

2 Corinthians 12:11-21 – Loving the Unloving!

Scriptures:

¹¹ **I** have become a fool in boasting; **you** have

compelled **me**. For **I** ought to have been

commended by **you**; for in nothing was **I** behind

3762 -

the most eminent apostles, though **I** am nothing.

3029 - greatly

3762 -

Notes:

“...their failure to defend Paul was an inexcusable sin of silence.”
(Hughes, 2006) page 218

Paul is saying that he was in no way inferior to his detractors, the super-apostles. He described himself as ‘nothing’ but was not inferior to them. They practiced aggressive self-promotion, telling everyone how great they were. By inference Paul is saying his detractors are nothing also.

‘for in nothing...’ – in one breath Paul is saying his ministry is as important as any other apostle’s ministry (assigned to by Christ). And in the next breath says that he is not worthy of notice. This is true Christian humility in service. The ministry is vitally important, but the servant is not to be noticed. That is a hard thing to accept and live out in the ministry.

The minister is nothing – Christ is all!

“The church of God is the holiest thing there is on earth, and yet there are a great many imperfections in that church.” (Ironside, 1938) page 458

If God has assigned you to a place of ministry, it would be wrong to think lightly of it. God thought it was important enough that He assigned one of His precious servants the role of completing it.

Paul had led the Corinthians to Christ. He was their spiritual father and they were telling their spiritual father that he was doing everything wrong.

Scriptures:

¹² Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished

4592 – either a
normal signal or a
miraculous sign

2716 -

Notes:

“‘Signs’ authenticated the message, ‘wonders’ evoked awe, and ‘mighty works’ manifested divine power.” (Hughes, 2006) page 219

Paul did all these things that proved he was an apostle AND he experienced great suffering at the hands of others, including the Jews. Just because God does great things through someone is not a guarantee that they are not going to experience difficult things in life.

among you with all perseverance, in signs and

4592 -

wonders and mighty deeds.

5059 - miracle

1411 –
supernatural
power

Scriptures:

¹³ For what is it in which you were inferior to

Notes:

Paul is being ironic here! Forgive me for my selfless sacrifice while I shared Christ and showed you the way to eternal life.

Paul probably didn't take anything from them because he discerned a wrong spirit in them that would have misunderstood him.

other churches, except that I myself was not

burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!

2655 – be a
financial burden

93 – wickedness,
evil, unjust deed

Scriptures:
2 Corinthians 11:2 - For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Ephesians 5:25-27 - Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

¹⁴ Now *for* the third time **I** am ready to come to

you. And **I** will not be burdensome to **you**; for **I**

do not seek yours, but **you**. For the children ought

2212 -

not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for

2343 – store up

the children.

Notes:
Paul transitions from an ironic rebuke to fatherly tenderness.

This is the heart of true pastoral ministry.

Paul's detractors were living off of the Corinthians while Paul lived off his own labors and the support of other churches. Paul didn't want their money, he wanted all of them, not for himself but for God so that he could present them to Christ as His bride (2 Cor. 11:2). He identified his ministry with that of Christ's (Eph. 5:27).

Scriptures:
2 Corinthians 8:9 - For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for

1159 - exert
effort

1550 - give
oneself
completely, to be
completely
expended, be
exhausted

Notes:
This is what Paul said that Christ did (2 Cor. 8:9).

"Unlike Christ's sufferings, Paul's sacrifices did not save the Corinthians but were in continuity with those of Christ." (Hughes, 2006) page 220

your souls; though the more abundantly I love

"If Jesus Christ be God, and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him." C. T. Studd (Hughes, 2006) page 220

you, the less I am loved.

Scriptures:
2 Corinthians 11:13-15 - For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

16 But be that *as it may*, I did not burden you.

Notes:
Paul's detractors explained away his selfless sacrifice by suggesting that it was some kind of ploy to trap them. They are suggesting that Paul is a con man, possibly planning to take the donation for the church in Jerusalem for himself.

Paul's detractors were accusing him of the very thing they were trying to do (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you

3835 - clever

by cunning!

1388 - trickery

Scriptures:

¹⁷ Did **I** take advantage of **you** by any of those

Notes:

whom **I** sent to **you**?

Scriptures:

¹⁸ **I** urged Titus, and sent **our** brother with *him*.

Notes:
Paul pointed to the integrity of Titus and the other 'brother' as proof that he was not what his detractors were claiming he was.

Did Titus take advantage of **you**? Did **we** not walk

4122 - exploit

in the same  spirit? Did *we* not *walk* in the same

steps?

Scriptures:

¹⁹ Again, do **you** think that **we** excuse **ourselves** to

Notes:
Every part of the letter, including the parts where Paul is defending his ministry and his role as an apostle is meant to build them up, not himself. Paul states what is true of all ministers, that what he does he does in the presence of God in Christ Jesus.

you? **We** speak before God in Christ. But *we do*

all things,  beloved, for **your** edification.

27 – loved one

3619 – building
up, make more
able

²⁰ For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you

Notes:

"To be a true minister to men is always to accept new happiness and new distress... The man who gives himself to other men can never be a wholly sad man; but no more can he be a man of unclouded gladness. To him shall come with every deeper consecration a before untasted joy, but in the same cup shall be mixed a sorrow that it was beyond his power to feel before." Phillips Brooks (Hughes, 2006) page 222

such as I wish, and *that* I shall be found by you

such as you do not wish; lest *there be* contentions,

jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions,

backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

Scriptures:

²¹ lest, when I come again, my God will humble

Notes:
Paul is hoping that they will repent
before he arrives.

me among you, and I shall mourn for many who

have ~~sinned~~ before and have not repented of the

uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they

have practiced.

4238 – (aorist
active)

[Top of section.](#) [Top of chapter.](#)