

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

August 10, 2022

Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*

The Corinthian Letters

*The Last Letter* (Second Corinthians)

Text – 2 Corinthians 10 – *Paul Confirms His Authority*

Memory Verse – 2 Corinthians 10:4

*"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"*

- I. Paul's Walk, Weapons, and Warfare (vs. 1 – 5)
- II. Paul's Warning (vs. 6 – 11)
- III. Paul's Width (Measure) of Authority (vs. 12 – 18)

### Introduction

In chapter ten the letter will make an abrupt change in tone. The previous chapters seemed to have been addressed to most of the folks in Corinth who were supportive of the Apostle Paul. These last chapters deal with the minority in the church that were questioning Paul's authority. Remember, the church at Corinth was a church that was plagued with division (1 Corinthians 1:11). For a time, Paul was very concerned that the troublemakers in Corinth had taken over completely, but now we see that Paul is convinced that the church is healthy and moving in the right direction. However, there are still those that need to be convinced. This part B to the letter will try to convince the gainsayers to submit to the authority of the apostle. It has even been suggested by some that this sharp portion of the letter is really another letter altogether. While that theory is wrong, it is true that this part of the letter is focusing on a different group of people - his critics.

- I. Paul's Walk, Weapons, and Warfare (vs. 1 – 5)

#### A. The Gentle Approach (vs. 1 & 2)

1. Meekness – (1 Corinthians 4:21) humility; strength in reserve; not weakness, but having the power to react, but choosing not to do so. A fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22 & 23)

*"21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"* (1 Corinthians 4:21)

*"22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."* (Galatians 5:22-23)

2. Gentleness – sweetness of disposition; mildness of temper; clemency; disposition to treat with favor and kindness.

Note – meekness and gentleness of Christ. We can think of many examples of our Lord acting in this way. He could have wiped out the army that came to arrest Him, but instead He submitted Himself to them, choosing even to heal Malchus' ear (John 18).

3. Base in presence; bold in absence – base has the idea of humility or even being introverted; bold has the idea of confidence or even cockiness. Paul tried to avoid appearing vain or proud while he was there in presence, but he was accused of being almost cowardly when present. He warns them that he can be as bold as he needs to be.

### **B. The Powerful Approach (vs. 3 – 6)**

1. Paul was confident and was willing to be as bold as he had to be.
2. Paul's confidence was not in his flesh, but in the power of God (Ephesians 6:10 – 20). He was warning his critics that when he came in presence, they would not be facing the meek and mild Paul; they would be dealing with the power of God (Acts 13:8 – 11; Acts 19:13 - 17).

*"8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand." (Acts 13:8-11)*

*"13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified." (Acts 19:13-17)*

#### a. His weapons were:

1. The Scriptures (Hebrews 4:12); and specifically, the gospel (Romans 1:16)

*"12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)*

*"16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16)*

2. The Spirit (Acts 1:8)

*"8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)*

3. Supplication (including prayer and fasting)

b. His weapons would:

1. Pull down strongholds (demolish both human and spiritual opposition).
2. Cast down imaginations (thoughts, ideas, and philosophies).
3. Cast down every high thing (barrier, wall, or obstacle) that exalts itself – speaks of pride, and self-elevation.
4. bring into captivity every thought

II. **Paul's Warning (vs. 6 – 11)**

A. Paul warns of his willingness to punish (v. 6).

B. Paul warns not to look on his outward appearance (v. 7) – Though Paul did not seem powerful physically, he belonged to Christ; and he was powerful spiritually.

C. Paul warns that his presence will be as powerful as his absence (vs. 7 – 11).

1. He reminds them that he was given authority for their building up (edification); not to tear them down.
2. His letters were strong because that is what they needed; and his presence would be as strong as was needed as well.

III. **Paul's Width (Measure) of Authority (vs. 12 – 18)**

A. Paul would not compare himself with men:

1. who commended (lit. exhibit; putting on a show) themselves – Jesus warned about doing thing to be “seen of [men].” There are people who will serve God because it gives them the pre-eminence (3 John 9).

*"9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." (3 John 1:9)*

2. who measured themselves by themselves.

Every man and woman has been uniquely equipped by the Lord in order to fulfill their purpose. We cannot compare ourselves with each other; however, we should all strive to develop our strengths to the fullest and do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

*"31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)*

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest (Ecclesiastes 9:10).*

#### **B. Paul would not boast (rejoice) of things beyond his measure:**

1. the measure geographically – he was the apostle to the Gentiles, which included all of Greece. He was within his authority (vs. 13 – 14).
2. The measure of another – He would not boast about something someone else did (vs. 15 – 16).
3. The measure of his ability – he did not take credit for things that God had done through him (vs. 17 - 18). Paul was not bragging on his flesh. He was merely declaring the authority that was given him by the Lord.