

2 Corinthians 11:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

Analysis

Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. Paul's logic: *epei polloi kauchaōntai kata sarka* (ἐπεὶ πολλοὶ καυχῶνται κατὰ σάρκα, 'since many boast according to flesh'), *kagō kauchēsomai* (κἀγὼ καυχήσομαι, 'I also will boast'). *Kata sarka* (κατὰ σάρκα, 'according to flesh') means by worldly standards —ancestry, credentials, accomplishments, strength.

The concessive strategy is clear: if you value fleshly boasting, I can play that game. But Paul's coming boast will be ironic—he'll 'boast' of beatings, shipwrecks, stoning, hunger, nakedness, and weakness (vv. 23-33). This inverts *kata sarka* boasting by presenting sufferings as credentials. The false apostles boast of strength; Paul will boast of weakness. Both use the form of boasting; the content is radically different.

The simple future *kauchēsomai* (καυχήσομαι, 'I will boast') is emphatic—Paul is committed to this ironic strategy. He will meet his opponents on their chosen battlefield (boasting) but fight by different rules (boasting in weakness rather than strength). This exposes the foolishness of worldly values while defending his apostolic authority.

Historical Context

Boasting 'according to flesh' was common in ancient self-commendation letters (*periautologia*). Politicians, philosophers, and sophists cataloged their accomplishments, ancestry, education, and achievements. The 'super-apostles'

likely boasted of Jewish heritage, visions, rhetorical skill, and spiritual experiences. Paul will catalog the opposite—his sufferings for Christ.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What would 'boasting according to flesh' look like in contemporary Christianity—credentials, platforms, influence, numbers?
2. How can we adopt worldly forms (like Paul adopting boasting) while subverting worldly content and values?
3. In what ways might suffering, weakness, and persecution actually be better credentials for Christian ministry than success and recognition?

Interlinear Text

ἐπεὶ	πολλοὶ	καυχήσομαι	κατὰ	τήν	σάρκα	κάγὼ
Seeing that	many	I will glory	after	G3588	the flesh	also
G1893	G4183	G2744	G2596		G4561	G2504

καυχήσομαι

I will glory

G2744

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org