

2 Corinthians 5:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Analysis

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men—Eidotes oun ton phobon tou Kyriou (εἰδότες οὖν τὸν φόβον τοῦ Κυρίου, "knowing therefore the fear of the Lord"). Phobos (φόβος) ranges from reverential awe to terrified dread—here, the sobering reality of standing before Christ's bēma. This fear isn't slavish terror but appropriate seriousness about eternal accountability. It motivates evangelism: anthrōpous peithomen (ἀνθρώπους πείθομεν, "we persuade men")—Paul's apostolic ministry is driven by judgment's reality.

But we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences—Theō de pephanerōmetha (θεῷ δὲ πεφανερώμεθα, perfect tense, "to God we have been and remain manifest"). God sees Paul's motives completely. Paul appeals to the Corinthians' syneidēseis (συνειδήσεσι, "consciences")—their own moral awareness testifies to his integrity despite opponents' slander. This transparency before God and man vindicates authentic ministry versus self-promotion.

Historical Context

Paul's opponents in Corinth accused him of manipulative motives (2:17, 4:2). Paul consistently appeals to transparent ministry—no hidden agendas, no financial exploitation, no rhetorical tricks. His defense rests on God's knowledge and the

Corinthians' own experience of his character. This models ministerial integrity for all generations.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Does awareness of standing before Christ's judgment seat motivate your evangelism and ministry—why or why not?
2. How transparent are your motives before God—are there hidden agendas you rationalize but couldn't defend before Him?
3. Can you honestly appeal to others' consciences as evidence of your integrity, or would that expose inconsistencies?

Interlinear Text

Εἰδότες	οὖν	τὸν	φόβον	τοῦ	κυρίου	ἀνθρώπους
Knowing	therefore	G3588	the terror	G3588	of the Lord	men
G1492	G3767		G5401		G2962	G444
πείθομεν	θεῷ	δὲ	πεφανερῶσθαι	ἐλπίζω	δὲ	καὶ
we persuade	unto God	and	are made manifest	I trust	and	also
G3982	G2316	G1161	G5319	G1679	G1161	G2532
ἐν						G1722
ταῖς	συνειδήσεσιν	ὑμῶν	πεφανερῶσθαι			
G3588	consciences	G4893	your	are made manifest		
			G5216	G5319		

Additional Cross-References

Jude 1:23 (Parallel theme): And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

Hebrews 10:31 (References God): It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Revelation 20:15 (Parallel theme): And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Acts 18:13 (References God): Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

Psalms 76:7 (Parallel theme): Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?

Psalms 90:11 (Parallel theme): Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

Job 31:23 (References God): For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.

Nahum 1:6 (Parallel theme): Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (References God): Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 6:1 (References God): We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.