

**BELIEVERS MUST HOLD
ON TO TRUE TEACHINGS
ABOUT JESUS**

2 CORINTHIANS 11

LOUIE ZAMPERINI

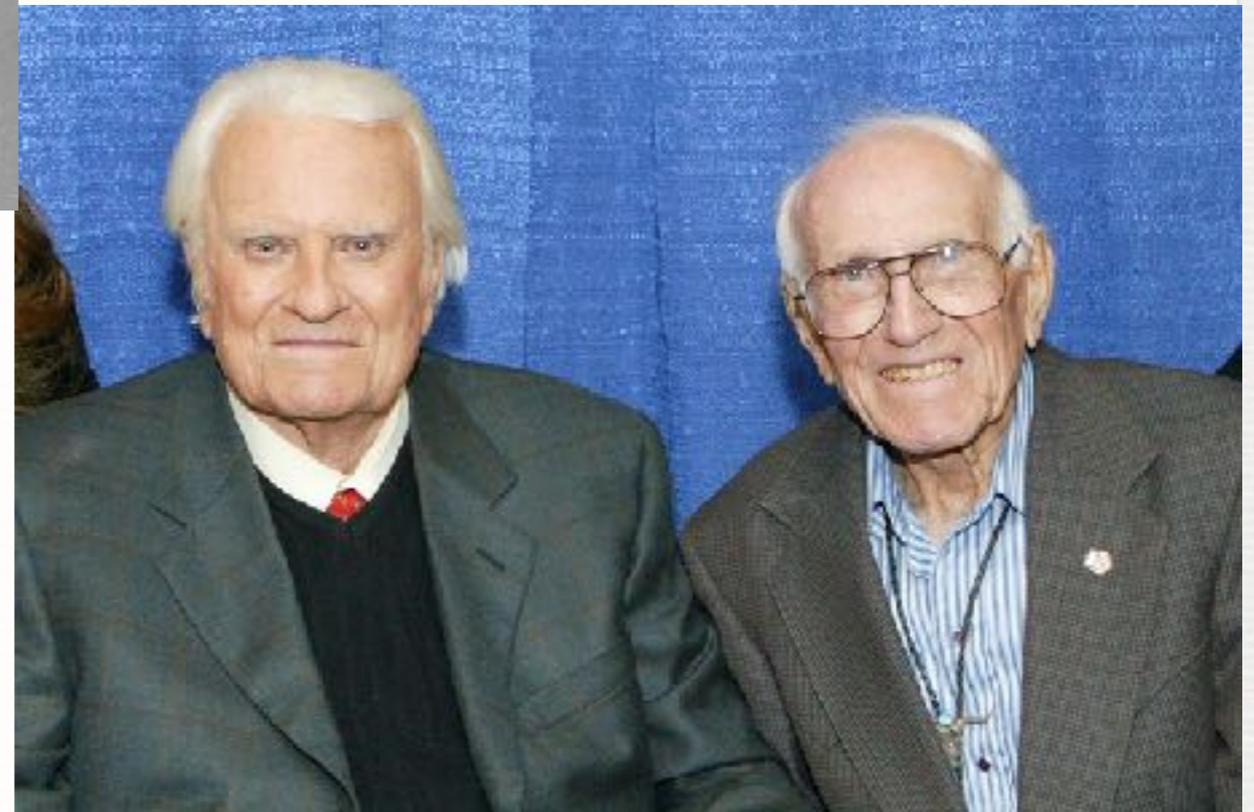


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Image from the film *Unbroken*

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INTRODUCTION

- In an effort to meet the Corinthians where they are, Paul decides to “boast” of his accomplishments in order to follow the foolish rhetorical norms of this church, hoping to gain their ear.
- In the end of his “fool’s speech,” or list of accomplishments, he turns the idea of boasting on its head and elevates the Christian hallmark of weakness in tandem with God’s strength.

**BELIEVERS MUST HOLD
TO THE TRUE GOSPEL SO
THAT THEY CAN
IDENTIFY AND REJECT
FALSE GOSPELS**

2 CORINTHIANS 11:1-15

BOASTING

- Paul reluctantly engages in boasting to gain the ear of the Corinthians.
- His reluctance to boast according to their etiquette is clear in verse 1, as he essentially says, “Bear with me as I play the fool so I can expose the foolishness of my opponents.”
- Though he disdains doing it, he is forced to “answer a fool according to his folly” (Proverbs 26:5).

BOASTING

- Paul begins to boast according to their standards in what commentators call the “fool’s speech,” which is known for parading one’s credentials in order to gain status and approval.
- But first, verses 1–6 reveal Paul’s justification for engaging in this type of Corinthian boasting he so vehemently hates.
- His appeal for the Corinthians to hear out his “fool’s speech” is based on three preliminary grounds.

BOASTING

- First, Paul's godly and paternal jealousy (verse 2).
- Since the Corinthians were betrothed to Christ upon their conversion, he considered himself a "father of the bride" of sorts, whose fundamental goal was to present her blameless to the bridegroom (Ephesians 5:27).

BOASTING

- Second, Paul's fears of their deception (verses 3–4).
- Paul clearly fears that dishonest teachers and false gospels, led ultimately by Satan himself (13–15), will steer the Corinthians astray from faithfulness to Christ, for they are already putting up with rivals in their midst who preach “another Jesus” than the true Christ.

BOASTING

- Third, Paul's authority.
- Paul states that the Corinthians should bear with his boasting because of his apostolic authority.
- If the Corinthians were willing to hear foolish boasting and different versions of the Gospel from false teachers, they certainly owed Paul the floor to reveal his list of credentials and his version of the Gospel.

FALSE TEACHERS

- Paul offers a final justification for his boasting: his “no-charge” ministry in contrast with the paid ministry of the false apostles.
- In addition to their numerous misbeliefs about apostleship, the Corinthians were convinced by false teachers that accepting payment for teaching was another criterion for being a true apostle.

FALSE TEACHERS

- Paul distinguished himself from the false apostles in Corinth in the way he labored with his own hands (1 Corinthians 4:12).
- He occasionally received unsolicited assistance from congregations, as was the case concerning the Macedonians (verse 9) but was uneasy accepting support, as evidenced by his hyperbole in verse 8.

FALSE TEACHERS

- The Corinthians did not receive Paul's policy well, taking his refusal of their remuneration as a sign of a lack of love.
- Paul has presented logic in refusing to receive support in other letters (1 Corinthians 9:17–18; 2 Thessalonians 3:9–10) but the immediate reason is to distinguish between his genuine ministry and the false “ministry” of the false apostles (verse 12, 2:17).

FALSE TEACHERS

- This section serves as an explanation and an introduction for Paul's upcoming boastful remarks.
- While he hates to engage in such a self-obsessive practice, he eventually does it out of desperate love for the Corinthians.
- If only they would have ears to hear the dangers of accepting a different Jesus, a different spirit, and a different Gospel (verse 4).

FALSE TEACHERS

- Perhaps if he speaks to them according to their foolish norms, they will hear him.
- May we, too, have ears to identify false teaching and flee from any false gospel.
- We, like Paul, must be willing to exert great effort in order to hold true to the true Christ and His Gospel, however painstaking and uncomfortable it may be.

**GOD'S POWER IS
EXPERIENCED IN THE
BELIEVER'S WEAKNESS**

2 CORINTHIANS 11:16-33

FOOL'S SPEECH

- Finally, Paul begins his “fool’s speech,” which parades his accolades and commendations in true Corinthian fashion.
- Paul “brags” of his impeccable religious credentials, severe apostolic trials, mighty works done through him, and surreal visionary experiences (22–29).
- If anyone could win in these résumé competitions in Corinth, it was Paul.

FOOL'S SPEECH

- While he knows such worldly boasting is foolish and the opposite of godly, he deems it the necessary door to take in order to reach the fools with truth.
- He makes sure, however, that his hearers know that this strategy comes from him and not God, stating that he's masquerading "as a fool" or "a madman" in order to comply with their norms of rhetoric.

WEAKNESS

- Paul ends his list in verse 30 by explaining why his boasting is distinctive. He is proud of the evidences not of his strengths, but of his weaknesses so that God could display unbelievable power in his deliverance of Paul during these terrifying circumstances.
- Also, since his hearers may consider his lengthy and severe list of trials as gross exaggerations, he appeals to God's omniscience to argue that he is not lying.

DAMASCUS

- Damascus held for Paul the indelible memory of his conversion.
- He was once a self-righteous Pharisee, attacking Christians most gruesomely. But on the Damascus Road, he encountered Christ and received His call.
- To escape Damascus, in a weak and fearful moment, he was lowered in basket outside the city wall like a lowly criminal in the shadows.

**APPLICATION:
MARKS OF A
FALSE TEACHER
(2 PETER 2)**

WORK OF FALSE TEACHERS (1)

- “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.”
- Secretly bring in heresies - doesn't mean that their teaching is secret, but focuses on the deceptive nature of their teaching. No false teacher announces that he or she is a false teacher.

WORK OF FALSE TEACHERS (1)

- Bring in destructive heresies that destroy by telling lies about Jesus Christ and his work for us and in us.
- These heresies hurt people. People's lives are destroyed. Heresy isn't harmless.
- Denying the Lord (Master) who bought them. Peter is saying that they appear to be saved. People who appear to be godly can still bring destructive heresies

POPULARITY OF FALSE TEACHERS (2)

- “Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned.”
- False teachers may be very popular. Just because something works doesn't mean that it is true. Certainly God's works will bear fruit, but Satan can counterfeit
- Truth will be maligned (blasphemed). The teachers and their followers will disgrace God and His honor.

STRATEGY OF FALSE TEACHERS (3)

- “and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”
- False teachers use greed (covetousness) to attract followers. They present a gospel that has self-gratification at its heart.
- Their judgment is not idle – they will be judged for their heresy. Even though it may seem that they prosper, judgment is coming.

BIBLICAL TEACHERS

- The opposite of these three characteristics provide a good definition of what biblical teachers should be.
- They are teaching the whole counsel of God and exposing heresies inside and outside the church.
- They preach God's Word even when sometimes it can be unpopular to the watching world.
- They are not greedy and do not seek to exploit their followers.