and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

2 Corinthians 10:1-6 NASB

- Paul is being hassled by his critics, they complain that he is bold and courageous in his letters, but meek and not impressive in person. They think he lives in the ‘flesh’ and that he is not spiritual.

“His letters are authoritative and forcible, but his personal presence is unimpressive and as for eloquence, he has none...” **2 Corinthians 10:10**

Weymouth NT

“PAUL, ACCUSATIONS AGAINST: Paul was accused of walking after the flesh. This charge can be seen behind the words of Paul in these two verses. He was answering ‘some’ who thought of him as walking after the flesh (v2). They were saying two things about Paul.

1. Some were saying that Paul was a coward (v1). This is what is meant by the word ‘base’ (tapeinos). They were saying that Paul was bold in his instructions; that is, he rebuked the church when he was writing to them, but he was a coward when it came to speaking face to face with them. Note Paul’s answer to the church and to his critics; it was that of tenderness in the midst of warning: “I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.” Christ was meek and gentle in handling the insults, attacks, rumors, lies, wrong, and evil done to Him. Paul was saying that Jesus Christ was his example in dealing with people; that is the reason he was meek and gentle when preaching and confronting face to face. He was not base and lowly because he was a coward, but because Jesus Christ demonstrated how people are to be handled, even people who are evil and in error. Jesus Christ

confronted people in meekness and gentleness; therefore, he, Paul, was meek and gentle.

2. Some were saying that Paul was carnal – that he walked after the flesh. This means several things:

- That Paul was unregenerate, that is, not really saved.
- That Paul was preaching and ministering in the flesh; he was not really called of God.
- That Paul was only ministering in the flesh; he was only after a personal following – only seeking to sell his own ideas and position – only interested in lining his own pockets and in securing personal recognition and his honor.

Very simply, Paul Says that he will confront these critics when he arrives in Corinth. He has the confidence, that is, the inner strength and boldness, to confront them; and he will. But note a crucial point: even in this declaration of spiritual strength and boldness, Paul was meek and gentle. He *beseeked* them twice in these two verses; that is, he begged and pleaded with them to turn to God – to repent of their attacks and false teaching – so that he might not have to confront them. Paul longed for everyone in the church to make sure that they had trusted Christ as Savior and that they held to the truth of the gospel: that they “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.” (Philippians 1:27) **Leadership Ministries World Wide**

.³ As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; ⁴ and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He *said*, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, ⁶ but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.” ⁷ The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. ¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹ And the Lord *said to* him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, ¹² and he has seen In a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain

his sight.”¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; ¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; ¹⁶ for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.” ¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; ¹⁹ and he took food and was strengthened.

Acts 9:3-19 NASB

¹² “While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, ¹³ at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. ¹⁴ And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ ¹⁵ And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; ¹⁷ rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’ ¹⁹ “So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision.

Acts 26:12-19 NASB

¹¹ For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

¹³ For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; ¹⁴ and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. ¹⁵ But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷ nor

did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. ¹⁸ Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰ (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.) ²¹ Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² I was *still* unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; ²³ but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." ²⁴ And they were glorifying God because of me.

Galatians 1:11-24 NASB

- Paul was not 'moving in the flesh,' he had a rich history with God to prove it. He now wants to inform the Church about the weapons of warfare that he has used and that they need to 'have in their arsenal'.

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow *and* destruction of strongholds, ⁵ [Inasmuch as we] refute arguments *and* theories *and* reasonings and every proud *and* lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God; and we lead every thought *and* purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One)

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 AMPC

²¹ Because when they knew *and* recognized Him as God, they did not honor *and* glorify Him as God or give Him thanks. But instead they became futile *and* godless in their thinking [with vain imaginings, foolish reasoning, and stupid speculations] and their senseless minds were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools [professing to be smart, they made simpletons of themselves]. ²³ And by them the glory and majesty *and* excellence of the immortal God were exchanged for *and* represented by images, resembling mortal man and birds and beasts and reptiles.

Romans 1:21-23 AMPC

- The Greek word is 'logismous' – imaginations, speculations that develop into strongholds.
- We need to be armed with weapons that destroy thought patterns that raise up against the knowledge of God.

² Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test

the Lord?”³ But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, “Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”⁴ So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.”⁵ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.⁷ He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us, or not?”

Exodus 17:2-7 NASB

- We must oppose and not support any ‘belief system’ like what we see in **Exodus 17.**

⁷You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ’s, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ’s, so also are we.⁸ For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame,⁹ for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters.¹⁰ For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible.”¹¹ Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons *we are* also in deed when present.¹² For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

2 Corinthians 10:7-12 NASB

- Paul says to his critics, “We will get all this straight when I come in person.”

¹³But we will not boast beyond *our* measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you.¹⁴ For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ;¹⁵ not boasting beyond *our* measure, *that is*, in other men’s labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you,¹⁶ so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, *and* not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another.¹⁷ But HE WHO

BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD. ¹⁸For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.

2 Corinthians 10:13-18 NASB

- Paul tells those at Corinth, “God has enlarged my ‘sphere’ as far as Corinth now...”
 - There are various ‘spheres’ of influence:
 - Ministry to the Lord
 - Ministry to family and friends
 - Ministry in the church
 - Ministry beyond the church
 - Ministry to the world
 - Paul’s sphere got enlarged all the way to Corinth...
 - It is not the boundaries of your sphere of influence but knowing that you are where He has placed you...
 - Lord, I want to have you extend my sphere of connections to the exact measure You have prepared for me. You have a spiritual destiny for me and I long to see it fulfilled...

For [it is] not [the man] who praises *and* commends himself who is approved *and* accepted, but [it is the person] whom the Lord accredits *and* commends.

2 Corinthians 10:18 AMPC