

1 Corinthians 4:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

Analysis

But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. Paul's resolve is qualified: *ean ho Kyrios thelēse* (ἐάν ὁ Κύριος θελήσῃ, "if the Lord wills")—submitting travel plans to divine sovereignty (cf. James 4:13-15; Acts 18:21). The verb *gnōsomai* (γνώσομαι, "I will know/ascertain") implies examination—Paul will personally investigate the troublemakers.

The contrast is sharp: *ton logon* (τὸν λόγον, "the word/speech") versus *tēn dynamin* (τὴν δύναμιν, "the power"). The arrogant Corinthians had impressive rhetoric but lacked genuine spiritual authority. Paul distinguishes eloquent talk from *dynamis*—the power of the Spirit that authenticates gospel ministry (1:17-18; 2:4-5; 2 Cor 12:12). His coming will expose whether critics merely talk impressively or manifest the Spirit's reality. Words are cheap; power proves authenticity.

Historical Context

Greco-Roman culture prized rhetorical skill—sophists dazzled audiences with eloquence. Corinthian critics likely attacked Paul's speaking ability (2 Cor 10:10; 11:6) while boasting of their own sophistication. Paul consistently subordinates human rhetoric to Spirit-empowered proclamation (1:17; 2:1-5). His impending visit threatens to unmask all pretense—authentic apostolic authority manifests not

in flowery speech but in miracles, transformed lives, and moral courage under persecution.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Do you evaluate ministries and teachers primarily by rhetorical polish and charisma, or by genuine spiritual fruit and power?
2. In what areas of your life does impressive 'speech' mask a lack of real 'power'—religious talk without spiritual reality?
3. How do you cultivate the habit of submitting your plans to God's will ('if the Lord wills') rather than presuming on the future?

Interlinear Text

ἐλεύσομαι	δὲ	ταχέως	πρὸς	ὑμᾶς	ἐὰν	ὁ	κύριος
I will come	But	shortly	to	you	if	G3588	the Lord
G2064	G1161	G5030	G4314	G5209	G1437		G2962

θελήσῃ	καὶ	γνώσομαι	οὐ	τὸν	λόγον	τῶν
will	and	will know	not	G3588	the speech	G3588
G2309	G2532	G1097	G3756		G3056	

πεφυσιωμένων	ἀλλὰ	τὴν	δύναμιν·
of them which are puffed up	but	G3588	the power
G5448	G235		G1411

Additional Cross-References

Acts 18:21 (Parallel theme): But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

Acts 19:21 (Parallel theme): After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

Hebrews 6:3 (Parallel theme): And this will we do, if God permit.

Romans 15:32 (Parallel theme): That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

1 Corinthians 2:6 (Parallel theme): Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

1 Corinthians 11:34 (Parallel theme): And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

1 Corinthians 4:18 (Parallel theme): Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.

2 Corinthians 1:23 (Parallel theme): Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

James 4:15 (References Lord): For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.