

PAUL AND HIS CRITICS COMPARED, PHYSICALLY
II COR. 11:21-33

Introduction:

- A. Paul felt the need to defend himself from his critics in the church at Corinth.
 - 1. Paul was deeply embarrassed by his situation.
 - 2. "I speak foolishly," v21; v22, "I speak as a fool."
 - 3. 12:11, "I am become a fool in glorying."

- B. Why would Paul embarrass and humiliate himself?
 - 1. Why not walk away?
 - 2. These were wolves in sheeps clothing.
 - 3. He had preached to them first.
 - 4. He had planted them.
 - 5. He had espoused them.
 - 6. Their existence as a true church was threatened.

- C. Paul's defense was two-fold.
 - 1. His physical suffering and mental stress.
 - 2. His visions and revelations of the Lord.
 - 3. Paul believed himself to be superior to his critics in both areas.
 - 4. Not superior to the true apostles. v12:11.

- D. If he was forced to defend himself, he would do it.
 - 1. "I admit, to my shame, that we have been weak. But whatever the subject on which others are not afraid to boast -- though it is foolish to say so -- I am not afraid either!" TCNT

I. PAUL WAS NOT INFERIOR TO THEM IN HIS BACKGROUND.

- A. Jesus, being a Jew, it was assumed that those of Jewish background would be superior.
 - 1. v22.
 - 2. Even in our age a persons background is a consideration.
 - a. Wicked, Famous, Infamous, Wealthy, super-educate

II. PAUL WAS NOT INFERIOR AS A SUFFERING MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST, GENERALLY SPEAKING.

- A. Paul suffering generalized. v23.
 - 1. "labours more abundant."
 - 2. "stripes above measure."
 - 3. "prisons more frequent."
 - 4. "near death more often."

- B. Such suffering must be, as a Christian.
 - 1. Many people are victims of violence.
 - 2. I Peter 2:19-21; 4:12-16; II Cor. 12:10.

III. PAUL'S SUFFERINGS SPECIFICALLY. V24-27

- A. Paul's times of trouble. v24-27.
 - 1. He avoided them if he could. v32-33.
 - 2. He never sought any of these.

- B. Paul's mental stress. v28,29.
 - 1. care = merimna - dividing, or distracting the mind.
 - 2. weak = astheneo - to be ill, to be feeble.

IV. PAUL BELIEVED HIS INFIRMITIES WERE PROOF OF HIS CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. V30

- A. "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities."
 - 1. Infirmities = astheneia = want of strength, feebleness, sickness.

- B. The reason for Paul's statement. v12:9.
 - 1. "my strength is made perfect in weakness."
 - 2. (God's) .

V. WHY WOULD PAUL SUFFER SO GREATLY?

- A. He had a powerful religious experience.
 - 1. This is to say, he had knowledge of his sinful state
 - 2. He knew how he was saved.

- B. He had a Biblical perspective.
 - 1. What happens to us is of little consequence.
 - 2. What we do affects all of eternity.
 - 3. What should a man profit?

- C. He possessed a great love for Jesus.
 - 1. "The love of Christ constraineth us."