

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

2 Corinthians: God's Pattern For Victory Over Severe Ministry Opposition

Part XII: Responding To Challenges Of One's Ministry Calling From God, 2 Corinthians 10:1-13:14

3. Exposing The Quality Service Record Of God's True Servant (2 Corinthians 11:16-33)

I. Introduction

- A. One way to discern if a party is a true servant of God versus being a spiritual impostor is to examine his ministry track record, cf. 1 Timothy 3:10. Godly servants do not like to dwell on their record like carnal folk like to do, but examining such a record is invaluable for the purpose of evaluating one's calling.
- B. 2 Corinthians 11:16-33 supplies the Apostle Paul's great track record for our evaluation (as follows):

II. Exposing The Quality Service Record Of God's True Servant, 2 Corinthians 11:16-33.

- A. Paul felt awkward "boasting" of his ministry track record as only foolishly carnal people get preoccupied with such activity, 2 Corinthians 11:16-18.
- B. However, due to the spiritual weakness of his Corinthian readers who seemed impressed only with one's track record as were the false apostles who opposed him (2 Corinthians 11:19-21a), Paul reported on his great ministry track record, comparing it to the record of his false critics, 2 Corinthians 11:21b, 22-33:
 - 1. The false apostles claimed to be Hebrews, but Paul was also a Hebrew, 2 Corinthians 11:22a.
 - 2. The false apostles claimed to be Israelites, but Paul was also an Israelite, 2 Corinthians 11:22b.
 - 3. The false apostles claimed to be of Abraham's seed, but Paul also came from Abraham, 2 Cor. 11:22c.
 - 4. The false apostles claimed to be servants of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:23a), but Paul claimed to be even more of His servant than they were (though he expressed disdain in explaining this, treating it as an exercise typical of foolishly carnal people, 2 Corinthians 11:23b), and Paul enumerated the ways his ministry showed more devotion to Christ than theirs in 2 Corinthians 11:23b-33 (as follows):
 - a. Paul noted he had worked much harder for Christ than had his false apostle critics, 2 Cor. 11:23c.
 - b. Paul explained that in his service for the Lord, he had been imprisoned more frequently, flogged more severely and been exposed to death more often than had his critics, 2 Corinthians 11:23d.
 - c. Paul reported that five times he had received forty lashes minus one from the Jews, something Paul's false apostle Hebrew critics probably never experienced, 2 Corinthians 11:24.
 - d. Paul told he had been beaten with rods three times, stoned and left for dead once (cf. Acts 14:19-20) and had been shipwrecked three times and spent a night and a day in the open sea, 2 Cor. 11:25.
 - e. Paul reported how he had been constantly on the move in his ministry, 2 Cor. 11:26a, for he had faced dangers from rivers, bandits, his countrymen and Gentiles, both in the city, in the country and at sea, and he had faced dangers from false brethren like Paul's critics at Corinth, 2 Cor. 11:26b,c.
 - f. Paul had known toil and insomnia, hunger and thirst and cold from a lack of clothes, 2 Cor. 11:27.
 - g. On top of all of these sufferings, Paul reported he daily bore the burden of concern for all the churches (2 Cor. 11:28), deeply caring for the weak and those who led into sin, 2 Cor. 11:29 NIV.
 - h. Paul added that if he were to boast of his ministry track record, it would regard his weaknesses, in that they demonstrated his great devotion to the Lord in them, 2 Cor. 11:30 with 11:23a.
 - i. Indeed, he added that he was not lying in reporting these things, as God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ would witness in his behalf regarding all of them, 2 Corinthians 11:31.
 - j. In one final incident that illustrated the extent of Paul's sufferings, he told how the governor of the city of Damascus under King Aretas had so ardently desired to capture Paul in response to his Christian ministry there that he had the whole city put under guard to find and arrest Paul, 2 Cor. 11:32 with Acts 9:20-24. Only when some believers let Paul down in a basket from a window on the wall did he escape from the governor's hands, 2 Corinthians 11:33 with Acts 9:25.

Lesson: *Just the track record of Paul's labors for Christ, his many and great sufferings coupled with his relentless drive against numerous, great odds to bear the concerns of God's people and of giving the truth exposed Paul as a true servant of Christ in vast superiority to his false apostle critics.*

Application: *(1) May we test others who claim to be God's servants by examining their ministry track record. (2) May we test OURSELVES by the SAME test, and adjust as God leads us!*