

2 Corinthians: Encouragement in Troubling Times

"Playing Hurt" # 24

2 Corinthians 11:22-30

10-30-16 Sun AM

There is a phrase often used in sports, "He plays hurt," or "you have to be able to play hurt." The sports world is full of athletes who played hurt:

1. Y.A. Tittle played the 1964 NFL season with a concussion and a cracked sternum.
2. Jack Youngblood of the 1979 L.A. Rams played a playoff game with a broken fibula bone from a chop block with a brace on his leg. He sacked Roger Staubach on a crucial play.
3. Kirk Gibson of the L.A. Dodgers came into the 1988 WS with two injured legs in the bottom of the ninth with two outs and two on and hit a game winning home run to win the game. Who can forget the image of him as He hobbled around the bases.
4. Hershel Walker of the Georgia Bulldogs played in the 1981 Sugar Bowl against Notre Dame and gained 150 yards with a separated shoulder.

These all played hurt and overcome great odds and obstacles. We Christians need to learn to play hurt in the Christian life. It is amazing how easy it is for Christians to give up and quit. We are easily offended and give up and even leave a church.

A few thoughts about this passage:

1. Here we have the fourth and most comprehensive list recorded in Scripture of Paul's sufferings for the cause of Christ (1:4-10; 4:7-12; and 6:4-10).
2. The sad truth is that the list is not exhaustive.
3. He gives more details than Luke did in the book of Acts and some are not mentioned in Acts.
4. True ministers boast not about their accomplishments but about the Lord's comfort in suffering.

How would you have liked to get this promise when you got saved?

Acts 9:15-16, "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

The false apostles had a life of ease and comfort, but Paul bore on his body the marks [physical results of persecution] of the Lord Jesus (Gal. 6:17). Strong's Concordance says "**scar of service!**" We could say he turned his scars into stars.

TT- 11:21-23a- The apostle Paul did not want to boast of his sufferings but the Corinthian believers' acceptance of the false apostles made it impossible for him not to do so.

vs. 23b-28- Let's examine Paul's scars in service this morning:

1. In Labors more Abundant (v. 23b).

This speaks of working to the point of sweat and exhaustion. This speaks of intense effort in the ministry whether it is in the word or shepherding the flock.

2. In Stripes above Measure (vs. 23c, 24, 25a).

Five times he received from the Jews 39 lashes.

Deut. 25:1-3, "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.

The Jews limited the number of blows to 39 lest they miscount and give more than 40 lashes. Note v. 25- He was beaten 3 times with rods by the Romans. This is recorded in Acts 16 at Philippi. Paul proudly bore the scars from his beatings by the Jews and the Romans.

3. In Prisons more Frequent (v.23d).

He was in prison in Philippi, Jerusalem, Caesarea, and twice in Rome (house arrest and the dungeon). Early church father, Clement of Rome, Paul was in prison 7 times.

4. Once I was Stoned (v.25b).

He was dragged out of the city of Lystra stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19). This was from mob violence not from the government or the religious leaders.

Some believe he died and was caught up to heaven as recorded in 12:2.

5. Three times I suffered shipwreck (v. 25c).

Acts records 9 sea voyages before he wrote 2 Corinthians and probably that many more after Paul wrote this letter.

6. General Perils (vs. 26-27).

1. Paul was especially mistreated by the false brethren, false apostles, and Judaizers.
2. His suffering separated him from the ease and comfort of the false apostles, validated his salvation, and proved his apostleship.

7. The Care of all the Churches (vs.28-29).

On top of all this suffering, he had the spiritual welfare, care, and burden for the churches. These pressures affected his peace, joy, and satisfaction.

v. 29- The weak in faith, the worldly, the spiritually stunted, caused him great pain (Heb. 13:17).

Con:

What kept Paul in the game of life? Paul played hurt in the Christian life and overcame because he depended on the power of God and boasted in his infirmities. He magnified God's power at work in him in his sufferings.

What about you today?