

Sermon Notes
Pastor Dale Barrett
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“THIS TREASURE...IN JARS OF CLAY”
A Study of II Corinthians

Text: II Corinthians 11:16-33

INTRODUCTION:

I. A Lesson about “Putting Up with Fools”, vs. 16-21a

A. The foolishness of the gospel

1. “Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes”, Proverbs 26:5
2. “For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as men. We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ”, I Corinthians 4:9,10.

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...” I Corinthians 1:18

B. The folly of man’s wisdom

1. Paul observed that they “put up with fools”, and that because (sarcasm) they were so wise. In verse 4 he suggested they put up with a false gospel “easily enough”.
2. Paul goes on to delineate the folly of what they were doing in bowing to false apostles.
 - a. They “enslave” you
 - b. They “exploit” you
 - c. They “take advantage” of you, with a sense of being taken by deceit.

- d. They “push themselves forward”
- e. They “slap you in the face”, a reference to disrespect and contempt, viewed as second class citizens.

3. Of all that Paul remarks tongue in cheek, “To my shame I admit we were too weak for that!”

II. A List of Persecutions and Pressures Paul Suffered, vs. 21b-29

- A. Ethnic pride, vs. 21b-23a
- B. Endured persecutions, vs. 23b-26
- C. Extreme pressures, vs. 27-29

III. A Life-Changing Experience that Produced Change, vs. 30-33

A. The truth about Paul’s boasting, vs. 30,31

1. “I will boast of the things that show my weakness”. This is reflected in two critical verses - one we have learned.
 - a. “We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the all-surpassing power is from God and not from us”, 4:7
 - b. “My power is made perfect in weakness”, 12:9

2. Paul appeals to the heavenly court - “the God and Father of the Lord Jesus” -to validate the truth of his claims, “that I am not lying”, vs. 31

B. The transformation in Damascus, vs. 32,33 (see Acts 9)

1. Why does Paul throw in this story at the end of this section? Let’s look at the context in Acts.
2. Paul had been a proud influential man - wise by the world’s standards but God struck him down to raise him up in weakness to be His servant. Damascus was the site where the transformation took place and Paul’s suffering began as prophesied by Ananias who had said, “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name”, Acts 9:16.