

Series: 2 Corinthians

Title: Glory in the Lord, Seek His Commendation

Text: 2 Corinthians 10: 7-18

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There were believers at Corinth that Paul was convinced were true believers. But they were being deceived by false preachers. It appears they had been turned away from Paul to follow these false preachers.

In verses 1-2, Paul these believers why he beseeched them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ in his letters, speaking more boldly at times. It was so that he might not have to be bold toward them when he was present.

In verses 3-5, Paul told these believers the reason he preached the gospel and did not use fleshly means (as he was accused of doing) was because he did not war after the flesh. He says our spiritual weapons are mighty through God's power to pull down all the sinners defenses.

In verse 6, Paul said told these believers that he was ready to use his apostolic authority against the false preachers. But he knew Christ's "fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner." So Paul would not even use the authority Christ gave him until Christ worked obedience in them—*And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.*

So in our text today, it is to these same believers that Paul asks this question.

2 Corinthians 10: 7: Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?

The false preachers were glorying in appearance, not in heart. They were comparing themselves to Paul and commending themselves. The erring believers had begun to listen and look on the outward appearance. So Paul meets these erring believers on that ground. *Do you look on the outward appearance?*

2 Corinthians 10: 7: If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.

If any one of you believers, trust to himself, that this false preacher and his fellow ministers bear the marks of Christ's minister, *let him of himself*, that is without the influence of these false preachers, honestly consider again, that, the same marks that convince you the false preacher is Christ's, even so we are Christ's because we bear the same marks. Paul does not accuse the false preachers of being false, as they did him. He simply says, the same marks that convince you believers that he is a minister of Christ, I and my fellow apostles possess also.

2 Corinthians 10: 8: For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:

Paul says I bear the same marks as them, but *though I should boast somewhat more of our authority*, I would be telling the truth because Christ gave us apostles more authority. Paul is saying, I could boast more of authority which we have given us by Christ that these false preachers do not have.

Brethren, Paul and the rest of the apostles had authority and power that Christ gave them that Christ did not give to other preachers. In Acts, the Apostle Peter rebuked Ananias for lying to God and Ananias fell dead. Then he rebuked Saphira and said, "*behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost:*" (Acts 5: 9-10)

As an apostle, Christ gave Paul the same authority—he said, *1 Timothy 1:20: [concerning] Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

So Paul says, if we are looking on the outward appearance, if I was trying to convince you based on outward appearances, I could boast much more of our gifts and it would be true, *I would not be ashamed*—Christ gave me this authority. But Paul says, I do not boast of that gift when I write to you,

2 Corinthians 10: 9: That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

Most commentaries agree words are missing from the authorized version of the bible which we use. John Gill and others use an ancient translation which gives the sense of this verse in context with the whole passage. Paul is saying, “In my letters, I could boast of my apostolic authority which Christ gave me to exact justice on the disobedient but I do not do so that I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.” He says that Christ gave that gift for edification, not destruction. And it would not be edifying to persuade God’s people by terrifying them. Then their faith would be standing in the wisdom of men rather than in the power of God. Paul says, “I do not do anything in my letters that would give my accusers ammunition against me because as is, when I use meekness and gentleness mixed with boldness in my letters, without me even boasting of my apostolic authority, my accusers already say this,”

2 Corinthians 10: 10: For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible. 11: Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *will we be* also in deed when we are present.

Why did Paul not appeal to believers by glorying in himself, by commending himself, by comparing himself with these false preachers and boasting of his gifts from Christ?

2 Corinthians 10: 12: For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

We dare not make ourselves of that number. And we dare not compare ourselves with those that commend themselves. It is because they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. The margin says it reveals they do not understand; it reveals they have no spiritual understanding; it reveals they look on the outward appearance rather than using spiritual discernment.

2 Corinthians 10: 13: But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. 14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: 15: Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men’s labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, 16: To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man’s line of things made ready to our hand.

Paul says nor will we boast without measure. The false preachers were boasting of all the places they preached, of all the converts they made, and of all the churches they planted just like false preachers do today. Paul declares that they boasted and took credit for other true preachers labors. But Paul says we will not do that. We preach where Christ has sent us and no further. We give God the credit for working through the gospel we preach to convert his elect.

Here is the point of the whole passage. This is why we do not glory in ourselves, compare ourselves with others and commend ourselves.

2 Corinthians 10: 17: But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 18: For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

Subject: Glory in the Lord and Seek his Commendation

Proposition: Believers should glory in the Lord, seeking no other commendation but that of God our Father in Christ Jesus!

OUTWARD APPEARANCE

2 Corinthians 10: 7: Do you look on the outward appearance?

Never look on the outward appearance to judge of things. Instead, use spiritual discernment.

Religious folks, who have not been born of the Spirit, are fleshly men. They have no spiritual discernment. So they only look on things after the outward appearance.

When a person looks on things after the outward appearance, he glories in appearance and commends himself and seeks commendation from others. Paul spoke of these false preachers earlier in the epistle as those who do just that.

2 Corinthians 5:12: For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart

Christ said of such carnal religionists,

Luke 16: 15: Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

God does not look on the outward appearance but on the heart, the motive, the spirit.

1 Samuel 16: 7: But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Brethren, true religion is spiritual. Christ told the woman at the well,

John 4: 23: But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24: God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

If we would worship God in spirit it is only by being born of God the Holy Spirit. We must be born again and given spiritual discernment by God or we cannot understand spiritual things. (John 3: 1-8; 1 Corinthians 2: 6-16) So Christ told his people to discern using spiritual discernment,

John 7:24: Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

WE DARE NOT

2 Corinthians 7: 12: For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

We dare not make ourselves like those who commend themselves. And we dare not compare ourselves with them that commend themselves. Paul refused make himself like those in false religion and he refused to compare himself with them. It is because they are not wise.

Self-made men are pleased with themselves. By comparing themselves with themselves they are self-righteousness and they despise others. Our Lord spake a parable about men who did just that,

Luke 18: 9: And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

God hates such men,

Isaiah 65: 5: Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These *are* a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Paul had gifts far superior to men who he knew were false preachers. Yet he would not compare himself to them or boast of himself as being better than them. He could have spoken of his gifts and it would have been true. The Lord did give him those gifts. But he would not. Why?

He said "*The Lord gave it to me!*" That means Christ is the Head of the church. Christ is the Authority with power to work in the midst of his church giving gifts to whom he will. So Paul waited on Christ to give to those who were his. The believer who has received everything from Christ, by Christ's power, knows to wait on the Lord Jesus because they have experienced Christ's power. They know Christ can move irresistibly upon whom he will. So we do not have to boast and persuade men by outward appearance. We dare not! We wait on the Lord to work in spirit in the hearts of men by his power.

Paul would not even use his Christ-given authority before Christ had made it obvious who were his and who were not, separating the wheat from the tares. Paul knew Christ is truly working in the midst of his church. Paul knew Christ's fan is in his hand and he will purge his floor. So Paul would rather not use and abuse his authority but wait on the Lord. Christ's preachers today have authority given us by Christ to rebuke and even to remove those who are disobedient, distracting men from the gospel and leading believers from Christ. But it is a last resort to use such authority. We wait on the Lord to work in his people through the preaching of the gospel.

Paul said, Christ gave this authority "*for edification, not for destruction.*" To use any gift God gives us for self-promotion, to turn men in the flesh, to persuade sinners to make a profession of faith and join the church would not be for the edification of his church but for its destruction.

Besides this, how can we boast when every grace, gift and ability we have is given to us by God?

1 Corinthians 4: 7: For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE GOD GIVES

2 Corinthians 10: 13: But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. 14: For we

stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ: 15: Not boasting of things without *our measure*, *that is*, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, 16: To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

When men boast and compare themselves to others they exaggerate and lie. They do so without measure. Paul said, "*But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us.*"

God sets the bounds of his preachers. He places his preacher where he would have his preacher to preach the gospel and to whom. This is so with all believers. God gives us a place to serve him in his kingdom and sets the bounds of our service.

Therefore, Paul says we do not go beyond our God-given sphere of service—"For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure." Nor do we intrude into other men's sphere of labor which God has given them, taking credit for what God had produced through other men—"Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours;..not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand."

False preachers and so-called churches today are constantly boasting of their missionary works, of their converts, of the churches they have planted. Most of it is boasting of things God has not even wrought or of things God has wrought through his true preachers which vain preachers take credit for. Paul says, "We dare not do so!"

Brethren, Christ fits each child in his body where he would have us to be. Christ gives us each a service to perform. Christ gifts each child with the gifts needed for the work. And Christ makes the work fruitful. This is why Paul said he would not boast of his labors as if he was the one who accomplished the work but he would glory in Christ. Notice the highlighted words below. As Paul gloried in the places he preached and the converts that were made, he gives God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of God all the glory:

Romans 15: **15:** Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, **because of the grace that is given to me of God, 16:** That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, **being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. 17:** I have therefore whereof I may glory **through Jesus Christ** in those things which pertain to God. **18: For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me**, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, **19:** Through mighty signs and wonders, **by the power of the Spirit of God;** so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. **20:** Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: **21:** But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

So believer learn where it is God has placed you, what work Christ has given you in his kingdom and do it with all your heart giving him all the glory. Do not envy another area of service that God has given to other brethren. Learn to be content to serve God where he placed you and is pleased to use you being thankful that God would use you at all. Remember, just because you do not serve in some other area of service it does not mean you are not of the body. Each member of the body has his place and is needful for the good of the whole body, no matter what that area of service may be. Above all, give God all the glory!

1 Corinthians 12: 12: For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. 13: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14: For the body is not one member, but many. 15: If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16: And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17: If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? 18: But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

For these reasons, any sinner who measures himself by another sinner or compares himself to another sinner trying to commend himself, proves his own ignorance—“*they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*” Worms measuring themselves by worms is not wise. Maggots comparing ourselves to maggots is utter foolishness!

GLORY IN THE LORD REJOICING IN HIS COMMENDATION

2 Corinthians 10: 17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

“*To glory in the Lord*” is to regard God as our only confidence. It is to give God the glory as the source of all our salvation and all good things we have. It is to ascribe everything we have, are, and all our hope to God and his grace.

Romans 11: 36: For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

God our Father chose his people in Christ from eternity by his free and sovereign grace. We did not choose him, he chose us. He blessed us with *all spiritual blessings* in Christ in eternity before as yet we were even born. He predestinated us to the adoption of children and to an eternal inheritance in Christ.

It is by Christ laying down his life that we have redemption from our sins through his precious blood. We are justified by his blood so that no charge can be laid against us. We are complete in Christ by Christ’s finished work, not by anything we do.

It is of God—being born again of the Holy Spirit—that we are in Christ and know Christ.

1 Corinthians 1: 30: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Furthermore, concerning anything we do in his kingdom, it is his gift to the praise of his glory. Just take the first eleven verses of 2 Corinthians chapter 10 to see this. Concerning the power of the gospel we preach to make sinners believe on Christ, Paul said in verse 4, it is not our might but “*the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but might through God to the pulling down of strong holds.*” Concerning the authority of Christ’s preachers and all gifts that his people possess, verse 8 reminds us, “*the Lord hath given us.*” We serve and do all things, verse 13, “*according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us.*” The gospel we preach is not the gospel of man but, verse 14, “*the gospel of Christ.*” So brethren, as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:31, “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*”

However, in the context of this passage in verses 7-11, the meaning of “glorying in the Lord” is concerning God’s approval of us. We are talking about not self-commendating, not glorying in self. Paul is exhorting us to

seek God's approval, not mans. So the lesson of the text is "*He that glories should glory in the approbation of God, (not in his own good opinion of himself, nor in the praises of others,) for not he who commendeth himself is approved and worthy of approbation, but he whom the Lord commendeth.*" Paul did not commend himself; neither did he rely on the commendation of others, his eye was fixed on God. If he had God's commendation, God's favor, it was a small thing to him to be judged by man's judgment.

"*It is not him that commendeth himself that is approved but whom the Lord commendeth.*" Remember our Lord's parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee commended himself. The publican sought God's approval asking mercy from God. And which one did God commend?

Luke 18: 10: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11: The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13: And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14: I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Brethren, instead of commending ourselves, instead of glorying in our own high estimate of ourselves and our attainments, instead of allowing ourselves to be puffed up by the applause of men, our greatest joy and satisfaction should be that in Christ we have the approval of God our Father!

Until that day that God calls all his elect home and Christ presents us perfect robed in Christ's righteousness so that by Christ God commends us with divine approval saying "Well done my good and faithful servant", my prayer for you and our prayer for one another should be, that "*the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*" (Heb 13: 20)

Amen!