

Introduction

- If he boasts, then he is arrogant and big headed...
- If he doesn't, then he has no credentials for ministry and is a fool...
- So he invites them to treat him as a fool, and give him space to "boast":
 - but then proceeds to subvert the nature and focus of their boasts...

Paul engages

- Humanly, we are all on the same level
- Paul has as much human credibility as anyone
 - Hebrew/Jewish heritage and credibility
 - and in terms of service, he has outdone them all...
 - they can't discount Paul, and we can't discount others in church life, simply because of their background

Paul subverts their boast

- Chooses to boast of things that would smack of weakness...
 - lashes, punishments, imprisonments, beatings...
- Leading us to see focus is **service of Christ**
 - rather than putting himself at the centre (by implication, as the false apostles have done), he puts Christ and serving him at the centre
 - that is his goal and priority - taking precedence over his own personal interests and well-being

Expectation of Suffering

- *In doing that Paul highlights **service and suffering** as part of the normal Christian experience over **leisure and luxury***
- Shapes what we are aiming at, disappointed about...
 - *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)*