

2 Corinthians 11:16-33 Paul Boasts About His Sufferings

16 I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then tolerate me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. 17 In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. 18 Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. 19 You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! 20 In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face. 21 To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27 I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. 33 But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

Luke 9:23-27

23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? 26 Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

27 "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

Paul - week 3 - welcome back!

We enjoyed hearing about how he didn't convert from Judaism to Christianity - he just became a Christian Jew. That the law was not a way to earn your way into heaven, but a marker of the tribe.

We then heard how he tirelessly went round telling Jews and Gentiles about the way to heaven - Jesus. How his efforts turned Christianity into a mainly gentile faith, which would spread round the world. This week we're going to hear about his personal life.

So - you might want to know if he was married.

Well good luck with that! We don't know.

On the one hand he says - don't I have the right to take a believing wife along with me on my journeys (1 Cor 9)

On the other hand, he never mentions her!

On the one hand, most Jewish men, and especially rabbis and pharisees were married.

But on the other hand 1 Cor 7:8 says - to the unmarried and widows I say - it is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am.

So lets start somewhere else..

After his career as Rabbi and Pharisee was cut short by his discovering Jesus as his saviour He took up tent making. Gosh - that's not a job thats in demand much these days, but it must have been solid work then, and he was always proud to say he paid his own way on all those missionary journeys.

He travelled extensively -

First missionary journey

2nd Journey

18 months in Corinth

3rd missionary journey.

We sometimes think the world was rough 2000 years ago, but it was not. The Romans had central heating, and air conditioning, toilets baths, and as wide a range of food from around the world as we do today. They had plays and theatre, philosophy, maths. And travel - they invented Roman roads! In fact archeology is showing us that people have always travelled much more than we assumed. The Amesbury Archer, and his bronze hoard, came from Switzerland over 4000 years ago - cue joke about traffic on the A303!

So Paul travelled, but then so did lots of other people. I don't think it would always have been comfy, but neither is National Express.

What Paul went through, but we do not - was his sufferings

In prison more frequently,

been flogged more severely,

exposed to death again and again.

Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

Three times I was beaten with rods,

once I was pelted with stones,

three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea,

I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27 I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

And just in case you thought Paul was telling you all that so you could pity him - this is in the letter - 2 Cor - that starts

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who **comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.** 5 For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

For Paul - its always 'Rejoice in teh lord always, and again I say rejoice' Phil 4:4
Or him and Slias singing hymns while in the prison in Philippi.

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One of Paul's sufferings was his 'thorn in the flesh' - we know not what it is.

2 Cor 12

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in

weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Some have said it was a literal thorn, or some think some blindness from his vision on the road to Damascus. We don’t know.

But lets talk about the ending.

Paul visits Jerusalem several times, there is at least 1 council there, maybe 2.

So he comes back for a journey - Acts 21:

17 When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. 18 The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. 19 Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20 When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: “You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. 21 They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. 22 What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, 23 so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. 24 Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law.

26 The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

Paul Arrested

27 When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, 28 shouting, “Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place.”

29 (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple.)

30 The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. 31 While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

So Paul is arrested and hears about a plot by 40 fanatics who vow not to eat until Paul was killed - so he is held in Caesarea for his own protection, but also for the amusement of the Roman Procurator Felix - chatting, trying to convert him - read Acts 24, 25, 26 if you want the detail! All is fine, until a new Governor is appointed, who tries to send him back to Jerusalem, to where those fanatics are still waiting to kill him.

As a Roman citizen he has the right to appeal to the emperor, so he appeals to Rome, and to Rome he goes.

But this being Paul its not smooth - there’s a shipwreck, and he ends up wintering in Malta and basically starts a church there! Adn then he gets to Rome, Where he stays under house arrest for about 2 years.

Writing letters - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Galatians 6:11

11 See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

Paul might have been chained between guards - he actually dictated most letters, that was the way - but then he signed his name.

2 Timothy 4 - the most personal ending..

6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Personal Remarks

9 Do your best to come to me quickly, 10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me.

Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

12 I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 1

3 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.

16 At my first defence, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. 17 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

19 Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.

(Another martyr)

20 Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. 21

Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters.

22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.

Pope Clement I writes in his Epistle to the Corinthians that after Paul "had borne his testimony before the rulers", he "departed from the world and went unto the holy place, having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance." [193]

Ignatius of Antioch writes in his Epistle to the Ephesians that Paul was "martyred", without giving any further information. [194]

Tertulian writes that Paul was "crowned with an exit like John" (Paulus Ioannis exitu coronatur), although it is unclear which John he meant. [195]

Eusebius states that Paul was killed during the Neronian Persecution [196] and, quoting from **Dionysius of Corinth**, argues that Peter and Paul were martyred "at the same time". [197] This

is also reported by **Sulpicius Severus**, who claimed Peter was crucified while Paul was beheaded. [198] **John Chrysostom** provides an account of Nero imprisoning Paul, but not of

his execution, and no mention of Peter. [199] **Lactantius** only mentioned '[It was Nero] who first persecuted the servants of God; he crucified Peter, and slew Paul' (Paulum interfecit). [200][201]