

Pauls Passion in Life

by Erlo Stegen

Paul's passion in life is his jealousy for the church and his desire to present them as a chaste virgin to Christ, while warning against the dangers of false apostles and brethren.

Duration: 49:17

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:3-6, 2 Corinthians 11:23-30

Topics: "Passion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the hardships and sufferings that the apostle Paul endured in his ministry. He describes Paul's physical scars and marks as evidence of his dedication to preaching the word of God. The speaker also addresses critics who question the credibility of experienced ministers, highlighting Paul's 30 years of proven faithfulness. He then lists various trials and dangers that Paul faced, including beatings, shipwrecks, and persecution from both Jews and Gentiles. The sermon concludes with a prayer for the congregation to remain steadfast in the truth and not be deceived by falsehoods.

Transcript

Lord, we thank you that we can be together again, and we ask you to be with us and to help us by your grace. Amen. Let's read the 2nd Corinthians, and we read from chapter 11.

I start with the first verse. Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly, and indeed you do bear with me. For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, for I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it.

For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles. For though I am untrained in speech, yet I am not in knowledge, but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things. Did I commit sin in abasing myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? Then from verse 13.

I speak as a fool. I am more. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked.

A night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeys often, in perils of waters, I have been in the deep. In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.

In weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness, besides the other things what comes upon me daily, my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble and I do not burn with indignation? If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. We will read thus far.

If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. We will read thus far. There are so many messages from the Lord you can receive.

It's a sermon on its own. Paul wasn't a preacher like others. He wasn't just a mere man like others.

Probably since the time of Adam and Eve till his time, there was no one who went through difficulty and suffering and opposition and harm and danger to him like Paul. You should sit down with this word and meditate upon it slowly, considering it for hours, and I think you will agree with me that there was never a man that had gone through the world like this man at that time. He was a man amongst men.

What can I say about him? How I love him and how I admire him and respect him. How I wish to congratulate him. If I feel what I feel now in heaven one day, I wish that if I receive a crown, I would say to the Lord, Lord take it and give him, that's Paul, another one.

I don't think that there's ever been a man, of course excepting our Lord Jesus Christ, there's been no other man that has changed nations like this Paul. And if he says, when it says in verse 23 that where he asked, are they ministers of Christ? Our speakers are full, I am more. I can only say Paul indeed, so true it is.

A lot of these experiences which he relates here are hidden from us in that we don't know the details and historically how they happened, what exactly it was. He refers for instance to being a day and a half in the deep, that is he was in the ocean and what was it like? How cold was the water? Was he treading water? Was he holding on to one of the logs or one of the pieces of wood or in a boat that was being splashed by enormous waves? We don't know. He was in danger of death often, beaten with rods three times.

Once he was beaten four times with the catinine tails or with a special type of rod. Remember when Jesus was to be crucified? And he was whipped also 40 times minus one. Because there was the law regarding the exact number and they were afraid that if they exceeded that number the person could die.

Think of it. Four times he was brutally beaten in that way, there was not a part of his flesh that hadn't been beaten and bruised on his back. One wonders whether there was any flesh left on his back.

I don't think that you'll ever see a back of a person like his. One day he was stoned and they left him for dead. But God raised him up again.

He said, I know famine and cold. He knew times of want of clothing and food. Nevertheless, nothing quenched the fire of God in his bones, nothing could dampen the zeal despite all these sufferings.

And having to go through experiences of false apostles, false brethren, but with all these experiences he was made stronger. I don't want to sin against the Lord, but I would say Lord after the second crown give him a third one as well. And yet many of the people in his day didn't want him.

And as you know those in Asia deserted him towards the end. Paul preached and wrote. But there were other apostles who were full of self praise.

They were full of self praise. The false brethren, false apostles brought a very smooth message, very subtle and very convenient and pleasing. So much so that many of the brethren forsook Paul and latched on to this more comfortable gospel.

They said these words are much sweeter than those of Paul's. And they said, but this is rather the better gospel, we choose this. And Paul then said, if that Jesus is not the Jesus which I preached, then you are deceived and you have gone off the track.

These were not genuine apostles that Paul was referring to. They were rather false apostles. Those who were imitating, like you can get false teeth, it's not the genuine teeth.

So Paul said, was I failing you in offering you the gospel free of charge because he was showing that these false apostles were charging them, they had to pay them. So Paul said, if that Jesus is not the Jesus which I preached, then you are deceived and you have gone off the track. Who sent us money so that we could go and preach the gospel there in the church.

500 preachers came to the meetings and he said he had to leave out some of the churches. I said to him, why didn't you just invite them even if there were up to 1,500 or even more, we would gladly help and assist also in bringing food. He says, he limited to only five in a certain area.

So I said, never make such a mistake again. Never. When we are there, don't make that mistake.

He says, there may be 3,000. I said, that's nothing. The more the merrier.

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The false apostles brought... They brought a sweet and buttered up message that was very appealing. And Paul said, I will become foolish then. If by that I can expose their foolishness.

Because indeed, foolishness, you don't have to go into the world to find it. There's plenty of foolishness among Christians. In Zulu, it says, my madness.

Excuse my madness. He's just showing their madness by saying that. And their foolishness.

It's heartbreaking if you see Christians being mad. Not right in their heads. Mad people with their Christ.

People devoid of wisdom and discernment. To such an extent that one asks them, what's wrong with you brethren? That your eyes were not open. Why is it that you can be so foolish? For a long time, I have preached and repeated again and again, the importance of asking for discernment from God.

But you find people who are so foolish and so blinded, they are as if bewitched. These people... They came with great oratory and eloquence in speech. So much so that Paul said, well, even if I am not trained in oratory, but then he spoke about and showed for what he was and what he was known to be.

And yet these brethren forsook him when the case was so obvious. And they then submitted to these people who brought this appealing message, this which was a false Christ. And Christians who follow after this and join in with this lack discernment.

They don't have Christ in their hearts. Read in Acts how he says, I know that when I've left you, there are wolves which will come into your midst and rise up from your midst, who will tear at you and break into pieces. And one wonders why they didn't have any more discernment than they had.

And he said, the Jesus they have is false and the spirit which they bring among you is false. But it's amazing that a person can, in their madness, just be swept off their feet and taken away. And God commanded Paul that these should be written so that they would be put into the Bible and canonized as the word of God.

And so the Lord said in the last days, because he knew that these words would be necessary for us in the last days where the Lord Jesus referred to as being so difficult that if God didn't enable his elect, they would all be lost. If God wouldn't shorten the days, hardly anyone would be saved. Just think about that.

And those are times in which we are living. And so So Paul said, you have been deceived by this self-seeking. False apostles who beguile you and deceive you into having to give to them.

Instead, I do not seek my own. I seek for you. I'm jealous for you.

I don't know, brethren. Where are you counted? With which group, Paul says. I am jealous for you with godly jealousy.

There was something which burned within him, consumed him. It was a heavenly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Do you see where Paul's jealousy lay? Do you see the zeal which consumed him that he might present them in purity, in virginity, not with another Jesus, but to Christ alone? This is likened to a pure chaste girl to be presented to a bridegroom. So the alternative being one who is not chaste, one who has given away through sinfulness her virginity. She has defiled herself.

Now Paul says, I don't want to present you like that, but as a chaste virgin to Christ. But he said, I am afraid for you. In the same way as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so too your minds might be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

And you be deceived by the serpent through his craftiness. The serpent came to Eve asking, is God, does he really mean it when he is so severe in his command? The serpent was trying to smear God's character, trying to imply that what God had said was wrong. I have said, well, lo and behold, the serpent came to Eve asking, is God, does he really mean it when he is so severe in his command? The Zulus came and then they said, it's a Ispamu.

The Zulus came and then they said, it's a Ispamu. They said, but what type of Ispamu is this, gun is it? They said, but what type of Ispamu is this, gun is it? And then they were told, no this is a real gun. And then they were told, no this is a real gun.

And then the British said, buy and buy. Not now, but we'll show you, buy and buy. And then the Zulus said, oh, so it's Mbaimbai, which is the word till now for the word cannon.

And then they were told, oh, so it's Mbaimbai, which is the word till now for the word cannon. In this book. I am.

I am. I am. I am.

I am. And at the end you realize, mm-mm, I wasn't in it, in the real thing. You can be busy with Christ, with the gospel, and then one day your eyes will be open.

Was the wrong thing, not the right thing. I wasn't on the road, I was next to it. And the regret and remorse for all eternity.

That's why in closing now, I want to close with this question. Have you got the right Christ, the right Jesus, the right gospel? You may claim to have him, but at the end of the road he'll shake his head and say no. No, that wasn't the right way.

You just look at Paul, the features in his face, look at his back, tell him to take his shirt off, and he'll show you the marks and the scars, and show me yours. And then these ladies ask our opponents, you are busy, you want us to get, or you want to fell a good tree? And you yourself haven't even a shrub that's got some shade for us. But those people that have proved themselves for 30 years, over 30 years, you want us to fell down their tree.

But all those that left us to this very day, they haven't even got a shrub that would have a bit of shade. Do you know of one man who's forsaken the right way, and who's got a bit of shade where you could be quickened? It's madness and foolishness. And when the leaders, the politicians, the leaders of this country, and when the leaders in the political field, business, and ministers say, people preachers come from all over the world, that they don't preach the gospel that you preach.

You go straight for our hearts and deal with sin in our lives. They speak sweet words to us, and tell us many jokes, and making us laugh. And then they go, but they haven't helped us.

What kind of a gospel do you preach? What kind of a gospel do you preach? Ask yourself. Ask yourself where you are. And answer that question before the sun sets today.

Let us pray. Lord, help us never to be brethren or apostles of lies. And be false.

But rather, that we would be in the truth, the truth of heaven. So that we would be in it and live in the truth. The whole earth and all people long for such people.

Lord, be merciful to us and everybody in this hall today, that they wouldn't be beguiled by the old serpent.
Amen.

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