

## 2 Corinthians 11

Title ideas:  
Simplicity of Christ!

## 2 Corinthians 11:1-15 – The Simplicity of Christ!

Scriptures:  
2 Corinthians 10:17-18 -  
But “he who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

<sup>1</sup>Oh, that **you** would bear with **me** in a little

folly—and indeed **you** do bear with **me**.

Notes:  
Paul hates the idea of boasting because the only thing worthy of boasting about is the Lord (2 Cor. 10:17). The Corinthians have put up with the boasting of Paul’s detractors and their evil influence has impacted the Corinthian church. So, in the next section Paul will seem to stoop to their level. This section explains why he is going to do that.

Paul is embarrassed that he is being forced to defend himself to the Corinthians church.

Scriptures:  
Deuteronomy 5:7-10 -  
‘You shall have no other gods before Me.  
8 ‘You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 9 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

James 4:4-5 - Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?

<sup>2</sup>For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For

2206 – ‘to be or become desirous of exclusivity in relationship

I have betrothed **you** to one husband, that **I** may

present **you as** a chaste virgin to Christ.

53 – pure, faultless 3933 -

Notes:  
We usually view jealousy as a character flaw. If it is one of God’s characteristics it must be pure and holy. Sin is what makes jealousy ugly and wrong. God is jealous for us because He deserves 100% of our love and devotion. To give less than 100% is to deny ourselves the fullness of God’s grace, to deprive ourselves of something that is good for us and that we need. God deserves 100% of our love and devotion because of what He did to make it possible for us to be in a relationship with Him. He sent His Son Jesus to die so that we could be reconciled back to God. To give less than 100% of our love and devotion to God would be to despise God’s love and Christ’s sacrifice.

When we are saved, we are betrothed to Christ and once glorified we are presented to Christ as His bride. Paul is picturing himself as the father of the bride. Paul is expressing paternal jealousy. After all, he had fathered the church. Paul was passionate about the purity of the church.

Based on Scriptures like this one my view of my role in the life of my daughter was formed. My responsibility to her was to help her to be pure, sexually, emotionally, physically, spiritually, until the day I walked her down the aisle and placed her hand into the hand of her husband.

“He means that he cannot bear to see his brethren turn from God to false gods because he knows that it is to their eternal ruin if they do.” (Ironside, 1938) page 436

Scriptures:  
Revelation 12:9 - So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

John 8:44 - You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Genesis 3:4 - Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

Genesis 3:13 - And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"  
The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

<sup>3</sup> But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived

3789 -

1818 -

Notes:  
Deceivers had crept into the church and there was a real danger of spiritual corruption in the church. Paul was concerned that they were being deceived and led astray from purity. Paul takes us back to the first human bride.

"When Eve fell, it was not because she was beaten into submission by Satan, but by his encircling her soul with sequential coils of deception as he promised Eve things he could not deliver." (Hughes, 2006) page 195

The more we allow the deceiver to speak into our lives, the more his coils of deception wrap around our lives corrupting us away from the purity God would call us to. One of his tactics is to convince us that 'purity' means something different than what God says - 'did God really say...'

Typically, the messages of these deceivers were tailored to appeal to the carnal nature of people. They said things that people want to be true, even though they aren't. Jim Bakker selling Silver Solution as a cure for coronavirus. People want to believe it is true and he is very charismatic. He is preying on their fear. Missouri has sued him and New York filed a cease and desist letter.

These deceivers are wolves in sheep's clothing.

"Christians are especially open to the kind of cunning deceit that combines language of faith and religion with the content of self-interest and flattery." D. A. Carson (Hughes, 2006) page 195

"Satan never says, 'Good morning, I am the Devil! I want to mislead you, I want to seduce you, I want to turn your heart away from God, I want to ruin you for time and eternity.'" (Ironsides, 1938) page 437

The truth of God is simple, it is revealed plainly in the Word of God. Jesus told us to be little children, not like theologians or college professors.

Eve by his craftiness, so your minds

1<sup>st</sup> of two mentions of Eve in the New Testament

3834 - crafty, cunning

may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in

5351 - depraved, perseveres - 'To be or become actively deviating from what is considered moral, right, proper, or good.'

572 -

Christ.

Scriptures:

Galatians 1:6-9 - I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Psalms 12:7-8 -

The words of the LORD are pure words,  
Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,  
Purified seven times.  
7 You shall keep them, O LORD,  
You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus

whom we have not preached, or if you receive a

different spirit which you have not received, or a

different gospel which you have not accepted—

you may well put up with it!

430 – be patient  
with, endure, bear  
with,

Notes:

The question we need to ask every time we hear someone teaching the Bible is, 'Are they teaching the Jesus of the Bible or a different Jesus?'

They were willing to accept a different gospel because they liked the way it sounded.

God's Word is perfect and eternal, no one should mess around with it (Psa.12:7-8).

It has been said (maybe by Thomas Jefferson) that 'Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.'

"...eternal vigilance is the price we must pay for maintaining the truth of God." (Ironside, 1938) page 435

Don't be gullible when it comes to the things of God. Know the truth and search the Scriptures before you accept any teaching that is different than what you already believe.

"For there is no other gospel of God than the gospel of His Son, telling sinful men of the way whereby they may be justified before His face." (Ironside, 1938) page 438

Scriptures:

<sup>5</sup> For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the

5302 – be in a  
state of low status

most eminent <sup>A</sup>apostles.

3029 - extremely

652 – a special  
messenger of  
Jesus Christ,  
messenger,  
envoy, one sent

Notes:

Typically, these false teachers had letters of recommendation from important sounding people or organizations and they would boast about their standing with that organization – 1<sup>st</sup> in my class at the Advanced Institute of Apostolic Deception.

They questioned Paul's credentials – where are his letters of recommendation?

'eminent' = super

A speaker's status was measured by the fee he could get for speaking. The more you charge, the more important you were. A low fee, or no fee as in Paul's case meant you weren't that important.

"If the Devil cannot induce people immediately to give up some line of truth, then he will attack those whom God has sent forth to defend that truth." (Ironsides, 1938) page 436

Scriptures:

<sup>6</sup>Even though *I am* untrained in speech, yet *I am*

2399 – ‘idiotes’ –  
layman, someone  
not an expert

Notes:

Paul was not as eloquent or  
charismatic as the super-apostles, but  
he was not inferior to them in  
knowledge.

That begs the question – which is  
more important for a preacher of the  
gospel – skill or knowledge. Paul  
suggests it is knowledge. The world  
would rather have a skilled preacher  
rather than a knowledgeable one.

not in knowledge. But

‘manifested’ – you have seen  
firsthand the truth of Paul’s  
apostleship.

*we* have been thoroughly manifested among you

5319 – cause to  
be seen

in all things.

Scriptures:

<sup>7</sup> Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you

Notes:

Paul's detractors were suggesting that the fact that Paul did not ask for a speaking fee meant:

1. His teaching was of low caliber
2. His message wasn't worth much
3. He gave it away because no one would pay for it
4. That he wasn't really an apostle

might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of

They are saying that a real apostle would have taken their money.

Paul would rather be speaking of Christ than defending his authority as an apostle of Christ.

God to you free of charge?

Scriptures:

<sup>8</sup> I robbed other churches, taking wages from them

4813 -

2983 -

3800 – money for support, needed for living expenses

Notes:

The church of Corinth was prosperous, but because of accusations like this one he didn't burden them with his needs. But he did accept the generous support of churches less able to give than the church in Corinth.

'robbed' – hyperbole

to minister to you.

Scriptures:

<sup>9</sup> And when I was present with you, and in need, I Notes:

was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the

brethren who came from Macedonia supplied.

And in everything I kept myself from being

burdensome to you, and so I will keep *myself*.



Scriptures:

<sup>10</sup> As the truth of Christ is in **me**, no one shall stop

Notes:

Paul was modeling the example of Christ who taught for 'free' always. Paul is trying to turn this topic against the false teachers, asking what does it say about them that they won't teach unless they are paid well.

**me** from this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

Scriptures:

<sup>11</sup> Why? Because **I** do not love **you**? God knows!

Notes:

Paul calls God as his witness of his love for the church of Corinth. Paul was following the example of Christ and the Corinthians missed that or were drawn away from that by the false teachers.

Scriptures:

<sup>12</sup> But what **I** do, **I** will also continue to do, that **I**

Notes:

What Paul was doing was right and he intended to keep doing it, even if his detractors accused him of weakness or evil. Always do what is right and let God be your defense.

may cut off the opportunity from those who desire

an opportunity to be regarded just as **we** are in the

things of which they boast.

Scriptures:

<sup>13</sup> For such **are** false apostles, deceitful workers,

Notes:

Paul uses the strongest language so far.

'transforming themselves' implies that they were doing it deliberately. They may have dressed in some way that made them look impressive – apostolic. That would have been quite a contrast to plain-dressed Paul. To them appearance was everything – to Paul the gospel was everything.

transforming themselves into <sup>A</sup>apostles <sup>+</sup>of Christ.

3345 – change  
appearance,  
masquerade,  
disguise

Scriptures:

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself

transforms himself into an angel of light.

3345 – change  
appearance,  
masquerade,  
disguise  
V. 13

Notes:

Not only is Paul calling false apostles, but now he is calling them agents of Satan.

“It is so stupid of modern civilization to have given up believing in the devil when he is the only explanation of it.” Ronald Knox (Hughes, 2006) page 199

Scriptures:

15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers

also transform themselves into ministers of

righteousness, whose end will be according to

5056 – point of  
time marking the  
end

Notes:

A special kind of wrath awaits those who lead people away from Christ in the name of Christ.

In a way, Paul is extending grace to the false prophets. If they heed his words and repent, they can be forgiven and escape the judgment coming to them.

their works.

Title ideas:  
Who is weak?  
Being weak for the weak!  
Distance Caring!  
Caring in Isolation!

## 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

Scriptures:

<sup>16</sup> I say again, let no one think me a fool. If

878 – ‘Devoid of wisdom or good sense or sound judgment.’

otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also

may boast a little.

2744 – brag about, glory in,

Notes:

Paul was disgusted by the idea of boasting on the part of a servant of God. But because the Corinthians were listening to the boasting of Paul’s detractors and diminishing his ministry, he decides he must stoop down to their level. He is doing it to save the ministry in Corinth – to protect the people he loves.

In this text Paul acts like the surgeon who upon being questioned concerned his ability to perform a particular surgery recounts his qualifications.

Paul doesn’t want to be thought of as a fool, he feels it is necessary for their faith.

When we think of boasting it usually involves the things we have done that we are proud of, not the things we have endured in life.

It is hard for me to read this text without thinking of myself as a spiritual wimp or sissy. In twenty years of ministry, I have not experienced even a small fraction of what describes here in this text.

“Paul was altogether at home when speaking of Christ, but when he had to speak of himself, it was most distasteful, and he considered it as mere foolishness.” (Ironside, 1938) page 443-444

Scriptures:

<sup>17</sup> What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, <sup>†</sup> Notes:

but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of

boasting.

Scriptures:

<sup>18</sup> Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I <sup>†</sup> Notes:

also will boast.

Scriptures:

<sup>19</sup> For **you** put up with fools gladly, since **you**

2234 – with  
delight

*yourselves* are wise!

Notes:

There is a distinct tone of sarcasm in this statement.

You are so wise that you even put up with fools.

This is an attack on his detractors – he is calling them fools.

You are so wise – you put up with fools and their boasting while they exploit you.

You have put up with people boasting in themselves and seem to enjoy it, so I will give you a little more of it.

Scriptures:

<sup>20</sup> For **you** put up with it if one

Notes:

brings **you** into bondage, if one devours **you**, if

2615 - enslave

2719 - exploit  
completely

one takes *from you*, if one exalts himself, if one

strikes **you** on the face.

Scriptures:

<sup>21</sup> To *our* shame I say that we were too weak for

Notes:

Okay, you want to compare lives – let's compare! Let's see if anyone can match this!

This is mock shame! 'I was too weak to exploit you, devour your resources, lift myself up, and abuse you.'

that! But in whatever anyone is bold—I speak

foolishly—I am bold also.



Scriptures:

Philippians 3:2-11 - Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Romans 9:3-5 - For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

Matthew 16:24 - Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Romans 10:1 - Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

22 Are they Hebrews? So **am I**. Are they Israelites?

So **am I**. Are they the seed of Abraham? So **am I**.

Notes:

Generally speaking, the ones who came against Paul were Jews who had made a confession of Christ (theoretically). They taught that to be truly saved, must believe in Christ and follow Jewish traditions and laws – must become a Jew.

'Hebrew' = pure ethnic identity

'Israelite' = religious identity

'seed of Abraham' = of God's covenant people – the elect of God

Some people will change their religion for some sort of temporal benefit. If Paul had remained as he was because meeting Christ on the road to Damascus he would probably have enjoyed a good life as one of the most renowned rabbis of his time.

No one could boast of greater Jewish heritage than Paul ([Phil. 3:2-11](#)).

"It was true, but Paul could barely bring himself to voice it, because it countered the gospel of grace and the call to assume the humble character of Christ and take up the cross and follow Him ([Matt. 16:24](#))."

(Hughes, 2006) page 202

Scriptures:

23 Are they ministers of Christ?—**I** speak as a

Notes:  
Paul's detractor's rejected Paul's weaknesses and viewed as disqualifications.

This is holy foolishness!

fool—**I** *am* more: in labors more abundant, in

5228 - 'hyper' 2873 -

stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently,

in deaths often.

2288 - 'An event or experience capable of causing death; understood as death itself.'

Scriptures:

Romans 9:3 - For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh...

24 From the Jews five times **I** received forty *stripes*

Notes:  
'forty stripes minus one' = flogging – was the most severe punishment that could be inflicted by the Jews. It was extremely painful and very humiliating.

Even after everything he suffered at the hands of the Jews, he loved them enough that he would have sacrificed his own salvation if that could have saved them (Rom 9:3).

minus one.

Scriptures:  
Galatians 6:17 - From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 14:19-20 - Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. 20 However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was

Notes:  
'beaten with rods' = Gentile punishment – stripped and beaten until the magistrate was satisfied that they had suffered enough.

These beaten left Paul marked by his suffering (Gal 6:17). These were the scars of his love for Christ and for those he ministered to, even while they beat him.

stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and

Acts 14:19

Fourth  
shipwreck –  
Acts 27

The three shipwrecks occurred before the shipwreck in Acts 27.

a day I have been in the deep;

Scriptures:  
2 Corinthians 11:13 - For  
such are false apostles,  
deceitful workers,  
transforming themselves  
into apostles of Christ.

<sup>26</sup> in journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of

Notes:  
'false brethren' = false  
Christians. Could be referring to the  
false apostles of verse 13.

Prosperity theology has a real  
problem with Paul boasting in all the  
things he suffered for Christ.

"Suffering, not success, authenticated  
Paul's ministry." (Hughes, 2006)  
page 204

robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils

In the book of Acts are recorded six  
Jewish plots against Paul and three  
perilous encounters with Gentiles.

of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the

wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among

false brethren;

Scriptures:

1 Thessalonians 2:9 - For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

<sup>27</sup> in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in

Notes:

Paul's suffering was not an isolated event but a life he chose in his service to Christ.

hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and

nakedness—

Scriptures:

<sup>28</sup> besides the other things, what comes upon **me**

Notes:

'besides the others things' – the list was illustrative and not complete. He compares all the previous things this one thing – it was of highest importance and all other suffering paled in comparison to this.

The greatest suffering of all – deep concern for the churches.

daily: **my** deep concern for all the churches.

This speaks of Paul's empathy for those he loved. Not a bit of indifference in Paul.

3308 – anxiety,  
worry

Paul's greatest boast was about his constant concern for them.

Scriptures:

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak?

770 – 'To be or become wanting in moral strength, courage, will or other cognitive feature.'

770 -

Notes:

Our behaviors and actions can cause others to 'stumble' or fall into sin.

Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn

4624 – fall into sin

4448 – be greatly worried or angered

*with indignation?*

Scriptures:

30 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which

concern my infirmity.

769 – incapacity, a state of weakness or limitation

Notes:

Paul illustrates this point by recounting a very humiliating experience in his life.

Scriptures:

<sup>31</sup> The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Notes:

who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

Scriptures:

<sup>32</sup> In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the

Notes:

king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes

with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;

Scriptures:  
2 Corinthians 3:4-6 - And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

<sup>33</sup> but **I** was let down in a basket through a

window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

Notes:  
Paul's detractors, the false apostles, were modeling their behavior off of cultural norms. They came in and boasted of their qualifications, their degrees, their previous speaking engagements in front of important people, the large fees they have collected from other engagements – all of it was meant to impress their audience with their importance.

“We need to be wary of our Christianity becoming a Christianized version of our own culture.” (Hughes, 2006) page 207

[Return to top of section](#)