

SERIES: II CORINTHIANS: THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A MAN OF GOD, WEEK 45

TITLE: HOW TO MEASURE A MAN OF GOD

TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 11:16-27

INTRODUCTION: (1) HOW DO WE MEASURE A MAN OR WOMAN OF GOD?

* WHAT IS THE CRITERIA GOD USES TO MEASURE **A PERSON'S GODLINESS, BEING LIKE HIM - GODLIKE?**

** WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOVE GOD AND BE LIKE HIM? HOW DO WE MEASURE THAT?

*** WELL, THOSE QUESTIONS CAN LEAD TO A LOT OF GOOD DISCUSSION.

**** AND THERE ARE SOME CLEAR CUT ANSWERS FROM SCRIPTURE.

(2) FOR EXAMPLE, **OBEDIENCE TO OUR LORD'S** COMMANDS, QUOTE JOHN 14:15, I JOHN 5:3.

* ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC IS LOVE FOR THE WORD OF GOD, FOR WE FIND THE WILL OF GOD, THE MIND OF GOD, THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD IN HIS WORD. AND IF WE WANT TO BE LIKE HIM WE NEED TO KNOW HIM IN A GREATER WAY THROUGH HIS REVELATION OF HIMSELF IN SCRIPTURE.

** ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC OF GODLINESS IS **LOVE FOR CHRIST'S CHURCH** AND SERVING THROUGH HIS ORDAINED MEANS FOR FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSION.

*** I MEAN GOD HAS A PLAN FOR THE CHURCH TO CARRY OUT THE MANDATE OF THE GREAT COMMISSION AND MAKING DISCIPLES AND THAT IS CLEARLY THE MULTIPLICATION OF CHURCHES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS.

(3) IN FACT THE PAULINE CYCLE IN THE BOOK OF ACTS IS EVANGELIZE, AND GATHER A GROUP OF BELIEVERS TOGETHER TO MEET AND ASSEMBLE, ESTABLISH AND EQUIP THEM IN THE FAITH IN THAT ASSEMBLY, THAT CHURCH AND THEN ENTRUST THAT ASSEMBLY TO ELDERS, PASTORS.

* AND THOSE ELDERS OR PASTORS ARE EQUIPPERS WHOM EQUIP THE SAINTS WHO DO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, THEY ARE NOT PROGRAM DIRECTORS AND MEN WHO START MINISTRIES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH, EPHESIANS 4:11&12.

** NO THEY EQUIP PEOPLE WHOM USE THEIR GIFTS THROUGH THE CHURCH THAT GROWS THE FAMILY OF FAMILIES AND ASSISTS THE FAMILY TO DO THE SAME AND THEN MATURE SHEEP REPRODUCE THEMSELVES.

*** AND SO THE CHURCH GATHERS FOR EQUIPPING, SERVICE AND WORSHIP AND SCATTERS FOR EVANGELISM HERE AND AROUND THE WORLD.

**** AND THE VAST MAJORITY OF TIMES THE **WORD CHURCH IS USED IN THE N.T., IT'S** TALKING ABOUT THE LOCAL, VISIBLE, REAL CHURCH, NOT THE INVISIBLE BODY OF CHRIST MADE UP OF ALL BELIEVERS WORLDWIDE.

(4) AND AS CHURCHES MULTIPLY DISCIPLES **ARE MADE AND GROWN. IT'S A PLAN BROUGHT** FORTH FROM THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, WHO IS THE FOUNDATION, THE CORNERSTONE OF THE CHURCH FOR WHOM HE DIED, EPHESIANS 5:25.

* NOW GETTING BACK TO HOW WE MEASURE A MAN OR WOMAN OF GOD, ONE THING THAT IS CONSISTENT AMONG THEM IS THEY LOVE THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, THE VISIBLE REAL PRACTICAL FUNCTIONING CHURCH, THE ASSEMBLY THAT GATHER IN A LOCAL.

** AND MY QUICK LIST OF HOW TO MEASURE A MAN OR WOMAN OF GOD HAS NOT BEEN EXHAUSTIVE BECAUSE OF TIME TODAY.

*** HOWEVER, ONE CHARACTERISTIC THAT ALWAYS JUMPS OUT IS LOVE FOR THE CHURCH. I MEAN YOU CANNOT SEPARATE LOVE FOR CHRIST AND LOVE FOR HIS CHURCH.

**** AND ALTHOUGH WE HAVE A MULTITUDE IN PROFESSING CHRISTENDOM IN AMERICA TODAY WHO ARE SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENTS, NOT TEAM PLAYERS, NOT BODY LIFE PEOPLE, THAT IS NOT **GOD'S PLAN** TO BYPASS THE CHURCH, NOR DOES IT SHOW GODLINESS.

(5) NOW WITH ALL OF THAT SAID, PAUL WAS A CHURCHMAN. HE WAS THE CHURCH PLANTER PAR EXCELLENCE, THE QUINTESSENTIAL CHURCH PLANTER, ONE WHOM HAD TRUE LOVE FOR THE CHURCH AND OBVIOUSLY WAS A MAN OF GOD.

* AND HIS LOVE FOR PLANTING CHURCHES, EQUIPPING AND ESTABLISHING CHURCHES IS BROUGHT OUT CLEARLY IN HIS 13 INSPIRED BOOKS, 9 OF THOSE EPISTLES WRITTEN DIRECTLY TO CHURCHES AND 4 WRITTEN TO INDIVIDUALS WHOM WERE WORKING WITH LOCAL CHURCHES 3 OF THEM DISPATCHED BY PAUL TO WORK WITH CHURCHES, TIMOTHY TO EPHESUS, TWO BOOKS FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY AND TITUS WAS SENT TO CRETE TO ORDAIN ELDERS IN THE CHURCHES AND ESTABLISH THOSE CHURCHES.

**** BUT ALSO PAUL'S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH** JUMPS OUT AT ME IN OUR TEXT TODAY AND FOR NEXT WEEK IN WHAT HE PUTS HIMSELF THROUGH FOR HIS LOVE AND CONCERN FOR THE CHURCH AT CORINTH AND WHAT HE WENT THROUGH AS A CHURCH PLANTER AND SERVANT OF THE CHURCH IN HIS TRAVELS.

***** PAUL'S PARTIAL RECORD OF WHAT HE WENT THROUGH FOR CHRIST'S CHURCH IS INCREDIBLE,** AND YES HE DID IT FOR JESUS, BUT HE DID WHAT HE DID FOR JESUS THROUGH AND FOR THE CHURCH.

**** AND HIS LOVE FOR THE CHURCH AS A MAN OF GOD WAS NOT TALK, BUT ACTIONS. HE DID THINGS HE WAS RELUCTANT TO DO TO SEPARATE HIMSELF FROM THE FALSE APOSTLES AT CORINTH, AND HE SUFFERED BEYOND IMAGINATION WHICH CONTRASTED HIMSELF FROM FALSE APOSTLES WHO WERE IN FOR WHAT THEY COULD GET OUT OF THE CHURCH, NOT HOW THEY COULD SERVE THE CHURCH.

(6) AND TODAY IN OUR TEXT WE SEE HOW TO MEASURE A MAN OF GOD, AND ONE AREA TO **SEE THAT IS HOW HE LOVES CHRIST'S CHURCH** AND WHAT HE DOES AS A RESULT OF THAT LOVE.

* SO "HOW TO MEASURE A MAN OF GOD" IS THE TITLE OF OUR SERMON TODAY AND UNDER **THAT THEME WE'LL LOOK AT TWO POINTS.**

** NO. 1 THE RELUCTANCE OF PAUL TO TALK ABOUT HIS CREDENTIALS AS A TRUE APOSTLE IN CONTRAST TO FALSE APOSTLES WHOM CONTINUALLY BOASTED OF THEIR CREDENTIALS, VV. 16-21; AND NO. 2 THE RESUME **OF PAUL'S** CREDENTIALS AS A MAN OF GOD IN CONTRASTS TO THE FALSE APOSTLES, VV. 22-27.

*** AND WITH THOSE TWO POINTS AS OUR GUIDE THROUGH OUR STUDY OF GOD'S WORD, **LOOK AT V. 16 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START TO** SEE OUR FIRST POINT TODAY, THE RELUCTANCE.

I. THE RELUCTANCE, (READ V. 16)

A. NOW THE WORD AGAIN OR REPEAT, DEPENDING ON WHICH TRANSLATION YOU HAVE, POINTS THE CORINTHIANS BACK TO **PAUL'S EARLIER DISCUSSION OF BOASTING IN V. 1** OF CHAPTER 11, AND THEN IN VV. 2-15 OF THIS CHAPTER, HE NEEDED TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND TO EXPOSE THE FALSE APOSTLES AS AGENTS OF SATAN IN DISGUISE.

* NOW BEGINNING IN V. 16, PAUL RELUCTANTLY PICKS UP FROM V. 1, LAUNCHING HIS DEFENSE, WHICH PAUL ACKNOWLEDGES A CERTAIN FEELING OF FOOLISHNESS IN THIS SORT OF DISCUSSION AND DEFENSE OF HIMSELF.

** AND PAUL APPEALS TO THE CORINTHIANS NOT TO REGARD HIM AS A FOOL AS HE RELUCTANTLY SETS FOR THESE CLAIMS ABOUT HIMSELF.

*** HOWEVER, EVEN IF THEY WOULD NOT GRANT THIS REQUEST, THEN HE ASKS THEM TO TOLERATE HIM JUST AS THEY INDULGED THE FALSE APOSTLES, IN THEIR FOOLISHNESS, FOR THE FALSE APOSTLES BOASTED REPEATEDLY ABOUT THEIR CREDENTIALS AND PEDIGREE AND PAUL WOULD BOAST ONLY A LITTLE IN COMPARISON TO THEM, FOR ONLY ONE REASON WOULD HE TALK ABOUT HIS CREDENTIALS.

**** TO CONTRAST HIMSELF TO THE FALSE APOSTLES AND THEIR CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS TO **PAUL'S CREDENTIALS THAT HE WAS A TRUE APOSTLE.**

1. AND PAUL WAS VERY RELUCTANT TO DO THAT, BUT DID IT TO PROTECT THIS IMMATURE CHURCH FROM THE FALSE APOSTLES AND SO THEY WOULD NOT ALLOW THESE FALSE APOSTLES TO INFLUENCE THEM ANYMORE.

* BELOVED, PAUL DID WHAT WAS UNCOMFORTABLE FOR HIM OUT OF LOVE FOR THIS CHURCH. PAUL ASKED THE CORINTHIANS TO HEAR HIM OUT, ALTHOUGH IT WAS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE FOR HIM, FOR IT MIGHT SEEM THAT HIS BOASTING A LITTLE, MIGHT APPEAR TO THEM AS FOOLISHNESS.

** AND PAUL WAS NO FOOL LIKE HIS ENEMIES, BUT HE WAS MERELY ANSWERING FOOLS AS THEIR FOLLY DESERVED AS PROVERBS 26:5 SAYS, AND FOR THE PURPOSE TO PROTECT THE CHURCH FROM SPIRITUAL DISASTER.

*** SO PAUL IS RELUCTANT TO SAY WHAT HE SAYS AND THIS RELUCTANCE CONTINUES IN V. 17. LOOK AT V. 17 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 17. NOW SUCH SPEAKING AS PAUL WAS ABOUT TO PURSUE WAS NOT WHAT HE PREFERRED, AGAIN IT MADE HIM UNCOMFORTABLE, IT TOOK HIM OUT OF HIS COMFORT ZONE.

* IN FACT, PAUL ACKNOWLEDGED THAT WHAT HE WAS SAYING, HE WAS NOT SAYING AS THE LORD WOULD.

** AND WHAT HE MEANT WAS THAT HE WAS NOT FOLLOWING ANYTHING HIS LORD HAD DONE, BECAUSE JESUS NEVER BOASTED. AND THAT MADE IT HARD FOR PAUL TO DO SO, BECAUSE THE SUPREME GOAL OF HIS LIFE WAS TO BE LIKE CHRIST.

*** **NOW DON'T MISUNDERSTAND THIS. WHAT PAUL SAID WAS ACCURATE, AND HE SAID IT WITHOUT PRIDE OR SELF-COMMENDATION. NONETHELESS HE WAS RELUCTANT, BUT WOULD DO IT OUT OF LOVE FOR THE CHURCH TO PROTECT THEM.**

**** AND LET ME BE CLEAR HERE. PAUL WAS NOT DENYING THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF HIS WORDS IN V. 17; HE WAS MERELY STATING THAT HE WAS FORCED TO UTILIZE A LEGITIMATE METHOD OTHER THAN THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST, AND IT MADE HIM FEEL LIKE A FOOL IN DOING SO. PAUL IS NOT SINNING. HE IS DOING WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO TO TRY TO WAKE UP THE CORINTHIANS, PAUL MUST BOAST, BUT NOT IN A PROUD WAY, BUT IN A HUMBLE MATTER OF FACT WAY.

- LOOK AT V. 18 PLEASE.

C. READ V. 18. NOW THE MANY WHO BOASTED ACCORDING TO THE FLESH – SINFULLY, WERE THE FALSE APOSTLES, THE FALSE TEACHERS.

* AND THEIR BOASTING WAS VAIN, WORLDLY AND EMPTY, BASED ON THEIR HUMAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS, THEIR PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS ROOTED IN HUMAN SINFUL PRIDE, THEY BOASTED OF THEIR CREDENTIALS THAT QUALIFIED THEM AS APOSTLES OF GOD ALTHOUGH THEY WERE FALSE APOSTLES, V. 13.

** AND AT THE END OF V. 18, PAUL SAYS, I WILL BOAST ALSO. AND AGAIN PAUL MUST COUNTER THEIR FALSE CLAIMS, SO HE WILL BE FORCED TO BOAST ALSO, BUT AS WE WILL SEE, HIS BOASTING HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HUMAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS, BUT WILL BE A RESUME OF SUFFERING FOR HIS SAVIOR OUT OF LOVE FOR **CHRIST'S CHURCH.**

*** SO HE WILL BOAST ALSO BUT NOT ACCORDING TO THE FLESH. HIS WILL BE A DIFFERENT KIND OF BOASTING. LOOK AT V. 19 PLEASE.

D. READ V. 19. NOW PAUL WILL START TO USE SOME SARCASM HERE IN V. 19.

* AND HE BASICALLY SAYS, THAT THE CORINTHIANS HAD SUCH A MISPLACED PRIDE IN ITS OWN MATURITY, AND SUCH UNJUSTIFIED CONFIDENCE IN ITS CAPACITY FOR DISCERNMENT, THAT THEY ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BE EXPLOITED BY A BUNCH OF RELIGIOUS HUCKSTERS.

** YOU TOLERATED THE FOOLISH, THE FALSE APOSTLES GLADLY AND YOU THINK YOU ARE SO SMART.

*** IT IS TO SAY THAT THEY CONSIDERED THEMSELVES TOO WISE TO BE TAKEN IN BY THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE FALSE APOSTLES. BUT THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED. THEY THOUGHT THEIR OPENNESS WAS COOL. THEIR TOLERANCE HAD NO LIMITS, THEY THOUGHT THEIR TOLERANCE WAS WISE BUT IN REALITY THEY WERE FOOLS BY BEING SO TOLERANT FOR IN THE PROCESS THEY WERE BEING ENSLAVED TO ERROR.

**** AND WHAT THEY TOLERATED WAS INCREDIBLE IN THEIR PRIDE. LOOK AT V. 20 PLEASE.

E. READ V. 20. NOW WHAT THE CORINTHIANS HAD TOLERATED FROM THE FALSE APOSTLES WAS INCREDIBLE AND FIVE EXAMPLES ARE MENTIONED BY PAUL.

* NO. 1 THEY TOLERATED OR PUT UP WITH THE FALSE APOSTLES ENSLAVING THEM TO THEIR FALSE TEACHING, ENSLAVING PEOPLE TO HERETICAL TEACHINGS THEY ESPOUSED.

**** AND IT'S INTERESTING THAT PAUL USED THIS** SAME GREEK VERB IN GALATIANS 2:4 TO DESCRIBE THE JUDAIZERS, THE FALSE TEACHERS AT GALATIA ENTRAPPING THE GALATIANS IN THEIR FALSE LEGALISTIC SYSTEM OF WORKS.

*** NO. 2 THE FALSE TEACHERS DEVoured THE CORINTHIANS IN THE SENSE OF PLUNDERING THEM FINANCIALLY. AND UNLIKE PAUL, WHO REFUSED TO BE A BURDEN TO THE CHURCH, THE FALSE APOSTLES WERE IN IT FOR THE MONEY.

**** NO. 3 THE CORINTHIANS HAD ALSO BEEN TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY THE FALSE APOSTLES. THEY HAD BEEN CAUGHT LIKE A FISH ON A HOOK, FOR THIS SAME GREEK VERB IS USED IN LUKE 5:5 AND IS TRANSLATED **"CAUGHT"**.

1. SO THEY WERE **"CAUGHT" LIKE A FISH ON A HOOK** OR LIKE AN ANIMAL IN A TRAP, MOST LIKELY IN SLANDEROUS STATEMENTS ABOUT PAUL. THEY BELIEVED LIES ABOUT THE ONE WHO HAD STARTED THAT CHURCH AND LOVED THEM. THEY GOT SUCKED IN BY LIES AND ENTRAPPED.

* NO. 4 THE FALSE APOSTLES ALSO EXALTED THEMSELVES IN STARK CONTRAST TO PAUL. THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE OBSESSED WITH THEIR OWN IMPORTANCE, THEY HAD NO HUMILITY OR MEEKNESS, THEY HAD AN INFLATED VIEW OF THEMSELVES THROUGH PRIDE AND EXALTED THEMSELVES IN CONTRAST TO PAUL WHO HAD HUMBLER HIMSELF.

** AND THEN NO. 5, THEY SLAPPED THE CORINTHIANS IN THE FACE, THEY HIT YOU IN THE FACE.

*** AND THEY MAY HAVE PHYSICALLY STRUCK SOME OF THE CORINTHIANS IN THE FACE TO INTIMIDATE THEM, OR THE EXPRESSION MAY BE METAPHORICAL, HUMILIATING THEM.

**** EITHER WAY, THEY ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BE ABUSED BY THESE FALSE TEACHERS SHOWING THAT THEY WERE NOT TRUE MEN OF GOD.

2. AND BELOVED WHEN YOU TAKE GOD'S MEASURING STICK FOR GODLINESS, THEY DID NOT MEASURE UP. AND PAUL'S SARCASM REACHES ITS PEAK, A CRESCENDO IN V. 21. LOOK AT V. 21 PLEASE.

F. READ V. 21. NOW WITH BITING IRONY, PAUL IN V. 21 SAID, THAT IF THOSE 5 THINGS HE TALKED ABOUT IN V. 20 ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE APOSTLES, THAT HE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT HE HAD BEEN TOO WEAK TO QUALIFY, TO MY SHAME IN SARCASM, I AM TOO WEAK FOR THAT!

* PAUL WAS TOO MUCH OF A WEAKLING TO ENSLAVE A CHURCH BY DECEIT AND THEN OPPRESS THE CHURCH LIKE THE FALSE APOSTLES DID.

** AND PAUL MAY HAVE BEEN QUOTING WHAT THE FALSE APOSTLES SAID ABOUT HIM WHEN HE WROTE THAT HE WAS TOO WEAK TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CORINTHIANS, TO TAKE THEIR MONEY AND TRY TO INTIMIDATE THEM.

*** AND THEN THE LAST PART OF V. 21 MARKS **THE TRANSITION TO PAUL'S ACTUAL DEFENSE** OR BOAST AS HE CALLS IT THAT BEGINS IN V. 22.

**** AND JUST AS THE FALSE TEACHERS HAD BEEN BOLD IN ATTACKING PAUL, SO PAUL WOULD BE BOLD IN DEFENDING HIMSELF OR TALKING ABOUT HIS CREDENTIALS FOR APOSTLESHIP.

1. AND THE PHRASE, **"I SPEAK IN FOOLISHNESS"** GIVES EVIDENCE OF THE SARCASM HE HAS USED IN THESE VERSES.

* AND PAUL DOES FEEL FOOLISH IN HAVING TO QUOTE BOAST ABOUT HIS CREDENTIALS, BUT HE SENSES HE MUST TO DIFFERENTIATE AND DISTINGUISH HIMSELF FROM THE FALSE APOSTLES AND HE WILL BE BOLD IN DOING IT. HE WILL FOR LOVE OF THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH TO PROTECT THEM.

* **AND THAT TRUTH LEADS TO OUR 2'D POINT** TODAY, THE RESUME OF PAUL THAT QUALIFIED HIM AS A MAN OF GOD, UNLIKE THE FALSE APOSTLES.

** LOOK AT V. 22 PLEASE TO BEGIN WITH.

II. THE RESUME, (READ V. 22)

A. NOW I AM NOT GOING TO TAKE A LOT OF TIME TO DEVELOP EACH VERSE BECAUSE OF TIME, BUT I WANT YOU TO GET A SIMPLE UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT PAUL IS INSPIRED TO SAY.

* AND IN V. 22 WRITES THAT HE WAS AS MUCH A HEBREW, AN ISRAELITE, AND FROM THE SEED OF ABRAHAM AS HIS OPPONENTS.

** AND OBVIOUSLY THESE FALSE TEACHERS WERE JEWISH AND USING THAT AS A CREDENTIAL THAT THEY WERE THE REAL DEAL AND THEY WERE TRYING TO ELEVATE THEMSELVES OVER PAUL WITH THEIR PEDIGREE.

*** AND MOST LIKELY THE ISSUE THEY WERE PROMOTING WAS **PAUL'S STATUS AS A JEW**. FOR HE HAD NOT BEEN BORN IN PALESTINE, BUT IN CILICIA ON THE SOUTH COST OF ASIA MINOR IN TARSUS.

**** IT WAS THEREFORE EASY FOR HIS OPPONENTS TO ALLEGE THAT **PAUL'S** JEWISHNESS WAS DEFICIENT, THAT HE WAS NOT A HEBREW OF THE FIRST ORDER BORN IN PALESTINE. THEY WERE TRYING TO TRUMP **PAUL'S** JEWISHNESS.

***** SO HE SAYS IN ESSENCE I HAVE THE PEDIGREE ALSO, ARE THEY HEBREWS? SO AM I. ARE THEY ISRAELITES? SO AM I. ARE THEY DESCENDENTS OF ABRAHAM? SO AM I. I AM JEWISH! SO NO TRUMP CARD THERE.

1. AND THEN PAUL ASKS ANOTHER QUESTION TO BEGIN WITH IN V. 23 AND THEN ANSWERS IT. LOOK AT V. 23 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 23. NOW THE QUESTION HERE IN V. 23, **"ARE THEY (THE FALSE APOSTLES) SERVANTS OF CHRIST?"** BEGINS A NEW THOUGHT IN WHICH PAUL SHOWS HIS PROOFS **THAT HE WAS CHRIST'S SERVANT IN A FAR HIGHER SENSE THAN ANY OF THESE FALSE APOSTLES COULD CLAIM.**

* AND THE QUESTION DID NOT IMPLY THAT **THESE MEN WERE ACTUALLY CHRIST'S SERVANTS.** IN FACT PAUL HAD JUST CALLED **THEM SATAN'S SERVANTS IN VV. 14&15 OF THIS CHAPTER.**

** HERE PAUL MERELY REPEATED THEIR CLAIM, PERHAPS WITH SOME IRONY.

*** **AND NOW PAUL'S BOASTS, PAUL'S** QUALIFICATIONS ARE BROUGHT FORTH. AND HE FEELS CRAZY IN SAYING, **"I MORE SO."** HE **DOESN'T LIKE COMPARISONS, HE DOESN'T WANT TO BOAST, HE FEELS FOOLISH, HE'S** UNCOMFORTABLE, AND THEN HE ADDS BEFORE I **MORE SO, "I SPEAK AS IF INSANE,"** TRANSLATED A MADMAN, OUT OF MY MIND, A DIFFERENT GREEK WORD FOR FOOL THAT HE HAS USED BEFORE THESE VERSES.

**** AND THIS AGAIN FOR CLARITY EXPRESSES **PAUL'S VIEW OF HIS BOASTING. THE WHOLE** DISCUSSION WAS INSANITY, BUT THE CORINTHIANS LACK OF DISCERNMENT MADE IT NECESSARY.

1. AND THE PHRASE, I MORE SO STARTS THE BEGINNING OF PAUL BOASTING ABOUT HIS CREDENTIALS AS A MAN OF GOD, THE MEASURE OF A MAN OF GOD.

* AND THE EVIDENCE THAT PAUL PRESENTS **THAT HE WAS CHRIST'S SERVANT** IS NOT HIS DEGREES, HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HOW MANY CHURCHES HE HAS STARTED, HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SAVED UNDER HIS PREACHING, HOW BIG THE CHURCHES WERE HE STARTED AND HOW MANY BOOKS HE HAD WRITTEN.

** NO, PAUL BEGINS BY TALKING ABOUT HIS SUFFERINGS! TO HIM, SUFFERING WAS THE **MARK, THE MEASURE, THE BADGE OF CHRIST'S SERVANTS.**

*** HENCE PAUL TURNS CONVENTIONAL THINKING ON ITS HEAD AND ARGUES FOR THE AUTHENTICITY, THE CREDIBILITY, THE SUPERIORITY OF HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY FROM HIS WEAKNESSES, NOT FROM HIS STRENGTHS. AND WHO DOES THIS?

**** CERTAINLY NOT FALSE APOSTLES! THEY LIFT UP SELF AND TALK ABOUT THEIR PEDIGREE, THEIR DEGREES, THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

2. PAUL BEGINS BY TALKING ABOUT THE SUFFERING, LABORING MORE, BEING IN PRISON MORE, BEATEN UP MORE, AND IN DANGER OF DEATH MORE AT THE END OF V. 27.

* AND THEN HE STARTS TO GET SPECIFIC ABOUT HIS SUFFERINGS IN V. 24. LOOK AT V. 24 PLEASE.

C. READ V. 24. NOW IN VV. 24 & 25 PAUL GIVES TWO EXAMPLES OF THE BEATINGS HE MENTIONED IN V. 23.

* AND THE FIRST EXAMPLE IS 5 TIMES HE RECEIVED FROM THE JEWS 39 LASHES.

** NOW THE LASHES THEMSELVES WERE MADE OF SEVERAL STRAPS OF LEATHER, SOMETIMES WITH BONE OR METAL TIED TO THE ENDS TO INFLICT MORE PAIN, A WHIP OF 3 CHORDS WERE USED.

***** IN PAUL'S CASE, THE PUNISHMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL, WHAT JEWS COMMONLY CONSIDERED BLASPHEMY.**

****** AND TWO THIRDS OF THE BLOWS FELL ON THE OFFENDERS BACK, THE OTHER THIRD ON HIS CHEST. AND MOSAIC LAW IN DEUTERONOMY 25:1-3 PRESCRIBED A MAXIMUM OF 40 BLOWS.**

1. AND AS CARRIED OUT BY THE SYNAGOGUES THIS WAS TRADITIONALLY LIMITED TO 39 SO AS NOT TO EXCEED THE LEGAL LIMIT, OR BE CHARGED WITH EXCEEDING THE LAW IF A PERSON DIED UNDER THAT BEATING.

*** FOR THE VICTIM WOULD BE LEFT RAW AND BLEEDING, LOOKING MORE LIKE A SIDE OF BEEF THAN A MAN.**

**** AND MOST PEOPLE WOULD BE SO TRAUMATIZED IF THEY LIVED AFTER ONE BEATING THEY WOULD BE EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO FACE ANOTHER.**

*** AND OF COURSE THAT WAS THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE BEATING, TO TERRIFY THE VICTIM INTO SUBMISSION.

**** BUT PAUL DID NOT SUBMIT AND WENT THROUGH THAT PUNISHMENT 5 TIMES FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

2. AND I MUST ASK THE QUESTION IN APPLICATION OF THIS, WHAT STOPS US FROM PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL? NORMALLY THE FEAR OF MAN, THE FEAR OF LOSING RESPECT, BEING VIEWED AS A RELIGIOUS FANATIC, LOSING MAYBE EVEN MONEY OR A SALE. PAUL **DIDN'T STOP**. THAT WAS A CREDENTIAL OF A MAN OF GOD.

* BUT THAT WAS NOT HIS ONLY BEATING. LOOK AT V. 25 PLEASE.

D. READ V. 25. NOW PAUL ALSO EXPERIENCED BEATING FROM THE ROMANS, AT WHOSE HANDS HE WAS 3 TIMES BEATEN WITH RODS. AND THAT BEATING WAS THE EQUIVALENT OF THE JEWS 39 LASHES.

* AND THEN PAUL WAS STONED AT LYSTRA IN ACTS 14:17, AND AFTER WAS DRAGGED OUT OF THE CITY AND LEFT FOR DEAD, WHICH HE MAY HAVE BEEN AS I WILL PROBABLY COMMUNICATE IN II CORINTHIANS 12.

**** ON TOP OF THAT 3 TIMES IN PAUL'S** NUMEROUS SEA VOYAGES TO GET PLACES IT ENDS WITH HIM BEING SHIPWRECKED.

*** AND AFTER ONE OF THOSE SHIPWRECKS PAUL SPENT A NIGHT AND A DAY (APPROX. 24 HOURS) IN THE DEEP SEA CLINGING TO A PIECE OF WRECKAGE UNTIL HE WAS RESCUED.

**** BUT THE SUFFERING GOES ON. LOOK AT V. 26 PLEASE.

E. READ V. 26. NOW PAUL IN V. 26 DESCRIBES SOME OF THE DANGERS HE ENCOUNTERED ON HIS FREQUENT JOURNEYS ON LAND BEYOND THE SEA IN V. 25.

* AND BOTH THE COUNTLESS SHORTER TRIPS THAT MADE UP HIS 3 MISSIONARY JOURNEYS AND THE MANY OTHER TRIPS HE TOOK COMMUNICATE THE MANY DANGERS IN TRAVELING THAT DAY.

** IN THE SPRING THERE WAS THE DANGER OF FLOODING WITH RIVERS AND NOT MANY BRIDGES, DANGERS BY ROBBERS WHOM WOULD ATTACK TRAVELERS, DANGERS FROM JEWS WAITING TO KILL HIM, HIS OWN COUNTRYMAN.

*** DANGERS FROM GENTILES INVOLVED IN FALSE RELIGION WHO HATED HIM AT EPHESUS EVEN FOR HURTING THEIR IDOL BUSINESS.

**** AND THEN DANGERS IN CITIES TRAVELING, DANGERS IN TRAVELING IN THE WILDERNESS, UNDEVELOPED PLACES AND DANGERS FROM FALSE BRETHERN, PEOPLE WHO PROFESSED TO KNOW JESUS, BUT DID NOT, LIKE THE FALSE APOSTLES AT CORINTH WHO HATED PAUL.

1. AND THE POINT IS PAUL CONTINUALLY AS A MANNER OF LIFE IN HIS LOVE FOR CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH LIVED IN DANGER, IN PERIL.

* BUT THE LIST OF SUFFERING THAT DISTINGUISHED PAUL FROM FALSE APOSTLES WHOM WILL NOT SUFFER FOR THEIR FAITH CONTINUES IN V. 27. ONE LAST VERSE FOR TODAY. LOOK AT V. 27 PLEASE.

F. READ V. 27. NOW BEYOND THE MANY DANGERS PAUL EXPERIENCED, IN V. 27 PAUL TURNED TO THE LABOR AND HARDSHIP THAT WAS ALSO A NORMAL WAY OF LIFE FOR PAUL, **ANOTHER PART OF HIS "BOAST."**

* AND LABOR AND HARDSHIP IS AN EXPRESSION PAUL USED WHEN DISCUSSING HIS MANUAL LABOR AT THESSALONICA IN I THESSALONIANS 2:9 AND II THESSALONIANS 3:8.

** AND THESE VERSES COMMUNICATE CLEARLY HOW HARD PAUL WORKED TO SUPPORT HIMSELF AT TIMES NOT TO BE A BURDEN TO THE BRETHREN.

*** **I THESSALONIANS 2:9 SAYS: "FOR YOU RECALL, BRETHREN, OUR LABOR AND HARDSHIP, HOW WORKING NIGHT AND DAY SO AS NOT TO BE A BURDEN TO ANY OF YOU, WE PROCLAIMED TO YOU THE GOSPEL OF GOD."**

*** AND THEN II THESSALONIANS 3:8 SAYS: **"NOR DID WE EAT ANYONE'S BREAD WITHOUT PAYING FOR IT, BUT WITH LABOR AND HARDSHIP WE KEPT WORKING NIGHT AND DAY SO THAT WE WOULD NOT BE A BURDEN TO ANY OF YOU."**

****** NOW BEYOND PAUL'S HARD WORK TO**
SUPPORT HIMSELF, HE WENT THROUGH MANY
SLEEPLESS NIGHTS. AND MOST LIKELY IT IS
NOT TALKING ABOUT PAUL HAVING INSOMNIA,
BUT AFTER SPENDING HIS DAYS MINISTERING,
PAUL WOULD HAVE TO WORK ALL NIGHT AT HIS
TRADE, AS A LEATHER WORKER, A TENTMAKER
TO PROVIDE FOR **LIFE'S NECESSITIES.**

1. AND EVEN THOUGH HE WORKED HARD THERE
WERE TIMES OF HUNGER AND THIRST AND
TIMES WITHOUT FOOD AND NECESSARY
CLOTHING, FACING COLD AND EXPOSURE, LIT.
NAKEDNESS OF THE BODY, NOT HAVING
ENOUGH CLOTHES.

*** NOW THESE ARE PAUL'S BOASTS** IN HIS
BURDEN FOR THE CHURCH AT CORINTH AND ALL
THE CHURCHES, WHICH WE LORD WILLING WILL
TALK ABOUT IN V. 28 NEXT SUNDAY.

AND IN WRAP UP AND IN APPLICATION (1)

PAUL'S SUFFERING SET HIM APART FROM THE MONEY AND COMFORT-SEEKING FALSE APOSTLES AND MARKED HIM OUT AS A TRUE MAN OF GOD.

* WHICH LEADS US BACK TO THE TITLE OF OUR MESSAGE TODAY, HOW TO MEASURE A MAN OF GOD.

** AND ONE OF THE WAYS CHRIST MEASURES A MAN OR WOMAN OF GOD IS, HOW MUCH DO WE **LOVE CHRIST'S CHURCH?** HOW DO WE SERVE CHRIST'S CHURCH?

*** AND THE ONLY WAY TO MEASURE OUR LOVE **FOR CHRIST'S CHURCH IS** UNDERSTANDING THE PRIMACY AND PREEMINENCE OF THE PLAN OF GOD IN THE N.T. THROUGH HIS CHURCH AND PARTICIPATING IN IT AND SERVING THROUGH IT.

**** AND BELOVED, PLEASE REMEMBER, WE CANNOT SEPARATE LOVE FOR CHRIST AND LOVE FOR HIS CHURCH.

(2) SO HOW CAN WE MEASURE THAT? HOW CAN WE QUANTIFY LOVE FOR THE CHURCH?

* WELL, WHAT COSTS YOU, HOW DO YOU SACRIFICE AND SERVE CHRIST WHO DIED FOR YOU, OUT OF LOVE FOR HIM? OUT OF LOVE FOR HIS CHURCH?

** WELL, YOUR TIME. **IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO COME TO WORSHIP SERVICE, THAT'S GOOD, THAT'S A START.**

*** BUT DO YOU AVAIL YOURSELF AND IF YOU ARE MARRIED AND HAVE CHILDREN, YOUR FAMILY, TO THE EQUIPPING TIMES WE PROVIDE OR DO YOU ALREADY KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT PARENTING, BODY LIFE, HAVE A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW, AN OVERVIEW OF SOME OF THE CLASSES WE HAVE?

**** DO YOU AVAIL YOUR CHILDREN TO THOSE EQUIPPING TIMES IN ASSISTING YOU IN LEADING YOUR FAMILY SPIRITUALLY?

(3) AND MY NEXT WORDS ARE NOT TO BE **HARSH, BUT TRANSPARENT, WHY WOULDN'T** YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED OR BE USED TO COMMUNICATE THE GOSPEL TO YOUR **CHILDREN? I DON'T GET THAT.**

* WHEN FOR SOME, IS IT MORE IMPORTANT, **AND THESE THINGS AREN'T WRONG, BUT WHY IS** IT MORE IMPORTANT TO GET YOUR KIDS TO FOOTBALL CAMP, BASKETBALL CAMP, BAND CAMP, SOCCER CAMP, OVER HAVING MORE **TEACHING FROM THE WORD OF GOD? WHAT'S** MORE IMPORTANT?

** NEXT ALL OF US NEED BODY LIFE, FELLOWSHIP, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND USING OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS THROUGH THE CHURCH. AND ONE MEANS FOR BODY LIFE IS OUR FLOCKS, ESPECIALLY IN PRACTICING SOME OF THE ONE ANOTHER COMMANDS.

*** BUT TWO LAST THINGS. IS GIVING AND SERVING A PRIORITY THROUGH THE CHURCH THAT JESUS DIED FOR? HOW DO YOU SERVE THE CHURCH?

**** BELOVED, PAUL WAS SACRIFICIAL IN HIS **LOVE FOR CHRIST'S CHURCH, TAKING HIS TIME,** AND MOVING OUT OF HIS COMFORT ZONE TO **SERVE CHRIST'S CHURCH.** DO WE? PAUL TRULY **WAS A MAN OF GOD. (LET'S PRAY)**