

# Struggle as Successful Service

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**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians Ch. 11**

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...sort of like Jesus did with the Twelve

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### FEATURED

#### How Christianity Destroyed the Concept of Race in the Ancient World

The early Christian church radically altered the social idea of religion as derivative of race.



### STRAY DOGS?

Here's how I named the site

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# A few housekeeping items...

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All of our lessons and handouts, plus podcasts and an occasional thought that might only be of interest to me



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# A few housekeeping items...

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Stories that have made the church  
who we are and who we are NOT  
*Starting Sept 17 @ 11 AM*

- What was it like to be a first century Christian?
- Why did Christians in the 4<sup>th</sup> century march through the streets saying, “There was a time when He was not”?
- Why do we have so many different types of churches now?
- Why did the German Lutheran church support the Nazis?

# Best Movie Speeches?

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utU9L8ONRbk>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians Ch. 11

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Paul gives the “Fool’s Speech”

- *Lampoons his opponents* by satirizing their argument
- Reiterates how he has gone *above and beyond* for their spiritual health
- Surprising twist: boasts in his *weakness and trials*, not in his strength

Can we have true community without sharing our true weaknesses?

***Objective: Leave here with some ways we can use our weaknesses to build us up as a community of faith***



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians – Where are we?

Passage	Rhetorical Mode	Function
1:1 – 2	<i>Prescript</i>	Introduces author and recipient – <b>“Paul...to the church of God in Corinth”</b>
1:3 – 7	<i>Thanksgiving and exordium</i>	Aims to make the audience open to the argument – <b>“...our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our suffering you share in our comfort.”</b>
1:8 – 2:16	<i>Narratio</i>	Explains facts of the situation and reason for writing the letter, with additional thanksgiving – <b>“For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears...”</b>
2:17	<i>Propositio</i>	Basic thesis statement of the entire letter – <b>“Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.”</b>
3:1 – 13:4	<i>Probatio and refutatio</i>	Main argument section covering: Paul’s approach to ministry (3:1 – 6:13) – <b>“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant...”</b> Deliberative digression on pagan feasts (6:14 – 7:1) – <b>“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers...”</b> Defense of the Severe Letter (7:2 – 16) – <b>“...I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while...”</b> Jerusalem collection (8:2 – 9:15) – <b>“Now finish the work...”</b> Rhetorical synkrisis comparing Paul and his opponents (10:1 – 13:4) – <b>“We do not dare classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves or compare themselves by themselves, they are not wise.”</b>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:1 - 6

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“O that you might bear a small amount of my *foolishness*! But already you are enduring me. For I am jealous for you with a *divine jealousy*, for I *betrothed* you to one husband, to present a *pure virgin* to Christ. But I fear that as the *serpent deceived Eve* with his craftiness, your minds might be *seduced away* from the generosity and the holiness of Christ. For if the one coming preaches *another Jesus* who we have not preached, or you receive a *different spirit* than the one you did not receive, or a *different message* you did not accept [previously], *you accept it well*. For I reckon to be *inferior in nothing* compared to the “*super apostles*.” But if I am even *untrained* [*literally “idiotic”*] in speech, yet I am not in knowledge. But in every way, *I have made this apparent in all things* to you.”



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians

## 11:1 - 6

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- What does Paul see as his role/responsibility with the Corinthian church?
- What is he worried about happening? What does he think is happening to the Corinthians?
- How does Paul compare himself to his opponents?



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:7 - 15

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“Or did I sin that I *freely preached the gospel* of God to you, humbling myself in order that you might be exalted? I *robbed other churches*, receiving support, for your service, and being present with you and being lacking, I did not *burden* anyone. For the brothers coming *from Macedonia* replenished my needs, and I kept and I will keep myself not burdensome in everything. The truth of Christ is in me, that *this boasting will not be silenced in me in the region of Achaia*. On account of what? Because I do not love you? God knows [I do]! But what I do, and I will do, [I do] in order that *I might cut off the pretext* of the ones wishing an opportunity so that *what they are boasting* might be found *as we also are*. For such are *false apostles, treacherous workers*, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. Do not also be amazed. For the Satan himself masqueraded as *an angel of light*. It is not surprising therefore if also his servants, whose end will be according to their deeds, *masquerade* as servants of righteousness.”

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- What are the Corinthians judging Paul for here?
- What was Paul’s purpose in rejecting their support?
- How does Paul describe his opponents?



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:16 - 21

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“Again I say: *no one should think me to be a fool*. But if even as a fool receive me in order that I also might boast a little. What I speak, *I don’t speak according to the Lord* but as *in foolishness*, in this essence of boasting. Since many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. For gladly *you bear with fools*, being wise. For you bear if anyone enslaves you, if anyone devours you, if anyone takes, if anyone exalts himself, if *anyone strikes you in the face*. I speak according to dishonor, as that we have been weak. But in whatever anyone might dare, *in foolishness I speak*, I also dare.”

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## 11:16 - 21

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- How would you describe Paul’s tone here?
- What does he fault the Corinthians for doing?



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:22 - 33

“Are they Hebrews? So also am I. Are they Israelites? So also am I? Are they seed of Abraham? So also am I. Are they servants of Christ? ***I speak irrationally above myself.*** In work even more, in imprisonments even more, in blows exceedingly, in deaths often. From the Jews, ***five times*** forty lashes minus one I received. ***Three times*** I was beat with a rod, ***once*** I was stoned, ***three times*** I was shipwrecked, ***a day and a night*** in the ocean I have done. Often in travels, in dangers of rivers, in dangers of robbers, in dangers of [the Jewish] race, in dangers from the Gentiles, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers on the sea, in dangers from false brothers. Often in labor and hardship, often in sleeplessness, in hunger and thirst, often in fasting, in cold and nakedness. Besides everything else, ***the anxiety upon me every day [about] the care of all the churches.*** Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is tempted to sin, and I don’t burn inside? If it is necessary to boast, ***I will boast in the things of my weakness.*** The God and father of the Lord Jesus, the one being blessed to the ages, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus to seize me but through a window in a basket, I was lowered through the wall and escaped his hands.”

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## 11:22 - 33

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- How does Paul describe his opponents and himself?
- What words would you use to describe Paul’s list of hardships?
- What does Paul boast in?



# What does that mean for us today?

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- How does our culture feel about weakness?
- How does our cultural bias affect us?
- What does a group prioritizing weakness versus strength look like?
- What are some ways we can embrace our weakness as a group?

# Assignment for Next Week

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- Read 2 Corinthians 12:1 – 10
  - Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses
  - How do these influence your relationship with God, your spouse, and children?
  - How can God's working through your weaknesses contribute to the spiritual growth of our class?

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