

Bold, Part 20: "Boasting in Weakness"**2 Corinthians 11:16-33**

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Following Jesus includes embracing situations that make us feel our true weakness.

I. Look at verses 16-20: Who is really the fool?

2 Corinthians 11:16-20 (ESV): 16 I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. 17 What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool. 18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. 19 For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! 20 For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face.

1. **Discipleship lesson #1:** Following Jesus is a narrow path that leads to life and all other paths deceive and enslave. See Matthew 23:4-28; Matthew 7:13-14.

II. Look at verses 21-28: Who is really a servant of Christ?

2 Corinthians 11:21-28 (ESV): 21 To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that! But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. 24 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

2. **Discipleship lesson #2:** Following Jesus includes carrying our crosses by sometimes suffering for the sake of Christ. See Matthew 10:38-39.

III. Look at verses 29-33: Who is really able to boast?

2 Corinthians 11:29-33 (ESV): 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? 30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, 33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

3. **Discipleship lesson #3:** Following Jesus includes embracing situations that make us feel our true weakness. See Acts 9:19-25.

→ Life Application:

1. Acknowledge the suffering you face: What uncomfortable, conflict-creating, painful, or dangerous situations are you facing? How are you reacting to these situations?
2. Embrace your suffering by faith: What are the ways that you appreciate Jesus and grasp the gospel more in these situations? What good fruit is God producing in you?

