

2 Corinthians 11

by John Nelson Darby

In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul passionately defends his ministry against false teachers while highlighting the importance of perseverance and reliance on God's strength amidst suffering.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:2

Topics: "Perseverance in Faith", "Discernment"

Description

John Nelson Darby expounds on 2 Corinthians 11, emphasizing the importance of individual faith while warning against false teachers who distort the gospel. He highlights Paul's deep concern for the Corinthians, expressing that true teaching must align with Christ and not be corrupted by falsehoods. Darby notes that while Paul faced ridicule for his appearance and speech, he remained steadfast in his mission, showcasing the power of God sustaining him through trials. The apostle's care for the churches reflects a balance of doctrinal depth and personal connection, illustrating the challenges of ministry amidst opposition. Ultimately, Darby underscores the necessity of discerning true teaching from that which pleases the flesh, urging believers to remain anchored in the simplicity of Christ.

Transcript

"As a chaste virgin" (v. 2) is individual. It is the whole, but it must be individual. Verse 4 refers to false teachers who might preach another Jesus or another gospel, but it was not another. Here he feared they might "be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ"; in Galatians it was not so much corrupting the gospel as presenting another, which was not another, for there could not be another. Paul says, "though I be rude in speech" (v. 6), and "in speech contemptible"; he was behind no one and he pleads hard with them. Poor Paul! he had a heart in these people and could not give them up. "I did not take your money; is that the wrong I did you? I did not do any other, I am sure."

354 Verse 15 is very solemn. You may even get Satan's power at work in the form of ministers of righteousness: Satan can ape in that way. Of course, he can never be really Christ. It is not that everybody who is ignorant and preaches below the full truth is Satan's agent, but there are those that bring in a working of Satan. It is people here; but there always will be some doctrine at the bottom of it. It appears these false teachers were pretty impudent, for he says, "If a man bring you into bondage; if a man devour you; if a man take of you; if a man exalt himself; if a man smite you on the face." It is wonderful what people will suffer from what is false - very much more than they will endure from what is true. That which is false pleases the flesh. Take any system: it is surprising with what rapidity people learn a system. And you

will always find Satan's teaching is always learned a great deal more rapidly than God's.

It is in verse 16 he begins to talk about himself. "If they boast, I must boast too, so much so that you have made me make myself a fool about it." In the two last verses of the former chapter he was ready to glory, "but he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord, for not he that commendeth himself is approved but whom the Lord commendeth." Yet, he adds, "I must glory: you have forced me to it"; and the Lord has allowed it for our instruction. "I speak as concerning reproach," he says (for some had said "his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible") "as though we had been weak; howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, I speak foolishly, I am bold also; are they Hebrews? so am I," and so on. We have here a wonderful picture of Paul's life, telling what it really was. Paul does not boast of being a Hebrew, but no one had any advantage over him in that respect.

"The care of all the churches" (v. 28) is not the taking care of them, but care for them as now for Corinth. It is wonderful to see the power of the apostle, the way in which he could take up all the highest doctrines and yet go into detail about all these other things. We see a flexibility of power that is astonishing, a generalising power and an individualising power that he is never tired in using. In us the tendency is to get weary when we see one or two gatherings going wrong. Verse 29 is sympathy with the saints.

355 Paul gloried in what he had gone through, he required power to go through all these things; it was not in his own power he went, and the sustaining is wonderful. Suppose a man preaching in this town was flogged for it, and he goes and preaches all the same at a neighbouring one! So he says, "But even after that we had suffered before and were shamefully entreated, as ye know at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention." Nothing broke him down: he was not cowed a bit after having his feet in the stocks. How naturally the apostle writes! After a kind of conversation in verse 31, he comes out with something he had quite forgotten, but that now occurred to him. It made little of himself to have escaped in such a way, but he did not mind that; it was what he was glorying in.

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