

“Marks of a True Leader,” Part 5 - 2 Corinthians 11:22-23 – March 5th, 2017

- Today's teaching will be part five of a series I've titled, "Marks of a True Leader."
- What we're about to see, in the text that's before us this morning, is Paul virtually silencing the false apostles once and for all.
- This because, they had been met with a measure of success in delegitimizing Paul's apostleship, citing his lack of credentials.

- It's important to understand that Paul's lineage was not only that of an Israelite, but a Hebrew Jew who was of Judean descent.
- The reason this is important is because these false apostles were using their blood ancestry as a qualification for apostleship.
- It's for this reason that Paul repeatedly tells the Corinthian Christians that he speaks as a fool by even daring to mention this.

One commentator of this wrote; Paul knows very well that his blood ancestry does not make him an apostle or a servant of Jesus, but many of the most eminent apostles either said or implied that it was important. Knowing the silliness of this, Paul prefaced his remarks here with "I speak foolishly." Yet, to make a point (to expose the foolishness of the most eminent apostles and to glorify the nature of Jesus), he will continue.

- In effect, Paul is painting a stark contrast on the canvass of their fake apostleship by continuing his sanctified shaming of them.
- He does this by basically showing them that the qualifications for apostleship are the polar opposite of what they boast about.
- In so doing he successfully exposes their fraud as so called apostles and servants of Christ vis-à-vis his contrasting credentials.

Last week I mentioned a blog that I had happened upon by a Bill Muehlenberg who posted a commentary titled, "2 Corinthians and the Heart of Christian Life and Ministry." I mention it again this week because he quotes one commentator who sums this up perfectly, writing, "With evident distaste for speaking about himself, Paul reminds the Corinthians that, as they well knew, in contrast to the pretended apostleship of these false teachers his apostleship was one of continuous suffering and self-abnegation, and that it was precisely in his own manifest weakness, which left no room for self-glorification, that the power and grace of God had been magnified." <https://billmuehlenberg.com/2017/02/18/2-corinthians-heart-christian-life-ministry/>

- Enter today's text, and with it the legitimate credentials of a true leader, who by contrast is self-abnegating, not self-promoting.

1. They are humble hard working servants (Verses 22-23a)

- v22 Paul rhetorically asks if they are Hebrews, or Israelites, or the descendants of Abraham, then he tells them that he is too.
- v23a He asks if they're Christ's servants saying he's out of his mind to talk like this, but he has worked much harder than they.
- What Paul is saying here is that he's a true apostle and a true Jew, not by blood or title as they boasted, but by being a servant.

- In order to better understand what Paul is saying here, we need to first know a little about the word in the original Greek text.
- The word for servant or minister as some of the other translations render it, comes from the ancient Greek word "diakonos."
- It carries with it the idea of a humble servant, or a menial worker, which was in stark contrast to what they used the word as.

- Sadly, we live in a day that's much like what was happening back in Paul's day, where the word minister has become exalted.
- So much so, pastor or minister has morphed into reverend, which has lent itself to many servants being puffed up with pride.
- What comes packaged with this pride is entitled privilege on the part of the minister, who will now be served, instead of serve.

Matthew 23:1–12 (NKJV) — 1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' 8 But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

2. They will put their lives on the line (Verse 23b)

- v23b Paul goes on to say that he's been in prison more frequently and flogged more severely than they, and exposed to death.
- The reason I separated the last part of this verse and saved it for last is because it speaks to a lost jewel in the church today.
- I'm hoping you'll kindly indulge me for the remainder our time in 2 Corinthians, as I expound on this very important principal.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was the main obstacle to leaders effectiveness in all arenas of life this would have to be it.
- Namely, that of ones unwillingness to count the cost, pick up their cross, die to self and put their own lives on the line for Christ.
- Whether it's the husband and father in the home, or the leader and certainly the pastor of a church, we must lay down our lives.

John 15:12–13 (NKJV) — 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

- Here's the bottom line in closing, unless and until we're willing to lay down our lives, God cannot bless our lives and ministries.
- While I am keenly aware that this sounds a little strong, the truth of the matter is, if we try to preserve our lives, we'll lose them.

Luke 17:33 - Any man who makes it his object to keep his own life safe, will lose it; but whoever loses his life will preserve it.