

A Different Kind of Boasting

2 Corinthians 11:16-33

September 29, 2019

How far would you go to serve others? What would you be willing to endure to benefit someone else, to encourage them? Would you be willing to give up deeply held traditions if that's what it took to serve others?

Serving others calls for a little **CRAZY**.

Why in the world would you endure sleepless nights and miss meals and put off long dreamed of vacations and purchases all for the purpose of serving others?

1. Go **CRAZY** for the good of others. 2 Corinthians 11:16-20

2 Corinthians 11:16-33 — **16** *I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. 17 What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool. 18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. 19 For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! 20 For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. 21 To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!*

There are people who will take advantage of you for their own personal benefit...but there are also people who will go a little crazy in their attempts to encourage you and make you better.

2. Embrace **SUFFERING** for the good of others. 2 Corinthians 11:21-29

But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.

What does it mean to be a better servant of Christ? Does it mean you have more stuff, a bigger retirement account or a nicer house? Apparently, for Paul, being a better servant of Christ meant embracing suffering for the good of others.

24 *Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger*

from false brothers; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

Are you wondering why it seems like faithful followers of Jesus, people who really do desire to live for the glory of God and the good of others, even those kinds of folks suffer and sometimes, it even seems like they suffer so much more than others?

28 And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?

His body had been beaten and his mind and heart were burdened. He bore the sorrows and troubles of his people on his heart.

3. Accept **HUMILIATION** for the good of others. 2 Corinthians 11:30-33

30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

He'll boast in the things that display the powerful, sustaining grace of God in Jesus. That's what connects me to what real success is in this life.

31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, 33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

There are people who will take advantage of you spiritually for their own benefit. But there are also people who will embrace suffering personally if it means they can encourage you in your faith. They would go a little crazy for you. And there is One who suffered Hell for you and His name is Jesus. It doesn't get any crazier than that! Believe in Him today!

Let's talk about a different kind of boasting...

1. Why would anyone think us foolish in our efforts to serve others (v.16)?
2. How do you think Jesus would have handled this situation (v.17)?
3. What impact does domineering, devouring, deceiving, demeaning and disrespectful leadership has on an organization (v.20)?
4. What did Paul mean when he said he was too weak to treat the Corinthians the way the false apostles had treated them (v.21)?
5. What would it look like for you to be a better servant of Christ (v.23)?
6. Can you recall a time when you suffered because of your efforts to serve others or share your faith with others (v.23-27)?
7. What kinds of issues causes you to suffer from anxiety (v.28)?
8. What do you see people do to others that gets your blood boiling (v.29)?

9. What is it in your life that drives you to be completely dependent on Jesus (v.30)?
10. What's the most humiliating thing that has ever happened to you in your efforts to serve others (v.32-33)?