

1 Corinthians 9:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

Analysis

But I have used none of these things: After fourteen verses asserting his rights, Paul shockingly renounces them all. The Greek *kechrēmai* (κέχρημαι, perfect tense, "I have used") emphasizes sustained refusal—Paul has not taken support in the past and will not in the future. **Neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me:** This entire argument is not a veiled request for money; Paul is establishing principles for others while personally declining them.

For it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. The Greek *kauchēma* (καύχημα, "boast, glorying") refers to Paul's unique missionary strategy: preaching without charge (v. 18). Paul would rather die than lose this distinctive ministry approach. Why? Because financial independence removes accusations of greed, demonstrates sacrificial love, and mirrors Christ's self-emptying (Phil 2:5-8). Paul's "boast" is not pride but strategic wisdom—he glories in making the gospel free, a living illustration of grace.

Historical Context

In a culture where philosophers charged fees and sophists demanded payment, Paul's free preaching was revolutionary. It disarmed critics, demonstrated genuine

love, and made the gospel accessible to the poor. Paul supported himself through tent-making (Acts 18:3; 20:33-35), modeling the very sacrifice he preached. His "glorying" was his unique calling—a life of voluntary poverty for gospel advance.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul assert his rights (v. 4-14) only to dramatically refuse them (v. 15)?
2. What is the relationship between Paul's "glorying" in free preaching and boasting in the cross (Gal 6:14)?
3. How does Paul's willingness to die rather than compromise his ministry model Christlike devotion?

Interlinear Text

ἐγὼ	δὲ	οὐδενὶ	ἔχρησάμην	τούτων	οὐκ	ἔγραψα
I	But	none	have used	of these things	neither	have I written
G1473	G1161	G3762	G5530	G5130	G3756	G1125
δὲ	ταῦτα	ἵνα	οὕτως	γένηται	ἐν	ἐμοί·
But	these things	that	so	done	unto	me
G1161	G5023	G2443	G3779	G1096	G1722	G1698
G2570	G1063					
μοι	μᾶλλον	ἀποθανεῖν	ἢ	τὸ	καύχημά	μου
for me	it were better	to die	than	G3588	glorying	my
G3427	G3123	G599	G2228	G2745	G3450	G2443
τις	κενώσῃ					
any man	should make					
G5100	G2758					

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 2:9 (Parallel theme): For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

2 Thessalonians 3:8 (Parallel theme): Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

1 Corinthians 9:12 (Parallel theme): If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

Acts 20:34 (Parallel theme): Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

Acts 18:3 (Parallel theme): And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

Acts 20:24 (Parallel theme): But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 8:3 (Parallel theme): As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

1 Corinthians 4:12 (Parallel theme): And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

Matthew 18:6 (Parallel theme): But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

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