

**Context**

1] Church in Corinth – Paul’s bridgehead into Europe – 1 ½ years stay

2] Problems in church – ‘false apostles’ (11:13-15)

*Nb great speakers - probably local, Jewish (11:22)*

**Summary** Let me, (like the false apostles) indulge in some unchristian boasting (16-21a). I have the complete religious pedigree (21b, 22). I have worked harder, been more persecuted by Jew and Gentile, been more stretched physically than any other (23-27) On top of that I feel responsible for the whole churches maturing (28, 29). The Lord knows I have been weak from the very start of my ministry (30, 31)

??? Why, if he knows it is foolish, does he carry on ‘boasting’?

**MP** God’s work / strength is shown in our weakness

**KV** If I must boast, I will boast of things that show my weakness. (30)

**Intro** On judgement day – what have you done?

**Paul’s foolishness (16-21)**

1] His boasting (16)

*Nb I repeat - cf (11:1)*

2] Unlike the Lord (17)

*? Why would you deliberately not act as the Lord would?!!!!*

*Nb the Lord is gentle and humble in heart (Mt 11:29)*

*\*Be modest as The Lord is modest \**

3] His action (18-21)

a) Many are boasting – so will Paul (18)

*\*don’t boast in anything but the grace of Jesus - it is total foolishness\**

b) That will suit the Corinthians (19)

*nb heavy sarcasm!!*

c) Like worldly leaders (20)

*ie Exploits / preys upon (KJV) cf (Lk 20:47)*

*Takes advantage / catches cf (Lk 5:5)*

*Slaps on the face cf (Lk 22:64; Acts 23:2)*

*\* as Christian leaders, do NOT be authoritarian, exploitative or harsh\**

d) His weakness in contrast

*cf The (real) work is to believe in Jesus (John 6:29)*

**Paul’s ‘credentials’ (22-29)**

1] His pedigree (22/23a)

a) Hebrews (Aramaic vs Greek speaking Jews (Acts 6:1)

b) Israelites the people adopted by God (Rom 9:4)

c) Sons of Abraham – father of the faithful (Rom 4:12)

*Nb Refuse, compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ. (Phil 3:8)*

*\*Note - Our ultimate identity is as a servant of Christ\**

2] His 'triumphs/ achievements' (cf 4:8-9; 6:4-12)

a) His persecution by man (23b -25a)

*cf 40 'degrades an Israelite.' (Deuteronomy 25:3)*

*Paul beaten, by Roman court (e.g Acts 16:22, 23, 37-39)*

*I.e. He dies daily (1 Cor 15:31)*

b) His opposition by 'natural forces (25b, 26a)

c) His human rejection (26b)

*nb In danger from Gentiles / Jews – the world hates (John 15:18,19)*

d) His personal discomfort (27)

*Cf his calling by God (Acts 9:15,16).*

*\*Take note - Christian identity is independent of a) birth / background/culture b) effort c) recognition d) achievement\**

3] His identity with weakness in the church (28, 29)

*cf (Matthew 18:1-6,10-14 )*

*nb 'weak' = believers who are hyper sensitive (Rom 14:1; 1Cor 8:7; 9:22)*

*\*Note - Godly leadership 'burns' for the maturing of Christians\**

### **Paul's boast (30-33)**

1] His weakness (30)

*Nb verified by God Himself*

*I.e. the God and Father of our Lord Jesus (1:3; Eph 1:3; 1 Thess 1:1; 1 Pet 1:3)*

*\*As a Christian – boast in your weakness\**

2] Not lying - before God (31)

*Nb not lying / solemn assertion cf (Gal 1:20; Rom 9:1; 1 Tim 2:7)*

*\*God is our ultimate witness\**

3] His 'commission' (32, 33)

*Nb Damascus 75 m N of Jer. Paul entered in power left in weakness -*

*the Corona Muralis (Crown of the Wall) – for first soldier to scale the wall of a city the Roman army was attacking. As Christ's fool, ignominiously lowered down a wall (Acts 9:25)!*

*\*Understand that the start of the Christian life is defeat and disgrace\**

### **Conclusion**

1] Our only boast / hope before God is that we trust in Jesus

2] If there is anything else in your mind, perhaps you are not in Christ.