

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 *katenrekēsa* (κατενάρκησα, 'I was burdensome') negated—and future *tērēsō* (τηρήσω, 'I will keep').

Hysterētheis (ὑστερηθείς, '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 for that which was lacking to me
G2655 G3762 G3588 G1063 G5303 G3450

προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ⁵
supplied the brethren which came from
G4322 G3588 G80 G2064 G575

Μακεδονίας καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ 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.