

# 2 Corinthians: A Suffering Servant

## [2 Corinthians 11:16-33](#)

Paul is deeply concerned that the believers at Corinth are being deceived and taken advantage of by false teachers. As he refutes their arguments, he further explains that true, mature believers are marked by suffering, not success. As modeled in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God works through human weakness to display his power and advance the gospel.

## Application

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1. Paul argues that his suffering validates the authenticity of his faith and ministry. How have you seen this truth play out in your life or the lives of others? What kind of suffering have you experienced for the gospel? In what ways has it affected your faith?
2. In the United States, we enjoy many freedoms, benefits, and protections as Christians that allow us to practice our faith and advance the gospel in ways that are rare in the history of the Church. What are some ways that this prosperity and affluence can hurt us as a church body and as individuals?
3. In the season of Covid-19, have you struggled more with sacrificing your personal freedom in order to come under authority and bless others? Or have you struggled more with fear and taking risks? What does this reveal about your heart? How can you grow in this area?
4. Paul's life has been supplanted by the mission of the gospel—he is consumed with concern, empathy, and responsibility towards those under his care. How can you take one step towards growth in this area? Who is God calling you to be on the hook for?

## Key Points

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- Paul feels responsible to prepare the Church for Jesus, and he's concerned that they are being deceived by false teachers who appear godly but are actually agents of Satan.
- These false teachers have built their credentials on birthright, and Paul explains that the true measure of spiritual authenticity and authority has nothing to do with this. Genuine faith is made evident through suffering.

- In our culture, we do not typically suffer as Paul did for the gospel. This can be a disadvantage—the benefit of persecution is that it reveals whether or not our faith is real.
- Paul chooses to put himself in situations where he will be oppressed, lose personal freedoms, and be exposed to death in order to advance the gospel. We must consider if we would be willing to follow this path.
- In carrying the burden of many churches, Paul has been supplanted by the mission of the gospel. He not only feels responsible for them, he also feels great empathy and is concerned more about them than himself.