

Monday Evening Bible Reading Group: May 30: 2 Corinthians 10: 12-18

This short passage takes a lot of thinking through. Paul reminds the Corinthians that he founded their Church: started them off on the journey of faith. So it is rather odd that newcomers should accuse him of interfering. This isn't a jealous bleat about others interfering with "my" Church. Paul would have been happy for others to build on his foundations: that is the way he worked as a church founder. The problem is that some of the newcomers were seeking to undermine his foundations. We'll get a glimpse of precisely what was at stake in later passages; though it isn't clearly stated. We are probably not familiar with the Pauline model of founding and moving on – indeed we probably aren't familiar with missionary passion. Church planting is a different sort of thing from church nurturing.. and maybe we are more inclined to see people having a God relationship outside any formal church membership. I think Paul would have said every Christian is a missionary: every sheep is a shepherd. Though of course not everyone is free to exercise a travelling ministry. We are all partners in the Gospel.

The rabbi expected more respect than the parent. The rabbi was doing a very special God job. Whatever our role, in a sense we are always going to fall short – markedly so if we take Jesus as our model! I like the reminder in one commentary that Gulliver was a giant and hero in Lilliput, being much the biggest being around; but then became a child's play thing in Brobdingnag, the land of real giants. There is quite a difficult balancing act here. We are not entitled to be satisfied with ourselves (self-satisfied). We can never boast. But isn't a little quiet satisfaction in a job well done OK. It is a sad person who always feels a failure!

What do you make of the final sentence: "It's what God says about you that makes the difference"?