

## Sermon Notes – May 28, 2023

### Review

- ⇒ The Apostle Paul loves the gospel! He knows that apart from the true gospel of Jesus, people will not get to God's heaven. With such high stakes, Paul is willing to defend and protect and, when necessary, to *contend* for the veracity of God's message.
- ⇒ We have seen in recent weeks that both grace and truth are essential – one without the other is dangerous for your spiritual health. False teachers present a different Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel.
- ⇒ Last week with Pastor Matt we saw the Apostle Paul continue his frontal assault on the “super-apostles” who present themselves as Paul's equals. Using biting sarcasm and strong irony, Paul demonstrates the foolishness of “comparing resumes” as evidence of Apostolic authority.

### Today's Text: II Corinthians 12:1-10

Today we see Paul's “boasting” take a turn from experiences of suffering to a rare look at how God has given Paul specific “visions and revelations” as part of his Apostolic credential. At the same time, we see that God cares about Paul's character, answering his prayer for deliverance from a malady with a firm, “No” along with a promise of greater grace. **(READ 12:1-10)**

### Apostolic Authority Came With Unique Privileges (1-6)

- ⇒ Not only has Paul suffered greatly for the gospel, but he was given unique & direct experiences with God that are not “normative” for all believers (as in, not \_\_\_\_\_ or to be expected; reserved as a mark of a true Apostle – cf. **12:12**).
- ⇒ Direct revelation is an essential part of Paul's Apostolic authority, giving him great \_\_\_\_\_ that what he is teaching is actually true (cf. **Gal 1:12**).
- ⇒ NOTE: “Jesus Christ is the same...” does NOT mean that God does things in the \_\_\_\_\_ throughout history. He does not. Cf. **Hebrews 1:1-2**.

- ⇒ Paul says that he was caught up into the “third heaven,” that is, into the direct presence of God! The purpose is NOT so that he will return and write a cool book about what he saw. In fact, he is forbidden to repeat the details. Why? Perhaps to prepare him for what he is going to \_\_\_\_\_ (**Acts 9:15-16**).
- ⇒ While some have wondered if Paul is speaking of himself in v. 1-6, that doubt is removed in v. 7.

### Even Great Apostles Need Great Humility (7-10)

- ⇒ God knows the Apostle Paul (just like He knows you & me), and He knows that Paul might tend toward pride, so God graciously sends him a “thorn in the flesh” to keep him \_\_\_\_\_ on God's strength. In this case, Paul's suffering is a gift from a good and gracious God.
- ⇒ Paul correctly persists in prayer. He pleads with God multiple times to grant his request, but each time God says “No.” Please note – it is right to persist in prayer. God is a good, good Father to us, and He delights to give good gifts to His children, but He always sees the \_\_\_\_\_. We do not.
- ⇒ As we saw last week, “*the gospel is a story, not of human greatness in overcoming obstacles, but of God's glory and power displayed in human weakness, in Christ on a Roman cross.*”
- ⇒ Paul's commitment in vss. 9-10 is to embrace his weakness, to be “*content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities.*”

### Responding to God's Word in Worship & Obedience

- ⇒ Let's be careful about how we define “normal Christianity.” God does heal and bless and deliver and dramatically answer prayer, but we err when we assume or demand that He must do the same things in the same way all the time (**Hebrews 11:32-40**). Do you willingly accept “No” from God? Does a “No” cause you to doubt His ability or His goodness?
- ⇒ Human pride is an affront to God. True humility rightly keeps the focus off of us and gives all glory and honor to God. How do you battle the strong pull toward pride in your life? (Pride wears many faces, including anger, control, lack of forgiveness, seeking the spotlight, or even “poor self-esteem”)

Communion Worship Next Sunday: June 4, 2023

“The Signs Of A True Apostle?”

Pastor Jay Mosser

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