

18 – 2 Corinthians 11:16-12:13 – Power in weakness

What do you do when someone claims to have had a dramatic spiritual experience?

- Roberts Lairdon

“about 6 foot tall with sandy brown hair, not real short and not too long”.

"Roberts, I am calling you to a great work. I am ordaining you to a great work. You will have to run like no one else and preach like no one else. You will have to be different from everyone else."

So what is happening?

2 Cor 11:16.

Verse 19 ... foolishly followed people who enslaved them, exploited them, took advantage of them, put on airs and yet slapped them in the face.

Verse 22 ... Paul can match their boasts

Paul's boasting takes turn

... Paul boasts about the sufferings that gospel ministry has resulted in.

Verse 30-33 ... the example of Damascus.

An 'unimpressive' experience

... a spiritual experience he has had 14 years ago.

... he never told them about it when sharing the gospel with them.

... Not even when he was given a 'thorn in the flesh'

... it remains as a constant reminder not to be conceited

For us today

1) A source of money making heresy?

“Heaven Tourism”

2) The place of spiritual experiences

... he only told people reluctantly so as to help them turn away from false teachers and to turn back to following Jesus.

Do you crave spiritual experiences to legitimise or authenticate or even top up your trust in Jesus?

Do you feel that an experience like this might validate the gospel?

Are you likely to be led astray by those who claim leadership authority based on their powerful experiences or powerful credentials?

Do you see genuine Christianity as requiring extra ordinary spiritual experiences?

So what should we be like?

Verse 9, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’

People who display the power of God in our weakness?

... speak more about who God is and what he is doing in our lives and his world.

... if we get to share our testimony either publicly or privately we will be people who seek to speak of the gospel of Jesus rather than ourselves.

... I will not be someone who craves bigger, better more powerful spiritual experiences

... will be reflected in how we do church and what sort of churches and teaching we will listen to online.

One more challenge ... what motivates him in all this foolish boasting.

... away from the powerful gospel of Jesus.