I’m Too Weak for That

2 Corinthians 11:19-21

If you begin at the top of chapter 11, you’ll see Paul is worried that the Christians in Corinth may be easily drawn away from the truth of Jesus Christ. There were men in his time (as in ours) who had "exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (Romans 1:25) and were attempting to convince other believers to do the same. It would appear from Paul's rants that they were having some measure of success. Paul's words here in Second Corinthians almost seem to have been written for the 21st century instead of the first.

Recently as I read this section of scripture, however, I discovered this short message in the midst of Paul's worry for his fellow believers. Obviously in Paul's time Christians struggled with many of the same things that cause us conflict today. These few verses reflect a tendency to believe that Christians should be doormats. So often as Christians we allow people to walk on us and bully us. We've been taught this is the Christian thing to do. In an attempt to mirror Christ's walk to the cross, we forget that He also overturned money tables.

I nearly laugh when Paul tells his readers that he is "too weak" to "put up with anyone who enslaves, exploits or takes advantage" of him. Our modern faith conveys the message that it's actually noble to allow someone to exploit us. Where do we read that Christ allowed himself to be taken advantage of or exploited? He did go to the cross without a fight, but that's because the Roman government was actually a pawn in the bigger plan of God. They weren't exploiting Him, He CHOSE the road to the cross. His submission only exemplified His complete control of the situation.

Many non-Christians think that Christians are weak. It's primarily because a lot of followers of Jesus Christ won't stand up for themselves. For some reason they believe that Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 12:10 "when I am weak, then I am strong" means they are required to be slaves, to bend and bow to everyone else's whims.

Paul chose to not exert his strength. He opted to serve those who were trying to discover who they were in Christ. However, he would not allow someone to rule over him or exploit him. Even in prison, Paul was in control. His actions caused those over him to give him respect.

Likewise, we never see Jesus being ruled by the Pharisees or Saducees. He showed them respect, but never backed down when they challenged Him. Yet, He consistently served and showed kindness, mercy and love to those who were looking for the truth in the gospel.

As leaders in the body of Christ, our attitude should be that of Christ (see Philippians 2). We should encourage those seeking to grow in Christ and serve the congregation where our Savior has planted us. All the while, we must not allow anyone or anything to enslave, exploit or take advantage of us. We must remember we are children of the King, a loving, caring peace bringing King, but nonetheless, a King.

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