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# Session 10: Humility, Gentleness and Boldness for Christ

# 2 Corinthians 10:1-6, “*By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am “timid” when face to face with you, but “bold” toward you when away! 2I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. 3For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 6And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.”*

**Paul makes a great acclamation for Jesus Christ:**

He speaks of the gentleness and the meekness of Christ (one translation for meekness is “sweet reasonableness.”)

This sets the whole tone for what Paul is going to try and challenge….yet defend his own character to the Corinthians.

The Greek word for “gentleness” is “prautes”…meaning the correct median between being too angry and being never angry at all.

It is the quality of the person whose anger is so controlled that he is always angry at the right time and never at the wrong time.

It describes the person who is never angry at any personal wrong he may receive, but who is capable of righteous anger when he sees others wronged….or God’s authority and moral rights challenged and demonized.

What are some of the things that we should be angry at right now….that you feel Jesus would “turn over the money changers tables and lambast the social issues” that are being pushed today?

**Note:** Paul wants the Corinthians to know…that what they see in him now vs. what they have seen him in the past is not personal anger because of what they have said about him…but he is speaking with “strong gentleness” of Jesus himself.

The Greek word for meekness or “sweet reasonableness” is “epieikeia” and means “that which is just and better than just.”

***Sometimes real justice is not to insist on the letter of the law, but to let a higher quality enter into our decisions.***

***It really states as the last analysis, the Christian standard is not justice…..but love.***

Paul is saying that he is not going by what the law might say in the situation concerning the Corinthian Church….and, that he is not seeking personal justice…but basically, “WWJD?” in this situation. That is the motive and desire Paul has concerning this problem happening in the Corinthian Church.

**What were the charges against Paul by the Corinthian Church?**

We don’t know for sure…but because of listening (reading) what Paul’s reply was back to the Corinthian Church…we can guess/speculate!

**Guess #1---Corinthians had charged Paul with being bold only when he is not face to face with them**….*but pretty poor in spirit when he was with them (congenial, giving, practical, listening to their concerns, not shoving “sin” down their throat and saying “you are going to hell if you don’t repent”).*

*But….now when you (Paul) are away from us, “you give us a strong piece of your mind.”*

Paul’s reply is that he prays that he may not have to take the occasion to strongly deal with them personally as he knows he is quite capable of doing.

***Watch it….letters can be dangerous. Think, pray, think again and act…when you are making a statement in a letter/email.***

***“Think, pray; think and say!”***

Mama’s quote: “Be careful of the words you say, keep them soft and sweet; because you never know from day to day which one’s you’ll have to eat!”

**Guess #2---Corinthians had charged Paul with arranging his conduct from a human motives standpoint.**

**Paul’s answer: My conduct and power come from God…and God alone.**

Paul was a human being subject to all the limitations of manhood, but God is his guide and God is his strength!

“We do not walk after, or according to, the flesh”…meaning I am a human being with a human body, but I never allow myself to be dominated by purely human motives, I never try to live without God.”

**TRUTH: A MAN MAY LIVE IN THE BODY AND YET BE GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.**

**Two (2) significant points by Paul:**

1. **“I am equipped to deal with and to destroy all the plausible clevernesses of human wisdom and human pride.”**

Human sincerity and integrity mixed with God’s wisdom and power is dynamite in terms of breaking any strong hold, any power of darkness, any of Satan’s tricks, any knowledge and human basic instincts that come against you.

Disobedience can be destroyed by obedience to the will of God. Any thing that life has to offer cannot penetrate God’s defense set up around us when we have yielded to His power.

1. **I am equipped to bring down every intention into captivity to Christ.**

***Christ has an amazing way of capturing what was pagan and subduing it for His purposes…***

Does this not set the tone for Romans 8:28… “…All things work together for good to them who love God and are called according to His purpose.”

***With God’s grace and love for us…how can we ever think that Satan could destroy us?***

 ***Only if we give in and let Satan have his way!***

2 Corinthians 10:7-18, “*You are judging by appearances. If anyone is confident that they belong to Christ, they should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as they do. 8So even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. 9I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters. 10For some say, “His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.” 11Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present. 12We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. 13We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you. 14We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ. 15Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand, 16so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in someone else’s territory. 17But, “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.” 18For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.”*

# Paul continues to answer his critics (we are guessing at what their criticisms were from Paul’s reply):

* **His opponents asserted that Paul did not belong to Christ in the same way that they did.**

They looked down on Paul perhaps because of his past. They felt that they had special knowledge that Paul did not. They glorified themselves and their own relationship to Christ. The problem with arrogant Christians is that they have in their mind that Christ belongs to them…instead of belonging to Christ.

* **His opponents taunted Paul even about his appearance… (his personal appearance)…they jeered that he was weak…and was no speaker.**

As to appearance…an early book called The Acts of Paul and Thecla (dating back to A.D. 200) stated that Paul was a “man of little stature, thin-haired, crooked in the legs, eyebrow meeting in the middle, with a hooked and crooked nose…but was full of grace.”

Paul…however was gigantic in spirit and toughness. He made up for all the weaknesses by just giving his heart and soul to God.

* **They accused Paul of making boastful claims to authority…in an area in which he was not welcomed…nor had he earned it.**

Paul came in with authority because the Lord had given it to him. “He really thought of himself and all Christians as being more than conquerors.” Paul was a Rabbi…and to the Jews a Rabbi demanded high respect. The Rabbis claimed that the respect for a teacher ought to exceed the respect for a parent…. “A parent brings a child into the life of this world, but a teacher brings a scholar into the life of the world to come.”

Paul had founded the Church at Corinth…and he wanted the best for this offspring of his.

* **Paul levels a charge at them…He says that he would never dream of comparing himself with those who are forever giving themselves testimonials…with no mistakes**. He states that they are only comparing themselves with themselves and with others that are testifying in the local assembly.

(One might think himself a good golfer…if comparing with me, they are excellent and much better). Compared with Tiger Woods, Ernie Els, Byron Nelson, Jack Nicklaus, …the good golfer is not even up to par.

**Easy to say… “I am as good as the next man,” and no doubt that it is true.**

 **But…..the point is, are we as good as Jesus Christ?**

He is our true rod of measurement and our proper standard of comparison and when we measure ourselves by him, there is no room left for pride…

 **“Self-praise,” says Paul, “is no honor.”**

***What we must understand….that it is not our own praise we must seek…we must seek Christ’s “well done…thy faithful servant.”***

**All pride seems to leave when we place ourselves next to the Savior.**

***And the last thing Paul says from his heart...***

***“He wishes to get things straightened out at Corinth because he longs to go on to the regions beyond…where no man has carried the story of Christ.***

***Paul’s message…. “Christ alone…He deserves the praise.”***

