

## 2 CORINTHIANS LESSON 18

### Chapter 10:1-18, Christian Warfare and the Authority of God's Ministers

28 August 2023

**Vs 1** "...by the meekness and gentleness of Christ..."

Note: "meek" does not mean "weak." Jesus said, "I am meek and lowly." (Mat. 11:2).

**Meek:** possessing the character and the ability to receive wrong or take hurt without being changed or altered by the experience.

**Examples:** Numbers 12:1-13, "**Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth**" (vs 3). Moses certainly wasn't weak.

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses (vs 1), but Moses didn't seek revenge. When the Lord's anger was kindled against Miriam, Moses asked Him to heal Miriam's leprosy (vs 13). His love for Miriam was not changed by her bad actions toward him.

Matthew 21:5 speaks of Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem. "**Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass...**" Those dwelling in Jerusalem cried for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. He went to the cross for them anyway, and said, "**Father, forgive them.**" That's meekness. Their bad behavior didn't change Him.

Paul beseeches the believers in Corinth by the same meekness and gentleness of Christ (vs 1). Their actions had been offensive, but it did not change Paul's love and care for them.

"...who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you." Paul's physical appearance and demeanor was not exceptional or special in any way. He was average at best.

**Vs 2** Paul doesn't want to have to exercise boldness with these believers when he sees them. He had to be bold when he wrote to some who mistakenly thought they could speak to him "**according to the flesh,**" not esteeming that Paul's ministry was according to the power of God.

**Vs 3** "**For though we walk in the flesh** (We live inside a body of flesh), **we do not war after the flesh.**" Christians do not wage wars or fight physical battles. Whenever religious groups (claiming to be Christians) involve themselves in physical conflicts, it hinders our ability to further the gospel.

**Vs 4** "**(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)**" Our weapon is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph 6:17).

**Vs 5** "**Casting down imaginations...**" When people imagine things that result in teachings that are in opposition to "**the knowledge of God,**" those things are cast down when our spiritual weapon is employed.

- Christians are not to employ physical violence. The light of the word of God illuminates all false teachings, evil practices, and science falsely so called (1 Tim 6:20).
- Christians employ prayer, witnessing, teaching, preaching, and singing in our efforts to expose false teachings, win the lost, and bring men's thoughts into captive obedience to Jesus Christ.
  - The bible is the final authority. Every thought that runs contrary to bible truth must be captured (stopped) and surrendered to Jesus Christ, whereafter He will be able, by His word, to change our thinking, our living, our circumstances, and our future.
  - Wayward thoughts lead to wayward actions. That is why the thoughts must be captured before it's too late.

**Vs 6** “...a readiness to revenge all disobedience.” You can’t fulfill obedience until you turn your back on your disobedience. You can’t be “for” something unless you are “against” something else.

**Vs. 7** “Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?”

- Christians are instructed to avoid the appearance of evil. We ought to dress right, groom properly, smile and allow our face to reveal the joy of the Lord, be careful where we walk, how we talk, who we befriend, etc. In that sense, appearance matters.
- Paul is talking about spiritual authority. You can’t look at somebody’s outward appearance and determine their qualifications as the Lord’s minister.

**8-9** “For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority...” These believers were resisting Paul’s authority to instruct them. It was necessary for him to correct them concerning their misjudgment of his qualifications.

**10-11** The Corinthian believers were put off by Paul’s weak bodily presence and contemptible speech. They were impressed by his letters but were disappointed by his appearance.

- Paul taught them that his qualifications were the same whether he was present or absent, whether he taught them in letters or in person.

**Vs 12** Ministers are unwise to compare themselves to other ministers, trying to make a name for themselves. Surrender to the Lord and allow Him to use you to minister as He desires. Don’t worry about your status among other preachers. Don’t worry about how highly you are esteemed.

**13-15** Paul reminds these believers that he is the one who brought them the gospel and established them in Jesus Christ. He didn’t arrive upon another man’s work and take over. His authority comes from the fact that he’s the one who suffered hardship and labored to preach the truth to them.

**16-18** Religious titles and self-glorification does not make a man approved, “**but whom the Lord commendeth.**”

- The proof of the Lord’s commendation will be His blessings upon your labors.
  - Souls saved, changed lives, people believing the bible, loving God, witnessing, and caring for others.
  - You can be virtually unknown in this world and accomplish a great work for the Lord. Don’t worry about recognition. Keep working and give God all the glory.