

2 Corinthians 11:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me.

Analysis

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. Paul introduces the 'fool's speech' (aphrosyne, ἀφροσύνη) that will dominate chapters 11-12. The Greek verb anechesthe (ἀνέχεσθε, 'bear with') appears twice—first as wish, then as assertion. Paul must adopt his opponents' foolish boasting strategy to expose its folly.

This ironic request frames what follows: Paul will 'boast' like the false apostles, but his boasting will subvert their entire value system by cataloging weaknesses rather than strengths, sufferings rather than triumphs. The repetition emphasizes both reluctance (he wishes they would tolerate this) and necessity (they must endure it). Paul's self-description as speaking in 'folly' is itself wise—worldly boasting is foolishness, yet he must temporarily adopt it to defend the gospel.

The appeal 'would to God' (ophelon, ὄφελον) expresses strong desire bordering on prayer. Paul's pastoral heart shows through—he hates boasting but loves the Corinthians enough to engage in it for their sake. His self-conscious embarrassment at having to defend himself contrasts sharply with the false apostles' shameless self-promotion.

Historical Context

Written around AD 56-57 from Macedonia after Paul's 'painful visit' to Corinth and severe letter. False apostles called 'super-apostles' (11:5) had infiltrated the

church, attacking Paul's credentials, demanding financial support, and promoting triumphalistic ministry that valued eloquence, visions, and worldly impressiveness over cruciform weakness.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. When have you had to defend yourself or the gospel in ways that felt uncomfortable or foolish by worldly standards?
2. How does Paul's reluctant, self-conscious boasting differ from the confident self-promotion common in modern ministry and leadership?
3. What would it look like to adopt Paul's ironic strategy today—boasting in weakness to expose the folly of boasting in strength?

Interlinear Text

Ὥφελον	ἀνέχεσθέ	μου	μικρόν	τῇ	ἀφροσύνη	ἀλλὰ
Would to God	bear	with me	a little	G3588	in my folly	indeed
G3785	G430	G3450	G3397		G877	G235
καὶ	ἀνέχεσθέ	μου				
and	bear	with me				
G2532	G430	G3450				

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 11:19 (Parallel theme): For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.

2 Corinthians 11:4 (Parallel theme): For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have

not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

2 Corinthians 5:13 (References God): For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

1 Corinthians 1:21 (References God): For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

2 Corinthians 11:21 (Parallel theme): I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

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