

Introduction

- Something about how we sum up character:
 - what kind of person is so and so...?
 - and the difficulties I have in summing people up!

Paul's Example (v.3-13)

- What is on your CV?
 - what commends you?
- How many of these qualities would you put on a CV?!
 - endurance - maybe
 - troubles, hardships and distresses - probably not!
 - beatings, imprisonments and riots - not so much!
 - in hard work, sleepless nights - possibly
 - hunger - naah!
 - purity, understanding, patience and kindness - not in that form...
 - the Holy Spirit and in sincere love - again, probably not!
 - truthful speech - OK
 - the power of God - bit weird?
 - with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left....
 - through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report - this doesn't sound like a very good reference from somebody, good report and bad...!
 - genuine, yet regarded as impostors -
 - known, yet regarded as unknown -
 - dying, and yet we live on -
 - beaten, and yet not killed -
 - sorrowful, yet always rejoicing -
 - poor, yet making many rich -
 - having nothing, and yet possessing everything -
- *Utterly confusing to the CV reader!*
- Qualities here:
 - sacrifice
 - generosity
 - devoted perseverance
- *Are our lives as marked by this zeal for living for the Lord as Paul's was?*

Paul's Instruction (v.14-7:1)

- This is about closest partnerships - yoking, horses or cattle in harness together to pull plough
 - husband/wife, etc
- This is rooted in our identity: temples of the Holy Spirit
 - weird story of the MP, his wife and his mistress - wife convicted this week of stealing a kitten from the mistress....
 - married, but not living the reality of that....
- Are we devoted, "married" to Christ?
- This is addressed to believers, concerning the choices they are to make as believers from now on:
 - they are to be devoted to Christ
- How is this misused?
 - separation, in varying degrees, from the world around us...
 - for Christians of my parents generation, it was often expressed as no alcohol, no cinema, no dancing - be separate, touch no unclean thing
 - less often expressed in those terms today - in fact perhaps we've gone the other way, and allow ourselves to be steeped in the influences of the world?

