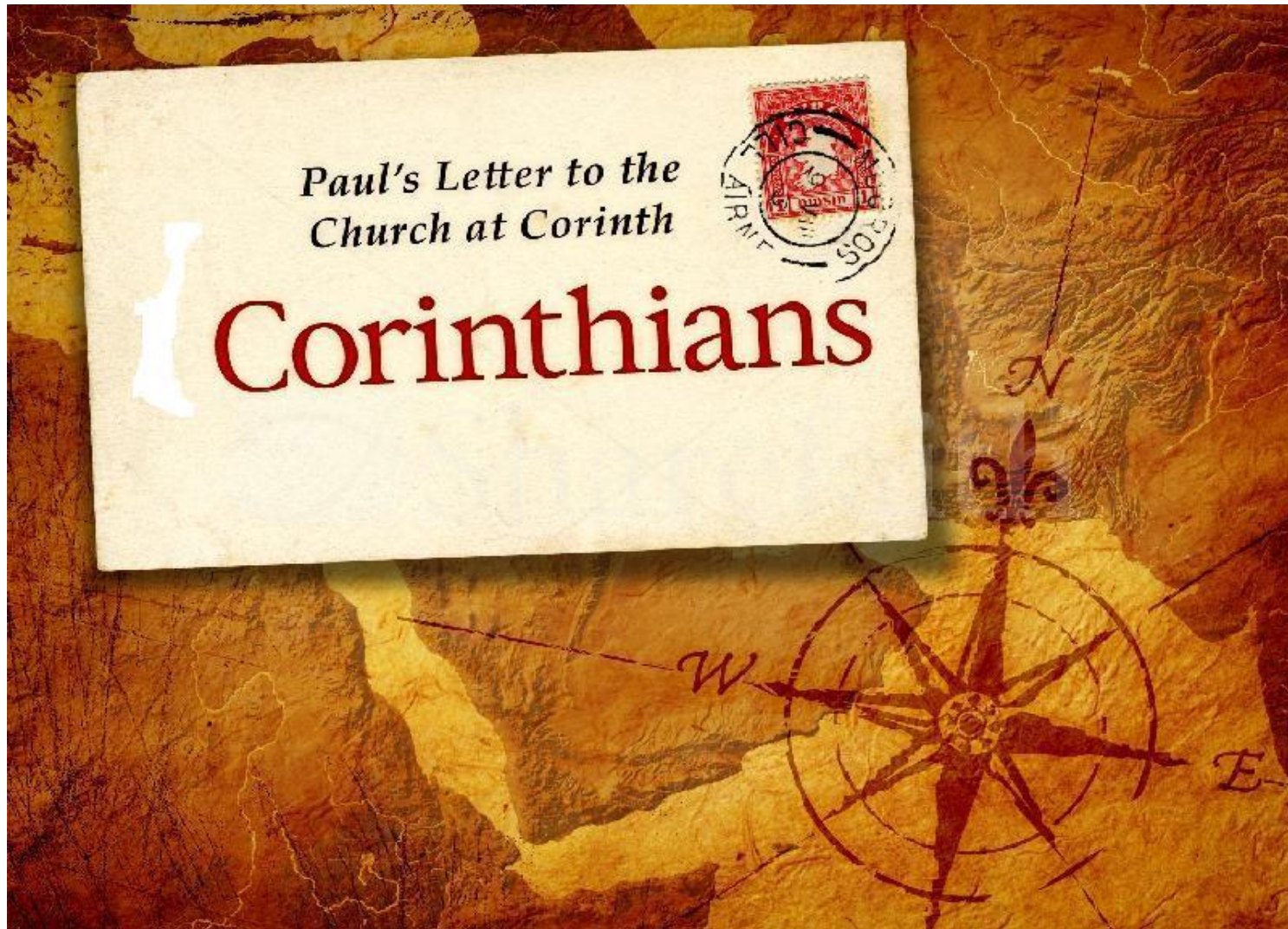


# 2 Cor 11:21b-28 Paul's Service and Sufferings for Christ



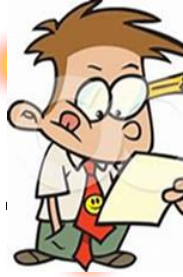
# Outline



Apostolic claims made by Paul 11:1 - 33

- Paul's Godly jealousy for the Corinthians 11:1-6
- Ministering Without Charge and False Apostles 11:7-13
- Satan disguises himself as an angel of light and Paul's boasting 11:14-21a
- Paul's service and sufferings 11:21b-28
- I will boast of what pertains to my weakness 11:29-33

<sup>20</sup> For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, [if] anyone devours you, [if] anyone takes advantage of you, [if] anyone exalts himself, [if] anyone hits you in the face.



For you tolerate it [actions of the false apostles]

- This is second time he has used the word “tolerate.”
- Also each of the five statements has an “if” associated with them, and they are all “assumed to be true.”

if anyone enslaves you - makes slaves of you and controls you

- Gal 2:4 But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, --- in order to bring us into bondage.

[if] anyone devours you - to gobble you up [your substance, spends your money]

- Luke 15:30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth ---, you killed the fattened calf for him.

20 For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, [if] anyone devours you, [if] anyone takes advantage of you, [if] anyone exalts himself, [if] anyone hits you in the face.



**[if] anyone takes advantage of you** – captures you, preys upon you, or deceives you

- Matt 23:14a Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses.

**[if] anyone exalts himself** – to lift yourself over someone

- 2 Cor 10:5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.

**[if] anyone hits you in the face** – to put people down by insult [physically or by speech\*]

- This happened physically to Paul in Acts 23:2.
- All these actions are a disgrace and you should know better.

Merryman

\* today we say “a slap in the face”

21a To *my* shame I *must* say that we have been weak *by comparison*.



**Now, Paul will lay this disgrace on himself !**

Lit: I speak according to dishonor as we ourselves have been weak\*

**dishonor** - *atimia* – shame, disgrace; it is used of self-disparagement in 2 Cor 11:21

- This is total irony! – we did not act in this manner.\*
- 1 Cor 2:3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.
- 2 Cor 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent !
- We did not act like authoritative apostles.\*      \* Merryman



## Today's verses



<sup>21b</sup> But in whatever respect anyone *else* is bold—I speak in foolishness—I am just as bold myself. <sup>22</sup> Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. <sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. <sup>26</sup> *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; <sup>27</sup> *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. <sup>28</sup> Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches. <sup>6</sup>

21<sup>b</sup> But in whatever respect anyone *else* is bold—I speak  
in foolishness—I am just as bold myself.



But in whatever way anyone may be daring

Interlinear

**verb** - may be daring - *tolmáō* - to have courage, boldness,  
confidence to do something

- The false apostles had plenty of daring or boldness, but this was the disguise they wore as servants of Satan.

in foolishness I speak

- Even though Paul knew that human boasting was foolishness, he felt it necessary to make his point.

I [Paul] also am daring

**verb** – am daring – *tolmao* – the idea is boldness

- After repeated warnings that he was going to boast (10:8; 11:1, 6, 16), Paul now finally began. Constable

<sup>22</sup> Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.



Paul starts his list of items to boast about with a comparison to the false apostles, i.e. So am I.

Are they Hebrews? So am I.

- A Hebrew of Hebrews Phil 3:5
- It looks very much as if Paul's opponents at Corinth were of Jewish origin. Barnett via Constable

Are they Israelites? So am I.

- Circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin. Phil 3:5
- Are they descendants [seed] of Abraham? So am I.
- Paul traced his descent all the way back to Abraham.\*
- Gal 3:16a Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. \* Constable





<sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

The next part of his list is about items that he was above measure of these false apostles, i.e. I more so.

Are they [the false apostles] servants of Christ?

- Paul's rhetorical question expects a no answer.
- Of course they are not servants of Christ. Merryman

I speak as if insane

- lit: I can't believe I'm saying this! McCalley

I [Paul] more so

- I beyond *them* or I above measure. Merryman/Darby
- Now Paul will now list how his service for Christ was “above measure” of the false apostles.

<sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.



- **in far more** [abundant] **labors**

**labors** – *kopos* – to labor to the point of exhaustion

- 1 Thess 2:9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you.
- **in far more** [frequent] **imprisonments**

The book of Acts shows us some of those:\*

- Acts 16 was imprisoned at Philippi
- Acts 22 was imprisoned at Jerusalem
- Acts 23 was imprisoned at Caesarea
- Also imprisoned at Rome two times



<sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

Next he talks about his being beaten:

beaten times without number,

- In stripes inflicted by being whipped, beyond measure.

Amplified

often in danger of death

- These beatings put Paul in a real danger of death.
- Next we are told how he was beaten.

<sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*.

- This was an official synagogue punishment.\*
- Deut 25:3 He may beat him forty times, but no more.

\*McCalley

<sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.



**Now, more on beatings and punishments:**

**Three times I was beaten with rods**

- This was a Gentile mode of punishment. McCalley
- Acts 16:22 The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them [Paul and Silas] to be beaten with rods.

**once I was stoned**

- Acts 14:19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.



## three times I was shipwrecked

- Nine voyages Paul made by ship in the book of Acts.  
McCalley
- Paul had already experienced shipwreck three times by now, though Luke recorded none of these in Acts.\*

## a night and a day I have spent in the deep

- Paul's night and day in the sea also comes as news to the reader of Acts.\*
- Obviously in Acts Luke gave us only a highly selective account of the Apostle Paul's very difficult life.\*

\* Constable



<sup>26</sup> I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren.

### *I have been on frequent journeys*

- Next, a list of the dangers from Paul's many journeys:

#### *in dangers from rivers*

- no dangers from rivers mentioned in Acts or Epistles

#### *[in] dangers from robbers*

- no dangers from robbers mentioned in Acts or Epistles
- Barabbas was called a robber in John 18:40.

#### *[in] dangers from my countrymen*

- Acts 9:22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ. <sup>23</sup> When many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him.



<sup>26</sup> *I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren.*



### [in] dangers from the Gentiles

- Acts 16:22 The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates [of Thyatira] tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods.

### [in] dangers in the city

- Jerusalem, Thyatira, Ephesus and many more

[in] dangers in the wilderness - not mentioned elsewhere

[in] dangers on the sea - Paul is shipwrecked during a voyage to Rome in Acts 27.

[in] dangers among false brethren – the false apostles

27 *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.



- **Next Paul will tell us about his personal adversity:**

*I have been in labor and hardship*

- 1 Thess 2:9 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.

*through many sleepless nights*

- 2 Cor 6:5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

*in hunger and thirst, often without food*

- same as above

*in cold and exposure*

- Rom 8:35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

<sup>28</sup> Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches.



Now Paul speaks of internal pressure:

there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches

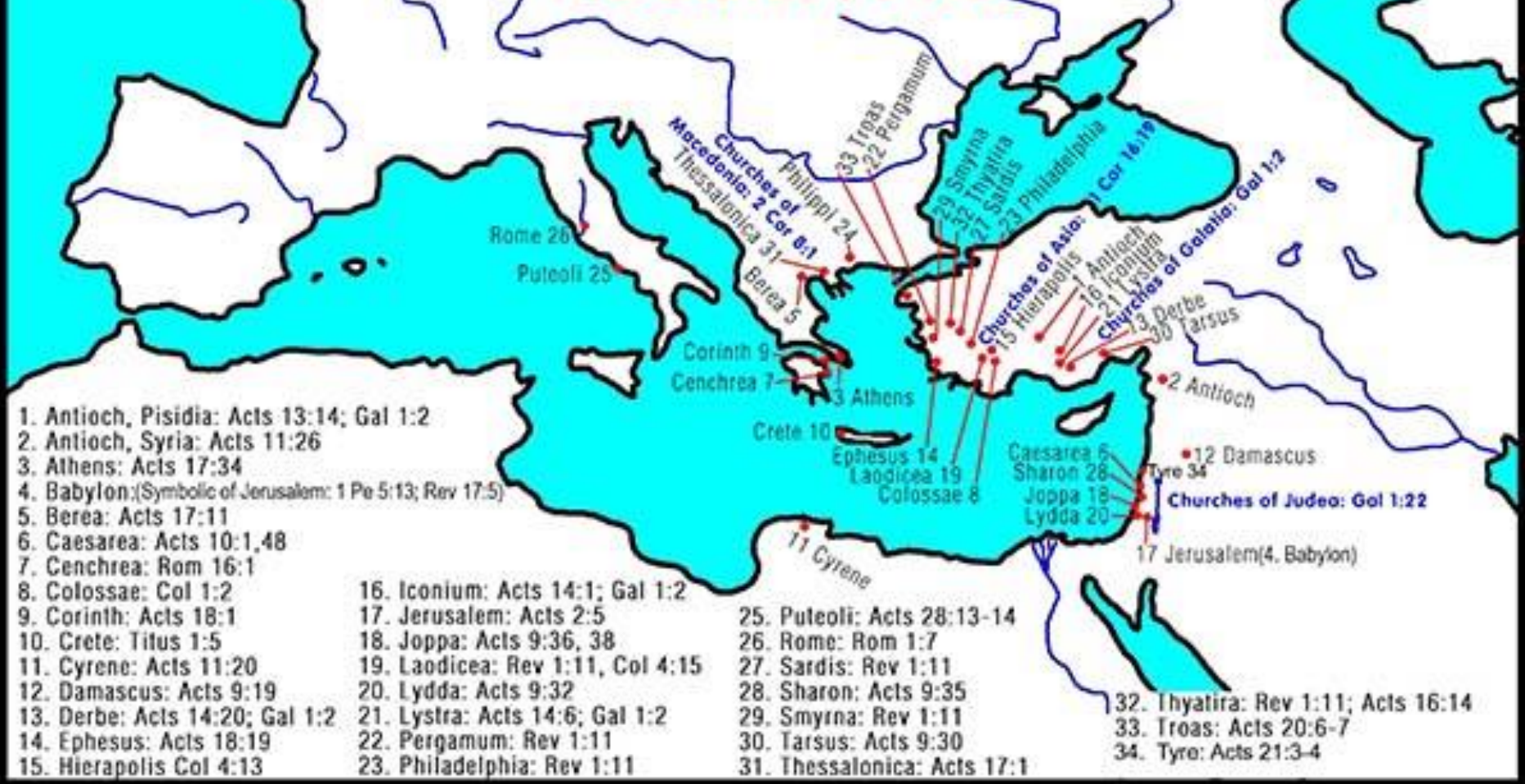
**concern** - *merimna* - that which causes a care, especially an anxious care

- The pressure, day after day, namely, my anxiety for all the assemblies. Wuest
- Some have said that Paul only started 14 churches in his lifetime.\*
- If so that is a remarkable thing, but I tend to think there are more than 14.\* \* Churchplanting.com

## Regions of Churches

- A. Region of Phoenicia: Acts 11:19
- B. Region of Samaria: Acts 8:14, 25
- C. Churches of Judea: Gal 1:22
- D. Churches of Galatia: Gal 1:2
- E. Churches of Asia: 1 Cor 16:19
- F. Churches of Macedonia: 2 Cor 8:1

## Local churches of the Bible: 70 AD



- 1. Antioch, Pisidia: Acts 13:14; Gal 1:2
- 2. Antioch, Syria: Acts 11:26
- 3. Athens: Acts 17:34
- 4. Babylon:(Symbolic of Jerusalem: 1 Pe 5:13; Rev 17:5)
- 5. Berea: Acts 17:11
- 6. Caesarea: Acts 10:1,48
- 7. Cenchrea: Rom 16:1
- 8. Colossae: Col 1:2
- 9. Corinth: Acts 18:1
- 10. Crete: Titus 1:5
- 11. Cyrene: Acts 11:20
- 12. Damascus: Acts 9:19
- 13. Derbe: Acts 14:20; Gal 1:2
- 14. Ephesus: Acts 18:19
- 15. Hierapolis Col 4:13

- 16. Iconium: Acts 14:1; Gal 1:2
- 17. Jerusalem: Acts 2:5
- 18. Joppa: Acts 9:36, 38
- 19. Laodicea: Rev 1:11, Col 4:15
- 20. Lydda: Acts 9:32
- 21. Lystra: Acts 14:6; Gal 1:2
- 22. Pergamum: Rev 1:11
- 23. Philadelphia: Rev 1:11

- 25. Puteoli: Acts 28:13-14
- 26. Rome: Rom 1:7
- 27. Sardis: Rev 1:11
- 28. Sharon: Acts 9:35
- 29. Smyrna: Rev 1:11
- 30. Tarsus: Acts 9:30
- 31. Thessalonica: Acts 17:1

- 32. Thyatira: Rev 1:11; Acts 16:14
- 33. Troas: Acts 20:6-7
- 34. Tyre: Acts 21:3-4



# Final Thoughts\*



- Paul is not in fact magnifying self in the passage.
- There is complete disparity between himself and his adversaries.
- But he is magnifying, as he does throughout this epistle, the amazing grace of God.
- Which in the midst of afflictions and sufferings is sufficient for his every need. \*Hughes via Constable