

INTRODUCTION

- * This last section of Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians deals specifically with the affliction that comes with "spiritual warfare." As we seek to serve Christ we will experience opposition. We are told in God's Word that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph 6:12)
- * As we have seen, this battle is primarily directed against the glory of God by attacking the truth of His Word. This attack is two-fold: attacking the message itself and then, also the messenger. We considered first, the attack on God's message and our responsibility to clothe ourselves with the armor of God, the weapons of our warfare, in order to defend the truth and to disarm the attacks against it.
- * Last week, we began considering the attack upon the messenger of the truth. If Satan can silence the messenger, he hinders the proclamation of the truth.
- * As our ministry is attacked, how should we respond? Paul provides an example in these final four chapters of this letter. Last week, we considered "Paul's Calling" and it's application to our lives. Today, we will consider "Paul's Credentials" ... what bore witness of the validity of his ministry and calling?

INSTRUCTION**I. ATTESTED TO BY HIS D _____ (11:7-20; 12:13)****A. Revealed By His A _____ (10:17; Matt 10:7-15; 1 Thess 2:1-13; Phil 4:14-16)****B. Contrasted To His A _____ (11:12-20; 2 Peter 2:12-15; Jude 10-13)**

1. THEIR A _____ (2 Cor 11:14-15)
2. THEIR A _____
 - a. They Seek to E _____ (cf. Gal 2:1-5; 2 Peter 2:18-19)
 - b. They Seek to D _____ (cf. Matt 23:14)
 - c. They Seek to D _____ (cf. Romans 16:17-18; 2 Timothy 3)
 - d. They Seek to E _____ (cf. 2 Cor 10:17-18)
 - e. They Seek to I _____ (cf. Acts 5:40)

II. ATTESTED TO BY HIS A _____ (11:22-32; cf. 6:3-13)**III. ATTESTED TO BY HIS R _____ (12:1-12)****A. The E _____ (12:1-5; cf. Galatians 1; Acts 9:10-17; 18:9; 22:17-21; 26:13-19)****B. The E _____**

1. HIS P _____ (12:7; Numbers 33:55)
2. HIS P _____ (12:8-10)

INTROSPECTION

- * Would your "ministry" be more reflective of Paul's or his adversaries?
- * Will you serve only for personal gain?
- * How do you view the afflictions that God has allowed into your life?

Do you view them as opportunities to substantiate His working in your life?

- * Is there a need to change the way you think ... and therefore act?

INTERACTION ... Thoughts & Questions to ponder for later discussion

It may be helpful to re-read the passage before the discussion.

- * Read Matthew 5:11; 10:16-33. How do these passages apply to the discussion regarding the attack on our ministry?

Matthew 10:7-15 ⁷ And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. **Freely you have received, freely give.** ⁹ Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, ¹⁰ nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food. ¹¹ "Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. ¹² And when you go into a household, greet it. ¹³ If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. ¹⁵ Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

1 Thessalonians 2:1-13 ¹ For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. ² But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. ³ For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. ⁴ But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. ⁵ For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness--God is witness. ⁶ Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷ But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. ⁸ So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. ⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, ¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. ¹³ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

Philippians 4:14-16 ¹⁴ Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. ¹⁵ Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.

2 Peter 2:12-15 ¹² But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, ¹³ and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, ¹⁴ having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. ¹⁵ They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

Jude 1:10-13 ¹⁰ But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. ¹¹ Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. ¹² These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; ¹³ raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

Galatians 2:1-5 ¹ Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. ² And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. ³ Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. ⁴ And **this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage)**, ⁵ to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

2 Peter 2:18-19 ¹⁸ For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. ¹⁹ **While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.**

Matthew 23:14 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

Romans 16:17-18 ¹⁷ Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. ¹⁸ For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

Numbers 33:55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be **irritants in your eyes** and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.

Matthew 26:44 So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.