



# — SECOND — CORINTHIANS



*The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People*

Part 36—“The Courage to Expose Evil”— 11 August 2024

## Introduction: Defining “Apostle”

“The office of apostle was limited to the Twelve and to Paul...The qualifications for the office of apostle are set forth in Acts 1:21-22; those holding to the office had to have walked with the Lord from the baptism of John until the ascension of Christ. Paul’s situation was unique; he referred to himself as an apostle, but one “untimely born” (1 Cor. 15:8-9).”

—Peter Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*

“The apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the apostles are from Christ. Both, therefore, came of the will of God in the appointed order.”—Clement of Rome (AD 1st c.)

“[‘Apostle’ as a gift] was a foundational gift limited to the formation of the church (Eph. 2:20). When the foundation of the church was laid, the need for the gift ceased. The word *apostle* is also used in a general sense of a “messenger” or a “sent one” in the cause of Christ. These are referred to as apostles but do not have the office or gift. The word is used in a nontechnical sense of one who is a messenger (Acts 14:14; 2 Cor. 3:23; Phil. 2:25).”

—Peter Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*

**Main Point:** There is a time and place for God’s people to expose \_\_\_\_\_, but this is not something that should be taken lightly or done apart from clear \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2 Corinthians 11:12-21a

### Context

Having changed his tone in the letter, Paul confronts the Corinthians directly about their tolerance of the presence of false teachers in their midst. He exhorts them to judge for themselves whether it is the false teachers or Paul and his co-workers who minister after the example of the Lord Jesus. He then sets to work subverting the boasting of these false teachers and exposing them for what they truly are.

### Exposition

I. Paul draws a clear contrast between himself and the false teachers by identifying who it is they truly \_\_\_\_\_. (11:12-14)

*2 Cor. 11:12—And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do.*

⇒ The purpose of Paul’s boasting is to “\_\_\_\_\_” the boasting of the false teachers.

⇒ These false teachers have claimed to be doing the same kind of apostolic work that Paul and his co-workers are engaged in. “*their boasted mission*”

**The Reality:** They are \_\_\_\_\_ at best, and outright \_\_\_\_\_ at worst!

(1) They are \_\_\_\_\_ apostles!

(2) They are \_\_\_\_\_ workmen!

“*disguising themselves*” —μετασχηματίζω (metaschematizō)—to feign to be what one is not, change/disguise oneself.

“The intruders present themselves as apostles of Christ; but as Paul has already shown that their Christ is not the real one (2 Cor. 11:4), their self-proclaimed status as apostles of Christ must therefore be false, a mere disguise. They were never commissioned by Christ; nor do they truly preach him, still less imitate him. They are deceitful workmen who go about in full disguise...” —D.A. Carson

*2 Cor. 11:14-15—<sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds*

**The Evil of this Deception:** They are following in the footsteps of \_\_\_\_\_!

(1) Satan conceals his true \_\_\_\_\_ and presents a false one. (‘light’ rather than ‘\_\_\_\_\_’)

(2) These teachers conceal their true identity and present themselves as servants of ‘\_\_\_\_\_.’

“It is their demeanor and behavior that reveal them to be ministers of Satan rather than of righteousness. ‘Ministers of righteousness’ are those who live righteously, not those who purport to be righteous or to preach a righteous message...they renounce shameful things and deceitful practices (4:2). They also repudiate all fleshly boasting and boast only in the Lord.” —David Garland

⇒ Although these men have fooled some, the true nature of their identity and work will be revealed on the last day (5:9-10).

Key Points: At times, evil must be \_\_\_\_\_ in order that it might be \_\_\_\_\_.

We are to judge Christian leaders by the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ and the teaching of \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Paul then justifies his \_\_\_\_\_ for the Corinthians and his \_\_\_\_\_ about the false teachers. (11:16-21a)

2 Cor. 11:16-18—<sup>16</sup> I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little.

<sup>17</sup> What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool. <sup>18</sup> Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast.

⇒ Paul resumes the subversion of the false teachers by ‘\_\_\_\_\_’ as they do. He recognizes this is ‘\_\_\_\_\_,’ however, and makes an important clarification.

“boastful confidence”—ὕπόστασις (*hypostasis*)—a plan or project; a situation, condition, or frame of mind.

“not as the Lord would but as a fool”

⇒ Out of reverence for Christ, he makes sure to clarify that his actions in boasting are not following in the example of Christ, but are mimicking the false teachers for rhetorical effect.

“...it is only their gullibility vis-à-vis the claims of the false apostles that forces him to boast at all. But even if they do regard his boasting as the act of a fool, let them accept him as such, and listen to his boasting as they have listened to the boasting of the other fools (his opponents) whom they have received.”—Colin Kruse

2 Cor. 11:19—For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves!

⇒ Paul loves the Corinthians enough to confront their own \_\_\_\_\_ view of themselves and the results that it has produced.

⇒ The false teachers are causing active \_\_\_\_\_ in their midst, wittingly or unwittingly doing the work of Satan.

“make slaves of you”

“devours you”

“takes advantage of you”

“puts on airs”

“strikes you in the face”

*These men are like their father, the devil. He makes use of the enslaving power of sin (Rom. 6:12,14). He actively seeks those to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). He seeks to gain an advantage (2 Cor. 2:11) in our lives. He is haughty (Isa. 14:14) and seeks to kill and destroy (John 10:10).*

“Paul paints a picture of rivals who are aggressive, acquisitive, and authoritarian. They attack others to build up their own authority. He has never acted this way, and some Corinthians apparently are proud of their new, more forceful authorities.”  
—David Garland

Key Points: \_\_\_\_\_ can be a good thing when done according to Scripture and for our good or that of others.

We must be discerning of which \_\_\_\_\_ we follow and what their influence is upon us.

### Concluding Thoughts

- We must be careful to distinguish between doctrinal \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ teaching.
- It is often easier for us to identify the influence of evil \_\_\_\_\_ of the church that it is \_\_\_\_\_ of the church.



# SECOND CORINTHIANS

*The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People*



Part 36—“The Courage to Expose Evil”—II August 2024

## Introduction: Defining “Apostle”

“The office of apostle was limited to the Twelve and to Paul...The qualifications for the office of apostle are set forth in Acts 1:21-22; those holding to the office had to have walked with the Lord from the baptism of John until the ascension of Christ. Paul’s situation was unique; he referred to himself as an apostle, but one “untimely born” (1 Cor. 15:8-9).”

—Peter Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*

“The apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the apostles are from Christ. Both, therefore, came of the will of God in the appointed order.”—Clement of Rome (AD 1st c.)

“[‘Apostle’ as a gift] was a foundational gift limited to the formation of the church (Eph. 2:20). When the foundation of the church was laid, the need for the gift ceased. The word *apostle* is also used in a general sense of a “messenger” or a “sent one” in the cause of Christ. These are referred to as apostles but do not have the office or gift. The word is used in a nontechnical sense of one who is a messenger (Acts 14:14; 2 Cor. 3:23; Phil. 2:25).”

—Peter Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*

**Main Point:** There is a time and place for God’s people to expose evil, but this is not something that should be taken lightly or done apart from clear evidence.

## 2 Corinthians 11:12-21a

### Context

Having changed his tone in the letter, Paul confronts the Corinthians directly about their tolerance of the presence of false teachers in their midst. He exhorts them to judge for themselves whether it is the false teachers or Paul and his co-workers who minister after the example of the Lord Jesus. He then sets to work subverting the boasting of these false teachers and exposing them for what they truly are.

### Exposition

I. Paul draws a clear contrast between himself and the false teachers by identifying who it is they truly serve. (11:12-14)

*2 Cor. 11:12—And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do.*

⇒ The purpose of Paul’s boasting is to undermine the boasting of the false teachers.

⇒ These false teachers have claimed to be doing the same kind of apostolic work that Paul and his co-workers are engaged in. “*their boasted mission*”

**The Reality:** They are misguided at best, and outright liars at worst!

(1) They are false apostles!

(2) They are deceitful workmen!

“*disguising themselves*” —μετασχηματιζω (metaschematizō)—to feign to be what one is not, change/disguise oneself.

“The intruders present themselves as apostles of Christ; but as Paul has already shown that their Christ is not the real one (2 Cor. 11:4), their self-proclaimed status as apostles of Christ must therefore be false, a mere disguise. They were never commissioned by Christ; nor do they truly preach him, still less imitate him. They are deceitful workmen who go about in full disguise...” —D.A. Carson

*2 Cor. 11:14-15—<sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds*

**The Evil of this Deception:** They are following in the example of Satan!

(1) Satan conceals his true identity and presents a false one. (‘light’ rather than ‘darkness’)

(2) These teachers conceal their true identity and present themselves as servants of ‘righteousness.’

“It is their demeanor and behavior that reveal them to be ministers of Satan rather than of righteousness. ‘Ministers of righteousness’ are those who live righteously, not those who purport to be righteous or to preach a righteous message...they renounce shameful things and deceitful practices (4:2). They also repudiate all fleshly boasting and boast only in the Lord.” —David Garland

⇒ Although these men have fooled some, the true nature of their identity and work will be revealed on the last day (5:9-10).

**Key Points:** At times, evil must be named in order that it might be confronted.

We are to judge Christian leaders by the example of Christ and the teaching of Scripture.

## 2. Paul then justifies his concerns for the Corinthians and his claims about the false teachers. (11:16-21a)

2 Cor. 11:16-18—<sup>16</sup> I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little.

<sup>17</sup> What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool. <sup>18</sup> Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast.

⇒ Paul resumes the subversion of the false teachers by 'boasting' as they do. He recognizes this is 'foolishness,' however, and makes an important clarification.

*"boastful confidence"*—ὀπίστανσις (*hypostasis*)—a plan or project; a situation, condition, or frame of mind.

*"not as the Lord would but as a fool"*

⇒ Out of reverence for Christ, he makes sure to clarify that his actions in boasting are not following in the example of Christ, but are mimicking the false teachers for rhetorical effect.

"...it is only their gullibility vis-à-vis the claims of the false apostles that forces him to boast at all. But even if they do regard his boasting as the act of a fool, let them accept him as such, and listen to his boasting as they have listened to the boasting of the other fools (his opponents) whom they have received."—Colin Kruse

2 Cor. 11:19—For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves!

⇒ Paul loves the Corinthians enough to confront their own misguided view of themselves and the results that it has produced.

⇒ The false teachers are causing active harm in their midst, wittingly or unwittingly doing the work of Satan.

*"make slaves of you"*

*"devours you"*

*"takes advantage of you"*

*"puts on airs"*

*"strikes you in the face"*

*These men are like their father, the devil. He makes use of the enslaving power of sin (Rom. 6:12,14). He actively seeks those to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). He seeks to gain an advantage (2 Cor. 2:11) in our lives. He is haughty (Isa. 14:14) and seeks to kill and destroy (John 10:10).*

"Paul paints a picture of rivals who are aggressive, acquisitive, and authoritarian. They attack others to build up their own authority. He has never acted this way, and some Corinthians apparently are proud of their new, more forceful authorities."  
—David Garland

**Key Points:** Confrontation can be a good thing when done according to Scripture and for our good or that of others.

We must be discerning of which leaders we follow and what their influence is upon us.

## Concluding Thoughts

- We must be careful to distinguish between doctrinal 'error' and 'false' teaching.
- It is often easier for us to identify the influence of evil outside of the church that it is inside of the church.