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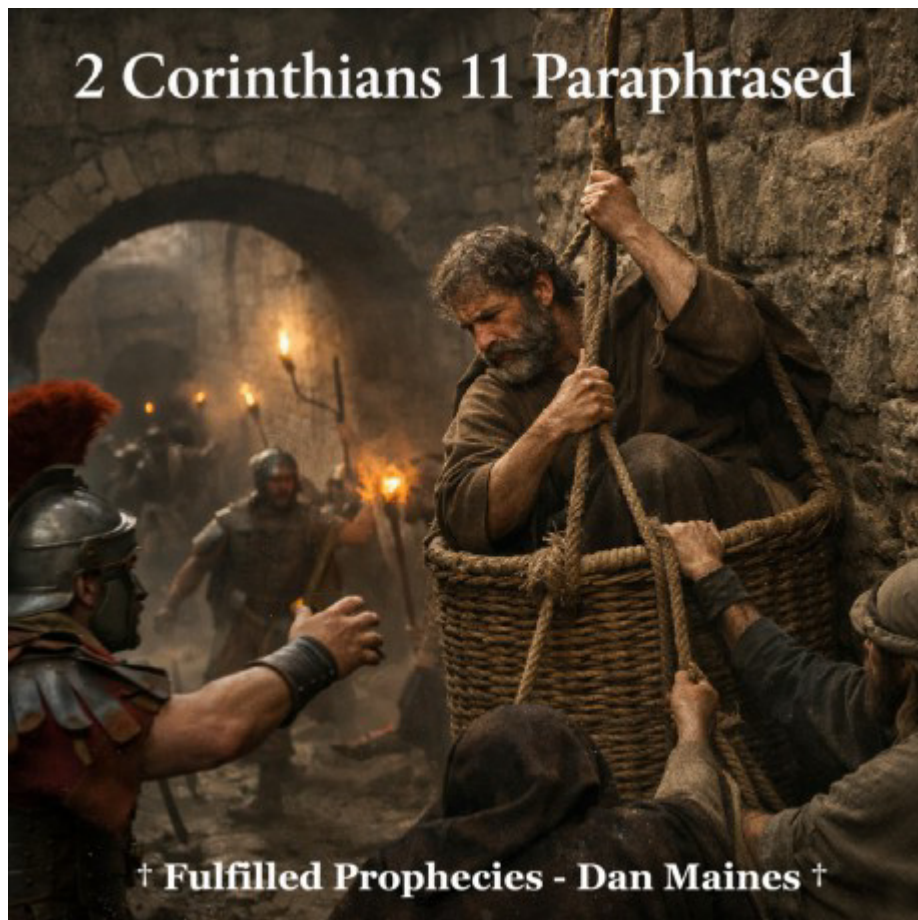
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2 Corinthians 11 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

2 Corinthians 11 Paraphrased

Introduction

† In this chapter Paul defends his apostleship because false teachers had entered Corinth and were trying to undermine the truth he preached.

† These men appeared impressive outwardly, but Paul exposes them as deceptive workers who were corrupting the simplicity of the gospel.

† Paul reluctantly speaks about his own sufferings to show that true ministry is marked by sacrifice, not self promotion.

2 Corinthians 11:1

I hope you'll put up with a little foolishness from me, and honestly you've already been patient with me.

† Paul isn't boasting for pride, he's defending the truth because the Corinthians were being misled by false teachers (Galatians 1:6-7).

† Sometimes truth requires exposing deception even if it feels uncomfortable.

† Paul calls it foolishness because boasting about oneself normally isn't proper for a servant of Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2

I'm jealous for you with a godly jealousy because I promised you to one husband so I could present you as a pure bride to Christ.

† Paul describes the church as the bride of Christ, a covenant relationship between Christ and believers (Ephesians 5:25-27).

† His concern is that false doctrine will corrupt their faith before the coming judgment that was approaching their generation.

† The language reflects the covenant imagery found throughout the Old Testament where God's people are described as His bride.

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I'm afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve with his cunning, your minds might be led away from the simple and pure devotion to Christ.

† Paul compares the false teachers to the serpent in Eden who twisted truth in order to deceive (Genesis 3:1-6).

† The danger wasn't persecution from outside but corruption from inside the church.

† The simplicity of the gospel means trusting Christ's finished work, not adding human traditions.

2 Corinthians 11:4

If someone comes and preaches another Jesus than the one we preached, or if you receive a different spirit or a different gospel than what you accepted, you tolerate it far too easily.

† The church was showing too much tolerance toward false teaching.

† A different gospel is not the gospel at all, Paul warned about this strongly elsewhere (Galatians 1:8-9).

† Even small distortions of the gospel eventually lead to complete corruption.

2 Corinthians 11:5

I don't think I'm inferior to those so called super apostles.

† Paul uses sarcasm here. These men presented themselves as superior teachers.

† Their authority was based on appearance and rhetoric rather than suffering for Christ.

† Paul exposes the false pride behind their claims.

2 Corinthians 11:6

Even if I'm untrained in speaking, I'm not lacking in knowledge. We've clearly shown this to you in every way.

† Paul may not have had polished rhetoric like Greek philosophers, but he had true knowledge of Christ.

† Truth isn't measured by eloquence but by faithfulness to God's revelation.

† Paul's ministry had already proven itself among the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 11:7

Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you could be lifted up because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge?

† Paul refused financial support from the Corinthians so no one

could accuse him of preaching for profit.

† The false teachers likely used financial gain to elevate themselves.

† Paul's humility exposed their greed.

2 Corinthians 11:8

I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so I could serve you.

† Paul speaks figuratively, other churches supported him so he could minister in Corinth.

† The Macedonian churches were especially generous despite their poverty (2 Corinthians 8:1-4).

† Paul's ministry was sacrificial rather than self serving.

2 Corinthians 11:9

When I was with you and needed something, I wasn't a burden to anyone because the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I kept myself from being a burden and will continue to do so.

† Paul protected the integrity of the gospel by refusing financial dependence on those he was correcting.

† This removed any accusation that he preached for personal gain.

† True ministry often requires personal sacrifice.

2 Corinthians 11:10

As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting won't be stopped in the regions of Achaia.

† Paul continues defending the integrity of his ministry.

† His confidence is rooted in Christ's truth, not personal pride.

† The region of Achaia included Corinth and surrounding areas.

2 Corinthians 11:11

Why? Because I don't love you? God knows I do.

† Paul's correction came from love, not hostility.

† True spiritual leadership sometimes requires strong warnings.

† Love protects people from deception.

2 Corinthians 11:12

But I'll continue doing what I'm doing so I can cut off the opportunity from those who want to be regarded as equal with us in the things they boast about.

† Paul refused to give false teachers any ground to claim equal authority.

† Their motives were pride and recognition rather than truth.

† Protecting the church sometimes requires confronting false leadership.

2 Corinthians 11:13

These men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

† Paul clearly identifies the problem, they were impostors.

† False teachers often appear religious and convincing on the surface.

† Discernment is essential for protecting the church.

2 Corinthians 11:14

And no wonder, because even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

† Deception often looks appealing and convincing.

† Satan rarely appears openly evil, he appears persuasive and religious.

† This is why truth must always be tested against Scripture.

2 Corinthians 11:15

So it's not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will match their actions.

† False teachers imitate righteousness while promoting corruption.

† Judgment eventually exposes deception.

† Their final outcome will reflect their works.

2 Corinthians 11:16

I repeat, no one should think I'm foolish, but if you do, then accept me as foolish so I can boast a little.

† Paul again explains that he doesn't normally boast.

† He's exposing the absurdity of the false teachers' bragging by temporarily using their own method.

† His goal is to wake the church up to deception.

2 Corinthians 11:17

What I'm saying here isn't according to the Lord, but I'm speaking as if foolishly in this confidence of boasting.

† Paul acknowledges that boasting isn't the normal pattern for Christian ministry.

† He's doing it temporarily to expose the false teachers.

† The Corinthians had been impressed by arrogant leaders.

2 Corinthians 11:18

Since many boast according to the flesh, I'll boast as well.

† The false teachers were boasting in outward credentials.

† Paul shows that if boasting were the standard, he could surpass them.

† This exposes how shallow their standard was.

2 Corinthians 11:19

You gladly tolerate fools since you think yourselves wise.

† Paul points out their contradiction.

† They considered themselves wise but were easily deceived.

† Spiritual pride often blinds people to error.

2 Corinthians 11:20

You tolerate it if someone enslaves you, devours you, takes advantage of you, exalts himself, or even slaps you in the face.

† The false teachers were exploiting the believers.

† Paul highlights how abusive leadership had become

accepted.

† True Christian leadership serves rather than dominates.

2 Corinthians 11:21

To my shame I must say we were too weak for that. But whatever anyone else dares to boast about, I'm speaking foolishly, I dare to boast as well.

† Paul sarcastically contrasts his gentle leadership with their abusive behavior.

† He now begins describing his true credentials.

† These credentials are suffering, not power.

2 Corinthians 11:22

Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.

† Paul meets them on their own terms regarding Jewish heritage.

† His lineage was legitimate and well known.

† Yet heritage alone never proves spiritual authority.

2 Corinthians 11:23

Are they servants of Christ? I'm speaking like a madman, I'm even more so. I've had far greater labors, far more imprisonments, countless beatings, and many times near death.

† Paul's real credentials were suffering for Christ.

† True apostleship involved sacrifice and persecution.

† This stands in stark contrast to self glorifying leaders.

2 Corinthians 11:24

Five times I received from the Jews forty lashes minus one.

† Jewish law limited flogging to thirty nine lashes to avoid exceeding forty (Deuteronomy 25:3).

† Paul endured this brutal punishment repeatedly for preaching Christ.

† His scars testified to his faithfulness.

2 Corinthians 11:25

Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, and I spent a night and a day in the open sea.

† Roman punishment included beatings with rods.

† Stoning nearly killed Paul in Lystra (Acts 14:19).

† These experiences show the cost of spreading the gospel.

2 Corinthians 11:26

I've often been on journeys, in dangers from rivers, robbers, my own countrymen, Gentiles, dangers in the city, wilderness, sea, and among false brothers.

† Paul's ministry involved constant risk.

† Even false believers created danger within the church.

† The gospel advanced through perseverance.

2 Corinthians 11:27

I've experienced labor and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, frequent fasting, cold and exposure.

† Paul's life shows the sacrifice required for ministry.

† Comfort wasn't the goal, faithfulness was.

† His suffering proves the sincerity of his calling.

2 Corinthians 11:28

Apart from all these external things, there's the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.

† Spiritual leadership carries emotional and spiritual burdens.

† Paul's concern for the churches weighed on him constantly.

† Shepherding believers requires deep care.

2 Corinthians 11:29

Who is weak without me feeling weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

† Paul identifies personally with the struggles of believers.

† True leaders care deeply about the spiritual health of others.

† Their concern reflects the heart of Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:30

If I must boast, I'll boast about the things that show my weakness.

† Paul's strength is found in weakness.

† God's power works through humility and dependence (2 Corinthians 12:9).

† This completely reverses worldly ideas of leadership.

2 Corinthians 11:31

The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed forever, knows I'm not lying.

† Paul calls God as witness to his truthfulness.

† His testimony about suffering wasn't exaggerated.

† Integrity matters in spiritual leadership.

2 Corinthians 11:32

In Damascus the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city to arrest me.

† Paul's persecution began very early after his conversion.

† The authorities viewed the gospel as a threat.

† This historical event is recorded in Acts 9.

2 Corinthians 11:33

But I was lowered in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

† Paul's escape from Damascus shows the danger surrounding early Christian ministry.

† Even apostles sometimes had to flee to preserve their lives for continued service.

† Humility often looks weak by worldly standards but is powerful in God's plan.

Historical References

† Josephus describes many false teachers and deceivers

appearing in Judea before Jerusalem's destruction, misleading the people with false promises.

† Irenaeus warned that heretical teachers often disguised themselves as true leaders within the church.

† Eusebius records that the early church constantly faced false teachers who attempted to distort apostolic doctrine.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We must test teaching carefully because deception often appears spiritual and persuasive.

† True Christian leadership is marked by humility, sacrifice, and faithfulness to Christ.

† The church must remain committed to the simplicity of the gospel rather than being impressed by personality or charisma.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Paul defend himself so strongly in this chapter?

A: Because false teachers were misleading the Corinthian church and threatening the purity of the gospel (2 Corinthians 11:3-4).

Q: What does Paul mean by godly jealousy?

A: He cared deeply about protecting the church's faithfulness to Christ as a bride devoted to her husband (2 Corinthians 11:2).

Q: Why did Paul boast about his suffering?

A: To show that true apostleship is proven by sacrifice and endurance, not self promotion (2 Corinthians 11:23-27).

Q: What warning does Paul give about false teachers?

A: They disguise themselves as servants of righteousness just as Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

Q: What does Paul's weakness teach us about ministry?

A: God's power works through humility and dependence rather than human strength (2 Corinthians 11:30).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† 2 Corinthians 11

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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