

Message Eleven

**Apostolic Authority**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 1:1, 24; 10:8; 12:12, 15; 13:4, 10

- I. Apostolic authority, in contrast to people's consideration in their natural concept, is not for ruling over the believers but for building them up—2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; 1:24; cf. 1 Pet. 5:3.**
- II. Our understanding of the word *apostle* must be biblical, that is, according to the pure Word of God, not according to religious tradition—2 Cor. 1:1:**
  - A. The Greek word for *apostle* means "one who is sent":
    1. An apostle of the Lord is a believer who is sent out by Him with His authority to preach the gospel of God, to teach the divine truth, and to establish churches—Acts 13:1-4; 14:4, 14-15.
    2. Paul was a sent one, not self-appointed but called by the Lord; his apostleship was authentic, having the authority of God's New Testament economy—1 Cor. 9:1-5; 2 Cor. 12:11-12; cf. 11:13; Rev. 2:2.
  - B. When Paul refers to himself as an apostle (2 Cor. 1:1; 12:12), he means one sent by God to minister Christ into sinners so that they may become sons of God and members of Christ and then be edified to grow and become the Body of Christ—Rom. 1:1; 8:14; 12:4-5:
    1. Paul did not use this word with the connotation that an apostle is a powerful person authorized by Christ to control and overrule (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10); such a concept is despicable.
    2. None of us should be an apostle in the sense of taking the position to exercise authority over others; rather, we should all be slaves of Christ—Matt. 20:25-28; Rom. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; James 1:1.
- III. The real apostles experience adversity and suffering because the entire earth is opposed to God's economy—2 Cor. 11:16-33; 6:4-10; 1 Cor. 4:9-13; Col. 1:24.**
- IV. The leading sign of an apostle is endurance—2 Cor. 12:12; 6:4; Rev. 1:9.**
- V. The apostles followed the pattern of Christ, willing to be weak in the organic union with Him, that they**

Message Eleven (continuation)

**might live with Him a crucified life for the building up of the church—2 Cor. 13:4.**

**VI. As an apostle, Paul was desperately absolute for the Lord's interests; he was willing not only to sacrifice all his rights but also to pay the price of his life—12:15; 11:28; 1 Cor. 9:12, 15, 18; Acts 20:24:**

- A. We should be willing to pour out our whole being— spirit, soul, and body—for the Body of Christ.
- B. Whenever we touch the work of the Lord for His Body, we must have a pure motive and a proper attitude:
  - 1. Instead of seeking what others have, we should seek only them and desire to gain them for the Lord's Body and to utterly spend what we are and have for the Body—2 Cor. 12:15.
  - 2. Then what we do and are will be a benefit to the Body.

**VII. Paul exercised the authority inherent in his apostleship by engaging in spiritual warfare, by moving within the measure of God's rule, and by his jealousy for Christ over the believers—10:3-4, 13; 11:2:**

- A. "Though we walk in flesh, we do not war according to flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powerful before God for the overthrowing of strongholds"—10:3-4:
  - 1. In the spiritual warfare, Paul fought according to the spirit with weapons that were divinely powerful.
  - 2. "As we overthrow reasonings and every high thing rising up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ"—v. 5:
    - a. Reasonings and thoughts are the strongholds of Satan within the minds of those who are disobedient to God.
    - b. Through the spiritual warfare, the reasonings and high things must be overthrown and every thought must be taken captive unto the obedience of Christ.

## 2 CORINTHIANS

### Message Eleven (continuation)

- c. The high things—the haughty things within the reprobate mentality that are against the knowledge of God—must be overthrown by the spiritual weapons.
- B. “We will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us”—v. 13:
1. The apostles went out to preach the gospel and to teach the truth within God’s measure and according to His rule.
  2. A basic requirement for the growth and development of the Body is that we recognize our measure and not go beyond it—Eph. 4:7, 16.
  3. Like Paul, we should move and act according to how much God has measured to us, staying within the limits of God’s ruling, God’s measuring.
  4. As soon as we go beyond our measure, we go beyond the authority of the Head, move out from under the anointing, and interfere with the order of the Body—Rom. 12:3.
- C. “I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ”—2 Cor. 11:2:
1. Paul engaged the believers to be the bride of the Bridegroom, the wife of the Lamb—John 3:29; Rev. 19:7.
  2. The genuine ministry stirs up our love for the Lord Jesus as our Bridegroom.
  3. We should care only for Christ, love Him, and allow no one to replace Him in our hearts—Mark 12:30; 1 Cor. 2:9; Eph. 6:24.
  4. If we take Christ as our Husband—a most intimate matter—we will realize that we need a wife’s fidelity, and we will learn to enjoy Christ as our life and to live, walk, and behave in oneness with Him—Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 6:17.