



# SECOND CORINTHIANS

*The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People*



Part 34—“Boasting in the Lord & His Work”— 28 July 2024

## Introduction: Achievement & the Passing of Time

- Human achievement and the satisfaction that is derived from it is a good gift of God to mankind. Consider the accomplishments of King Solomon (Eccl. 2:4-8). The problem for us, however, is that all of our successful work and achievement happens in a fallen world and the enjoyment of them is tempered by the passing of time.

*Eccl. 2:11—Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.*

- Our joy in the work that God gives to us is a blessing and we should not avoid celebrating it out of a false sense of humility.

*Eccl. 2:24—There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God..*

**Main Point:** It is a good thing when God’s people \_\_\_\_\_ in the work that He accomplishes in and through us, knowing that it is ultimately from Him that we will receive our \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2 Corinthians 10:13-18

### Context

In 2 Cor. 10-13, Paul is responding to the criticisms of his opponents (false teachers who have invaded the Corinthian church). He exhorts the Corinthians to judge for themselves whether it is Paul or his critics who are more like the Messiah they claim to have been commissioned by. Paul and his coworkers do not compare themselves to others, rather, they look to Lord Jesus.

### Exposition

- I. ‘\_\_\_\_\_’ was an issue that Paul felt that he had to address.

“boasting”—καυχάομαι (*kauchaomai*)—to make a boast about someth., boast about, mention in order to boast of, be proud of.

⇒ This was certainly something that his opponents could be accused of doing because of how they likely modeled themselves on the sophists (traveling orators/teachers).

“Sophists delighted to parade their accomplishments and display their oratory. They aimed to collect growing numbers of disciples who hung on their words and paid large sums of money for the privilege of learning at their feet.”—D.A. Carson

⇒ Paul subverts the common Jewish and Greek views of boasting as a predominantly negative thing by how he relates it to his own experience of suffering in service to Christ.

2. Boasting is a good thing within assigned ‘\_\_\_\_\_.’

*2 Cor. 10:13—But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you.*

⇒ Paul recognized that it was proper for he and his coworkers to boast within the limits of the work God had given them to \_\_\_\_\_.

“according to the measure”—μέτρον (*metron*)—according to the measure of the limit (=within the limits).

“of the area of influence”—κανὸν (*kanōn*)—set of directions or formulation for an activity; an assignment. Related to services rendered within a specific geographic region.

“God assigned”

⇒ The Lord had brought Paul to Corinth and had used him to \_\_\_\_\_ the church there (2 Cor. 10:14).

“He argues that Corinth belongs to the sphere assigned to him by God by virtue of the fact that that he got there first and God blessed his work with growth.” —David Garland

**Key Point:** God \_\_\_\_\_ to His people areas of influence where He intends to work through us.

3. Boasting is a bad thing \_\_\_\_\_ of assigned limits.

*2 Cor. 10:15a—We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others.*

⇒ Boasting can be ‘beyond limits’ as a result of ‘overextending’ oneself. Paul’s concern here is to critique his opponents and their practices while distancing himself and his coworkers from them by way of contrast. They take credit for the work of others, something Paul and his coworkers refuse to do.





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**Main Point:** It is a good thing when God’s people boast in the work that He accomplishes in and through us, knowing that it is ultimately from Him that we will receive our commendation.

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In 2 Cor. 10-13, Paul is responding to the criticisms of his opponents (false teachers who have invaded the Corinthian church). He exhorts the Corinthians to judge for themselves whether it is Paul or his critics who are more like the Messiah they claim to have been commissioned by. Paul and his coworkers do not compare themselves to others, rather, they look to Lord Jesus.

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“He argues that Corinth belongs to the sphere assigned to him by God by virtue of the fact that that he got there first and God blessed his work with growth.”  
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**Key Point:** God assigns to His people areas of influence where He intends to work through us.

#### 3. Boasting is a bad thing outside of assigned limits.

*2 Cor. 10:15a—We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others.*

⇒ Boasting can be ‘beyond limits’ as a result of ‘overextending’ oneself. Paul’s concern here is to critique his opponents and their practices while distancing himself and his coworkers from them by way of contrast. They take credit for the work of others, something Paul and his coworkers refuse to do.

“[Paul’s critics] probably boasted that whatever vitality the Corinthians displayed was due to their ministry—even though they were latecomers to the scene and occupied themselves by diminishing the authority of the founding apostle.”—D.A. Carson

⇒ Paul recognized that Christians can work together and be used by the Lord for different kinds of work (I Cor. 3:6-9). These critics, however, take credit for what the Lord had done in Corinth through the work of Paul.

**Key Point:** We can rejoice in the work that God does through others that furthers His purposes in the world.

#### 4. Boasting that is proper is hope-filled and forward-looking.

2 Cor. 10:15b-16a— *But our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged,<sup>16</sup> so that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you*

⇒ Paul is hopeful that the Corinthians will continue to grow in their faith. This will mean that they resolve their differences with Paul and expel the false teachers.

⇒ With the problems in Corinth resolved, Paul can continue Gospel ministry in other locations. Specifically, we learn in Romans (Rom. 15:24), that he intended to go on to Rome and then to Spain.

“If you had progressed as far as you ought, I should by now be occupied in gaining new churches and I should have your assistance in doing so. But, as things are, you are delaying me by your weakness.”—John Calvin

**Key Point:** People generally boast in the past, but believers live with hope for what God will also do in the future.

#### 5. Proper boasting must be grounded in true worship of the Lord.

2 Cor. 10:17-18—<sup>17</sup> “LET THE ONE WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.”<sup>18</sup> *For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.*

⇒ Paul paraphrases a quote from LXX Jer. 9:23-24 which he had done previously in I Cor. 1:31. This is given as the rationale for why he and his coworkers can boast but can do so within limits.

(1) God was the one who entrusted to Paul his apostleship and ministry among the gentiles.

(2) God had led Paul to Corinth and had powerfully worked through him so that the church would be established there.

(3) God was the one before whom Paul would appear to give an account of his ministry.

“This boast in the Lord has nothing to do with Paul’s own pedigree or prowess. It has to do with what the Lord has accomplished through him.” —David Garland

⇒ Paul again points away from himself and unto Christ. Unlike these false teachers who commend themselves through letters (3:1) and boast of their abilities in comparison to others (10:12), Paul rests in the commendation of Christ.

“commend”

“approved”

“...what matters most in God’s universe is what God thinks of us, whether we are approved by him (2 Cor. 2:18). The person who commends himself is certainly not impressing the Lord; presumably he must be trying to impress others and win their approval.” —D.A. Carson

**Key Point:** The boasting of God’s people should ultimately focus on Him and His works.

### Concluding Questions

- What are the areas of influence that God has assigned to us?
- Our boasting is always in that which is temporary or that which is eternal.