

2 Corinthians 11:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.

Analysis

And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. Paul's determination appears in the perfect tense *katenarekēsa* (κατενάρκησα, 'I was burdensome') negated—and future *tērēsō* (τηρήσω, 'I will keep').

Hysterētheis (ὕστερηθείς, 'being in want/need') acknowledges Paul experienced genuine material lack while in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3). Yet rather than burden the Corinthians, he worked with his hands and accepted help from **the brethren which came from Macedonia** (likely Silas and Timothy, Acts 18:5, bringing the Philippian gift, Phil 4:15).

The emphatic **in all things** (en panti, ἐν παντί) and **so will I keep myself** shows Paul's unwavering commitment to financial independence from the Corinthians. This wasn't ascetic self-sufficiency but strategic gospel defense. His policy prevented false apostles from claiming he was in it for money and demonstrated that true apostolic ministry serves rather than exploits.

Historical Context

Paul's tentmaking trade (Acts 18:3) allowed him to support himself while planting churches. The arrival of Silas and Timothy with financial support from Macedonia (Acts 18:5) enabled him to devote himself fully to preaching. Yet he continued refusing Corinthian support to maintain his distinctive witness against the mercenary false teachers.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's willingness to experience want rather than compromise his witness challenge modern expectations of ministerial comfort?
2. In what situations might accepting or refusing financial support be strategically important for gospel credibility?
3. What motivates your ministry—the people you serve or the support you receive? How would you know the difference?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	παρὼν	πρὸς	ὑμᾶς	καὶ	ὑστερηθεὶς	οὐ
And	when I was present	with	you	And	wanted	I was
G2532	G3918	G4314	G5209	G2532	G5302	G3756
κατενάρκησα	οὐδενός·	τὸ	γὰρ	ὑστέρημά	μου	
chargeable	to no man	G3588	for	that which was lacking	to me	
G2655	G3762		G1063	G5303	G3450	
προσανεπλήρωσαν	οἱ	ἀδελφοὶ	ἐλθόντες	ἀπὸ		
supplied	G3588	the brethren	which came	from		
G4322		G80	G2064	G575		
Μακεδονίας	καὶ	ἐν	παντὶ	ἄβαρῇ	ὑμῖν	
Macedonia	And	in	all	from being burdensome	unto you	
G3109	G2532	G1722	G3956	G4	G5213	
ἐμαυτὸν	τηρήσω	καὶ	τηρήσω			
myself	so will I keep	And	so will I keep			
G1683	G5083	G2532	G5083			

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 2:6 (Parallel theme): Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

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.
