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The Memory of a Non-Violent Jesus in Paul's Letters

Paul's Use of the Jesus Tradition

If Matthew's gospel is representative of the early church's memory of Jesus as one who eschewed violence, Paul's letters hold the potential to push the evidence for this picture of Jesus earlier still. Surprisingly, little has been made of this particular continuity between Jesus and Paul, and the present chapter will be an attempt not just at filling this gap in the scholarly treatments already on offer, for I will also demonstrate that this particular continuity is one of the most salient features of early Christianity, Pauline or otherwise.

At the very real risk of falling into the familiar ruts of exploring the continuities (or in some cases divergences) between Jesus and Paul,[1] I want to revisit this issue by focusing on the very particular theme of non-violence. This theme offers a bypass of the traditional problems since one need not be confined to identifying allusions or quotations of Jesus Tradition alone; there is ostensibly a *corresponding pattern of non-violent behavior* that should be discernible as well. In the following pages, I want to highlight one place where Paul follows Jesus in both sayings (teaching) and actions (example) and explain why *this* particular continuity between Jesus

1. Perhaps the best recent treatment of the topic is Still (ed.), *Jesus and Paul Reconnected*.

and Paul is critically important for determining the place of non-violence in early Christianity.[2]

A Pauline Text That Advises Non-Retaliation

The most secure starting point for such an investigation is any Pauline text that exhorts his audience to refrain from retaliation when wronged by another. Although this will be our starting point, the theme of non-retaliation does not convey the full measure of Jesus' (and Paul's) non-violent ethics. Other themes that will demand our attention are reconciliation, peace, love, doing good, and Paul's own willingness to suffer abuse for the sake of his apostolic witness. We will focus initially on non-retaliation in Paul's letters and in his own example of non-retaliation in his willingness to suffer abuse for the sake of the gospel.

The proper response of Christians to mistreatment—whether from fellow Christians or outsiders—is clear in Paul's letters.[3] Before attempting to demonstrate Paul's continuity with Jesus Tradition, the texts in which Paul advocates non-retaliation should be brought into view. Only once the startling frequency of Paul's teaching is in view can one appreciate the material correspondence between Paul and Jesus on this issue.[4]

2. In view of the stated focus of this investigation, the three clearest instances of Paul's use of Jesus Tradition will be set aside. It is only in 1 Corinthians where Paul clearly quotes a saying of Jesus, and in each case the saying is unrelated to the issue of non-violence (1 Cor 7:10–11 (Mark 10:11–12; Matt 5:32); 9:14 (Luke 10:7; Matt 10:10); 11:23–25 (Luke 22:19–20; Mark 14:22–24). A similar conclusion must be drawn from the next two clearest examples—2 Cor 12:9 and 1 Thess 4:15—neither passage addresses the issue of non-violence directly. In order to investigate the continuity or divergence between Jesus and Paul on the theme of non-violence, one must examine those elements of Paul's letters which both address the theme of non-violence and arguably appear to be allusions to the teaching of or about Jesus.

3. Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation*, 211, writes that "references to proper behavior in response to injury or persecution appear in nearly all his extant letters and in a variety of genres."

4. I borrow the phrase *material correspondence* from Furnish, "The Jesus-Paul Debate," 46, though I use the term in this case to refer to one aspect of the correspondence between Jesus and Paul, whereas Furnish uses the phrase to refer to a broader range of issues.

- "Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them." (Rom 12:14)
- "Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them, if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom 12:17–21)
- "When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly." (1 Cor 4:12–13a)
- "Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near." (Phil 4:5)
- "Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. (1 Thess 5:13b–15)
- "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with on another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other, just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." (Col 3:12–15a)[5]

Several more examples could be given, but these few examples bring the issue of non-retaliation to the table.[6] Clearly the issue of non-retaliation,

5. Apart from the Colossians quotation, the rest are in canonical order. I placed Colossians last only to flag that I am aware that the authorship of the letter is a disputed issue. It is not necessary to the present argument, but does show a continuation of Paul's emphasis if it was by one of his own "disciples."

6. Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation*, 214, for example, adds 2 Cor 6:3–10, where Paul's endurance through suffering is catalogued in terms of his *forbearance* (μακροθυμία) and *genuine love* (ἀγάπη ἀνυποκρίτῳ); Gal 5:16–24, where love, peace and forbearance are the fruit of the Spirit (which are at war with the works of the Flesh). On Galatians, see Chapter Four. Compare also 1 Cor 6:1–8, where the believer is exhorted to prefer being wronged to finding judicial vindication outside of the Christian assembly. Finally, 1 Corinthian 13 identifies love as forbearing, not counting evil, and enduring all things (13:4, 5, 7). The preponderance of the theme of enduring suffering in 1 Thessalonians suggests that Paul's church there was successfully resisting the urge to retaliate in the face of unjust suffering

as I have presented it here, includes far more than the prohibition of returning evil for evil. Vengeance, cursing, litigating, and tallying up evils received are all related to the theme of retaliation; all of these activities are off-limits in Paul's letters. Likewise, positive responses that Paul advises as alternatives to retaliation are doing good, blessing, conciliating, forgiving, and loving. Not only are these various actions and prohibitions part of Paul's paraenetic material, these themes appear in a variety of other genres: Paul's descriptions of his own behavior in trying circumstances (i.e., the peristasis catalogues); the hymn extolling love; and the "virtue" and "vice" lists of Galatians. The preponderance of texts advocating non-retaliation has exercized its proper influence: there is little debate about the *presence* of the theme of non-retaliation in Paul's letters. Disagreement simmers around the discussion of the *motivation* for Paul's instructions and the traditio-historical *background* of the material.[7]

Romans 12:14 and 17 are considered two of the most identifiable allusions to dominical sayings in Paul's letters. What follows is an examination of whether Paul's exhortation in Romans 12 shows signs of dependence on early (i.e., pre-synoptic) traditions about Jesus and his teaching.

Romans 12:14

Comparing the Sayings (Rom 12:14; Luke 6:27–28; Matt 5:44)—Romans 12:14 is perhaps the most readily accepted dominical allusion in Paul's letters.[8] When Paul's language is compared to parallels in Matthew (5:44) and Luke (6:27–28), the reason for the majority view becomes clear.[9]

brought about by their "own compatriots" (cf. 1 Thess 1:6–7; 2:14–15; 3:1–8; 5:13b–15), see chapter 5.

7. Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation*, 216. It could be objected that including "lesser" evils (e.g., enduring verbal abuse, an unspecified admonition to be patient, etc.) which may or may not be related to physical violence is evidence we have over-egged the pudding; on the contrary, we simply recognize that Paul's exhortations prevent retaliation up to, that is to say *all the way up to*, self-defense. Enduring "lesser" offenses may be "less" non-violent than enduring a physical assault, but it is not unrelated. If one is untrained in responding non-violently to "minor" offenses, how could one be expected to cope with the temptation to live a retaliatory lifestyle in everyday matters?

8. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 96. Cf. Neirynck, "Paul and the Sayings of Jesus," 270; Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 305: "Wir haben feine genaue Wiedergabe, sondern eine targumartige Paraphrase des Jesuswortes vor uns."

9. So-called parallels between Romans and Matthew are marked with double underlining; parallels between Romans and Luke are identified with a single underline. The

Romans: "Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them."

Luke: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you."

Matt: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Numerous proposals for Paul's "rearranged" wording have been made,[10] but the fundamental point is best summarized by Dunn. He suggests that the differences in the wording of the sayings illustrates that Jesus' teaching was part of an early "living tradition" in which some flexibility was allowed, so long as the proper point was still being made.[11] The amount of data available for comparison makes it rather difficult to reach a firm conclusion about Paul's source(s), especially since he may have been working with something more fluid than a written form of Q. But as some recent work on oral tradition has shown, one of the chief characteristics of oral tradition is the flexibility permitted within the fixed tradition.[12] In short, a word-for-word approach to comparisons adopts a literary model on what is at least *partly* an oral phenomenon. At points Romans 12:14 is closer to Matthew's gospel, in other respects it follows Luke more closely, but whatever its parent (that is, whether literary text or oral tradition, or both), Paul's expression arguably echoes Jesus' saying. The malleability of 12:14 supports the view that this saying could have been remembered from the beginning in a number of different forms. The differences do not indicate a corruption or change in the logia over time. Rather, it is more likely that Jesus said similar things on different occasions, increasing from the start the diversity of the earliest traditional material. Dunn concludes: "The fact

comparrison was originally drawn from Dunn, *Romans*, 2:745.

10. For a full discussion, see Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 96–105. Romans 12:14 shares Luke's verb (εὐλογεῖν), but Matthew's object (οἱ διώκοντες).

11. Dunn, *Romans* 2:745. See also his considerably expanded defense of this position on the flexibility of living tradition in Dunn, "Jesus Tradition in Paul," 155–78 (esp. 174), and the work cited in the next footnote.

12. See, e.g., Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 240–318. See also Dunn, "Altering the Default Setting," 139–75. More importantly, oral tradition "subverts the idea(l) of an '*original*' version" since the tradition is "at best the *witness* of the event, and as there were presumably several witnesses, so there may well have been several traditions, or versions of the tradition, *from the first*" (153). Both Dunn and Bauckham build on the work of Bailey, "Middle Eastern Oral Tradition," 363–67, and Bailey, "Informal Controlled Oral Tradition," 4–11, and an ever-growing field of literature related to the oral transmission of traditions. See also Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*.

that [Jesus'] exhortation was remembered in different versions simply underlines the extent to which Jesus' sayings formed a living tradition where the expression of the sense was more important than a particular form of words."[13]

Objection on the Grounds of Old Testament "Background"—A great deal of literature that antedates or is contemporary with Paul's letters gives similar instruction without depending on the teachings or example of Jesus.[14] Nonetheless, something *is* unique about Romans 12:14. The traditional Jewish sapiential antonyms, *bless* and *curse* (εὐλογέω and καταράομαι), are combined by Paul in an unusual way. In the Old Testament the two actions are often contrasted, but blessing is not directed toward the one who curses. For instance, Psalm 108:28 reads (LXX):

> They will curse (καταράσονται), but you will bless (εὐλογήσεις)
> Let my opponents be put to shame,
> but your slave will be glad.

In other words, the psalmist is cursed by his opponents, but blessed by God. In this case too, the psalmist happens to pray that the curse of the accusers is revisited upon their own heads (108:17–20). This pattern is so common in the ancient world that Michael Thompson claims that "*nowhere* in pre-Christian Greek literature do we find humans (or God) responding to καταρᾶν or λοιδορεῖν with εὐλογεῖν. The evidence from vocabulary therefore strongly supports an echo of Jesus [at Rom 12:14]."[15] While Paul's ethical instructions in general have a great deal of Jewish tradition informing them (as do Jesus' own), Jesus' ethic of *enemy love*, *non-retaliation*, and *blessing of persecutors* which has been preserved in both Matthew and Luke

13. Dunn, *Romans*, 2:745. Thompson's question (*Clothed with Christ*, 99–100) seems to get at the heart of the form-critical issue too: "Clearly Jesus called his followers to love their enemies . . . Which is more likely, that he said something so unusual only once, with no explanation, or that its gist was a regular element in his preaching? He probably repeated this difficult to accept teaching and its applications on different occasions. We should not be surprised then to find different formulations in Matthew and Luke, and unfortunately we cannot speak with any certainty as to what has been created by the evangelists."

14. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 96. Cf. Zerbe, *Non-Retaliation*, 165–73, for a summary of the presence of non-retaliation in pre-Pauline Jewish writings.

15. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 97–98. "Vocabulary" may not be the best choice here. It is, rather, on the basis of a dissimilar (i.e., unexpected) application of categories of response that the claim for uniqueness (and therefore dependence on Jesus Tradition) is strong.

goes beyond "the more typically Jewish assumption that God would curse those who cursed his people. The inescapable conclusion is that the attitude inculcated here is distinctively Christian."[16] Many scholars come to a similar conclusion—Romans 12:14 is both uniquely "Christian" in the response it esteems and goes back, with a disputed degree of confidence, to a saying of the historical Jesus.[17]

Romans 12:17–21

Objections: Old Testament "Background" and the Paucity of Parallel Words—The same confidence among scholars is usually expressed for 12:17–21, though dependence in the particulars is less certain than in 12:14. One problem for showing Paul's dependence on Jesus Tradition is again the existence of non-Christian parallels that antedate his letters. Material from Proverbs is the most likely Jewish source of 12:17 (cf. LXX Prov 17:13, cited below), but there are no direct quotations of Proverbs until 12:20.[18] The obvious sapiential and dominical overtones have led some to posit that 12:17a is a dominical saying which itself was influenced by Proverbs 17:13.[19] However, the argument for Paul's dependence on a dominical logia runs into one more complication: 12:17a does not seem to have any saying of Jesus as its obvious referent. The similarities between Romans, 1 Thessalonians, and 1 Peter are quite clear, though 1 Peter's dependence on Paul is difficult to rule out. The direct connection with Matthew 5:38–39 and Romans 12:17a is minimal. The most obvious canonical parallels are collected below.

Comparing the Sayings and the Pattern of Response (Rom 12:17a, Matt 5:38–39)—The catena of passages gathered below represent the closest parallels to Romans 12:17a in (roughly) chronological order.[20]

16. Dunn, *Romans*, 2:745. After writing *blessing of persecutors*, it occurred to me that I myself conflated Matthew and Luke's differing traditions; Jesus instructs his followers to bless those who curse (Luke) and pray for those who persecute (Matthew). Evidently Paul's logion has shaped my own memory of what Jesus "said" more than I had realized.

17. For the majority, see, e.g., Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:640; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 655; many recent commentators cite Thompson's work.

18. Other potential "background" texts: Jos. As. 23.9; 28.4, 5, 10, 14; 29.3; Apoc. Sed. 7.9; Ahiqar 2.19.

19. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 107, and literature cited there.

20. One might also include (though it is rather more difficult to date) *Jos. As.* 29:3: "οὐ προσήκει ἀνδρὶ θεωσεβεῖ ἀποδοῦναι κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ" "It does not befit a man who

- "Whoever repays evil for good//evil will not be moved from his house." (Prov 17:13)
- "See that none of you repays evil for evil." (1 Thess 5:15)
- "Do not repay anyone evil for evil." (Rom 12:17a)
- "Do not repay evil for evil." (1 Pet 3:9)
- "An eye for an eye . . . do not resist an evildoer." (Matt 5:38–39)[21]

Even allowing for the flexibility of oral tradition, it is difficult to base a positive conclusion on the parallel of only two words. More compelling, however, is the similarity in what *pattern of response* the instructions convey. Rather than living by a tit-for-tat ethic, Jesus' disciples and Paul's communities should seek to fulfill the law through the love of neighbor *and* enemy (Rom 12:20; 13:10; Gal 5:14; Mark 12:31; Matt 5:17, 43–44). Returning evil for evil or gouging eye in place of eye is not the way of Jesus' followers. The words may be different, but the response envisaged is the same. Thompson concludes that there is no indubitable connection between 12:17a and Jesus Tradition; however, even if its origin is not dominical, the command "effectively summarizes" Jesus' teaching and behavior with respect to non-violence.[22] Individual links between Paul's letter and known Jesus Tradition are difficult to establish, in part because of the sometimes brief length of Paul's exhortations. Nevertheless, the instructions "could not but remind Christians whom Paul had never met of the characteristics of the one they confessed as Lord."[23]

worships God to repay evil for evil" or again 23:9 "καὶ οἴδαμεν ὅτι οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν ἄνδρες εἰσὶ θεωσεβεῖς καὶ μή ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ τινι ἀνθρώπῳ" "and we know that our brothers are men who worship God and do not repay evil for evil to anyone."

21. The possible overlap for Matthew is less apparent in English. In Greek, two roots (in italics) align with Rom 12:17: ὀφθαλμὸν ἀντὶ ὀφθαλμοῦ . . . μὴ ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ.

22. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 107. Cf. ibid., 109, "If the teaching of Jesus is not explicitly present in the passage, the example is implied." So also Dunn, *Romans*, 2:752.

23. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 109–10. Since Paul was writing to a non-Pauline community and seems to have assumed enough knowledge of Jesus Tradition to hear his references to it even in Rome, then the memory of a non-violent Jesus was more widespread than is often recognized. Assemblies established by Paul and by other apostles transmitted traditions which preserved Jesus' sayings and example that related to non-violence. We will say more about the issue of the non-Pauline character of the Roman church at the end of the present chapter.

Demonstrating Paul's Behavioral Correspondence with Jesus Tradition (1 Corinthians 4:11–13)

At the beginning of this chapter, it was suggested that one way through the Jesus-Paul debate that has been explored insufficiently is the continuity in *both* the words (teaching) and *deeds* (example) of Jesus and Paul, specifically regarding their attitude towards violence. In the preceding analysis, we have tentatively provided one sample of evidence for Paul's continuity with Jesus on *teaching* a particular, non-violent response to hostile behavior for Christ's followers.[24] We must now ask: did Paul follow his own ethical advice?

In 1 Corinthians there is a clear instance where the politics of peaceableness intersects with the politics of violence. In one of Paul's peristasis catalogues, Paul boasts (N.B. the use of first person *plural*):

> Until the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are naked and beaten and homeless, and we grow weary from working with our own hands. When insulted, we bless; when persecuted we endure, when slandered, we conciliate. We have become like the refuse of the world, the scum until now. (translation mine)

This passage may be set in a highly rhetorical context, but one need not attempt to strip away the rhetoric to find the "historical" Paul. For present purposes, it is more important to identify the way Paul's claims align with or diverge from traditions about Jesus preserved in the gospels. To that end, we will focus on the threefold antitheses of 1 Corinthians 4:12b–13a.

Jesus and Paul Blessing the Ones Who Curse (1 Cor 4:12b and Luke 6:28)

How then, do the three antitheses stand up to a comparison with Jesus' teaching and example? Owing to their form (and brevity), the three

24. That Romans 12 addresses a situation facing Roman Christians is taken for granted at this point. The focus of Paul's teaching on non-violence has been purposely limited to his letter to the Romans. In the next section of the chapter, we will address the Corinthian correspondence, and in subsequent chapters we will draw out Paul's references to a non-violent ethos in Galatians (chapter 4), and 1 Thessalonians (chapter 5). The purpose in demonstrating this theme in all of these letters is more than providing evidence across a range of letters, but demonstrates too that the theme had a wide geographical footprint in early Christianity.

antitheses are difficult to identify as Jesus Tradition, at least in the classic sense of identifying literary dependence. However, all three demonstrate clear "continuities" with the Jesus Tradition that is preserved in Luke's gospel. So, in the first of the antitheses, only one word is shared (and that in differing person/moods), but the sense is virtually identical:

> "when reviled we *bless*" 1 Cor 4:12b
> "*bless* those who curse you" Luke 6:28[25]

Jesus instructed his disciples to bless the ones who curse them; Paul claims to have done that very thing when faced with people who reviled/slandered him.[26] Paul claims to have acted in a manner consistent with the teaching of Jesus. Although we know nothing of Paul's pre-Christian response to being the recipient of slander, I noted above the unprecedented response to being cursed advocated by Paul in Romans and Jesus in the gospels.[27] That is, blessing one's slanderers is not an obvious pre-Christian (Jewish) strategy. Paul follows Jesus in this peculiar response to slander.

It is not enough to compare Paul's *behavior* and Jesus' *teaching* alone, however. No less important is Paul's behavioral continuity with Jesus' *actions* towards those who slandered or reviled him. The synoptic passion narratives catalogue numerous instances of verbal abuse suffered by Jesus, and the consistent response of Jesus is silence. He is mocked, blasphemed, insulted, and reviled by various characters throughout his trial and execution.[28] Surprisingly, the authors of the gospels *refrain* from portraying Jesus as one who publicly blessed those who slandered, reviled, and abused him, creating an acute difficulty for demonstrating Jesus and Paul's behavioral

25. *Bless* being the only root shared in the Greek.

26. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 179, also points out the wording in Rom 12:14, where Paul shares another word with Luke 6:28, *curse* (καταράομαι): "Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not *curse*."

27. Thompson, *Clothed with Christ*, 97–98.

28. The *verbal* aspect of abuse experienced by Jesus is gathered here. In Matthew he is *mocked* (ἐμπαίζω, 27:29, 31, 41), *blasphemed* (βλασφημέω, 27:39) and *insulted* (ὀνειδίζω, 27:44) and offers no response from the cross except "My God why have you forsaken me?" In Mark he is *mocked* (ἐμπαίζω, 15:20, 31), *derided* (βλασφημέω, 15:29), and *reviled* by those crucified with him (ὀνειδίζω, 15:32), and yet he offers no response. In Luke he is *mocked* (ἐμπαίζω, 22:63, 23:11, 36), *blasphemed* (βλασφημέω, 22:65), treated with *contempt* by Herod (ἐξουθενέω, 23:11), and Jesus prays: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (23:34). Rulers *scoffed* (ἐκμυκτηρίζω, 23:35), soldiers *mocked* (ἐμπαίζω, 23:36), one criminal *railed* (βλασφημέω), and he only prays "into your hands I commit my spirit" (23:46). Cf. John's gospel, where his dying word is not a bitter curse, but "it is finished." A catalogue of physical suffering follows below.

correspondence in blessing those who have reviled them. The prayer from the cross in Luke's gospel (23:34, see discussion below on 1 Cor 4:13a) is the exception that proves the rule. More typically, Jesus is silent when facing mistreatment or interrogation (cf. Matt 26:63; 27:12; Mark 14:61; 15:5; Luke 23:9). One must stretch as far "ahead" as 1 Peter 2:23 to find the claim about Jesus that one might have expected from the gospels:

> When reviled he did not return abuse (cf. Matt 5:39)
> Though he suffered, he did not threaten,
> But he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly
> (cf. Jer 11:20).

Although there is scant detail regarding the responses Jesus made to his own abusers, Paul claims to have offered blessing to his opponents when he was slandered. The nature of his letters provides us little in the way of evidence however, since they were not written primarily to report the abuse he suffered and the responses he made to mistreatment. While there certainly are examples to which one could point to demonstrate Paul's failure to bless his opponents,[29] Paul rhetorically portrays himself as consistently "walking towards the truth of the gospel" (Gal 2:14); he envisages not just his own imitation of Jesus (1 Cor 11:1; cf. 1 Cor 4:16), but also views his own life as animated by the risen Lord (Gal 2:19–20).

Jesus and Paul Enduring Persecution (1 Cor 4:12b)

The second antithesis of 1 Corinthians 4:12b ("when persecuted, we endure" "διωκόμενοι ἀνεχόμεθα") has no direct verbal parallel in Jesus Tradition, though conceptually it reflects the behavior of Jesus on display in the passion narratives.[30] Like the first antithesis, the second reappears in Paul's

29. Cf. Gal 5:12 (which we will discuss in Chapter Four) or the letter he wrote to the Corinthians that grieved them (2 Cor 7:8), to name just two possibilities. I will only say here that Paul's rhetorical excess, while understandable, need not be viewed as acceptable. At Gal 5:12, he has gone too far. Others will disagree, and the tradition of defending Paul here goes back at least to Tertullian, *An*. 16.6, but here I would rather affirm the view of Klassen, "'Love your Enemies,'" 21: "There is . . . a clear case of Paul's departure from the teaching of Jesus when he expresses the wish (in Gal. 5:12) that his enemies would accidentally castrate themselves."

30. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 180. During his trial and execution, Jesus faces numerous *physically* punitive measures; in Matthew he is *spat* upon (ἐμπτύω 26:67; 27:30), *struck* (κολαφίζω 26:67; τύπτω, 27:30), *slapped* (ῥαπίζω) (26:67), *flogged* (φραγελλόω, 27:26) and *crucified* (σταυρόω, 27:26ff) by the Romans. In Mark he is *spat upon (*ἐμπτύω,

ethical instructions or exhortations elsewhere, although not in the same form.[31] Like so many possible allusions to Jesus Tradition, this example suffers from its brevity. The phrase is not an identifiable part of the stock of Jesus Traditions, but Paul's response to persecution rehearses Jesus' own exemplary endurance of suffering, especially from Gethsemane to the cross.[32]

The primary concern is not in any case dependent upon confirming a dominical logion in Paul's letter, but instead we are interested in how Paul's behavioral response to suffering persecution is similar to and even modeled on Jesus' endurance of suffering. By his own account in Galatians, Paul inflicted great suffering on those he opposed, but once he became a "member" of the group he violently opposed, he evidently ceased engaging with opponents through physically violent means, and instead he recounts enduring physical suffering without resorting to physical retaliation. For example, we learn from one of his peristasis catalogues that he endured: countless beatings, 39 lashes on five occasions, being beaten with rods three times, and being stoned once (2 Cor 11:23–25). In Galatians, he asks "But why, brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, am I still being persecuted?" (5:11; cf. 4:29), and refers to the marks of Jesus he bears on his body (6:17). He refers repeatedly through his letters of *affliction* (θλίψις) he and other coworkers endured, though he typically refrains from providing

14:65; 15:19), *struck*, and received *with blows* (κολαφίζω and ῥάπισμα, 14:65), *flogged* (φραγελλόω) (15:15), *struck* (τύπτω, 15:19), *mocked* (ἐμπαίζω, 15:20, 31), and *crucified* (σταυρόω, 15:20), and yet he offers no response. In Luke he is *beaten* (δέρω, 22:63) and crucified (σταυρόω, 23:33), and Jesus prays: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (23:34). He also prays "into your hands I commit my spirit" (23:46). In John he is *struck* (ῥάπισμα) (18:22, 19:3) or (in Jesus' words, δέρω, 18:23), *whipped* (μαστιγόω, 19:1), *crucified* (σταυρόω, 19:16, 18) and his dying word is not a bitter curse, but "it is finished."

31. Cf. 2 Cor 4:9 "persecuted but not forsaken"; Gal 5:11 "Why am I still being persecuted?"; Phil 3:10–14 "I want to know Christ . . . and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death."

32. Jesus' suffering in the Synoptic Gospels is rarely called persecution (John describes Jesus' suffering as persecution a few times), but Jesus did warn his followers that they would be persecuted or opposed just like their master (Matt 10:24–25; cf. Mark 13:9, 12–13, parallel Luke 21:12, 16–17). Of course, these "predictions" could be later additions to the tradition, i.e., they may reflect the interests of the authors of the gospels. On Matthew, Davies and Allison (*Matthew*, 2:193) consider these verses dominical, though they identify 10:25a as a dominical reformulation of a traditional proverb; cf. Bultmann (*History of the Synoptic Tradition* , 86, 99, 103), who considers the "possibility" that 25a was originally a secular proverb attracted to 10:24. Collins, *Mark*, 594–607, has a good summary of the competing views on the source and compositional history of Mark 13.

specifics of his suffering.[33] Rather than demonstrating Paul's correspondence with the "heroic autonomy" of Stoic perseverance, Thiselton argues that Paul endures persecution in a counter-cultural manner: "Paul follows Jesus' principle of non-retaliation, which . . . was regarded as weak or unmanly in the Roman and Graeco-Roman world of Paul's day."[34]

Jesus and Paul Speaking Kindly to Slanderers (1 Cor 4:13a, Luke 6:28a and Matt 5:11)

Slandered in 1 Corinthians 4:13a ("when slandered, we conciliate") occurs only once in the New Testament, but it is semantically related to the much more common *blaspheme* (βλασφημέω), to which Jesus was repeatedly subjected according to the gospels.[35] The antithesis of slander is offering kind words in response to an opponent's insulting speech.[36] Yet again, we are faced with a compact phrase which has little chance of being aligned with a specific Jesus logion, but we are likewise faced with the pattern of response which was clearly a part of Jesus' teaching and yet quite remarkable in comparison with a more "instinctive" response to being the object of

33. Although Acts cannot be used as constructive evidence here, Luke's portrait largely confirms Paul's own outline. It may be that Luke has simply taken Paul's outline and created narratively interesting, if fictive, accounts of Paul's suffering, but it is important to point out that Paul's own terminology is enough to provide the following generalized statement—Paul once sought to destroy the church of God, a goal which probably included using physically violent measures (see chapter 4). Once Jesus was apocalypsed to/in him, he faced physical abuse on several occasions (whether from Jewish opponents, "Christian" opponents, or Roman/local civic authorities we do not know) and he claims to have endured those forms of suffering (presumably without retaliating). If we jettison Acts for historical reconstruction, nothing more specific can be said about Paul's violent behavior or his endurance of suffering.

34. Thiselton, 1 *Corinthians*, 363, 368.

35. Incidentally, *blasphemy* replaces *slander* at 1 Cor 4:13 in some manuscripts. On Jesus' experience of blasphemy, see Matt 27:39; Mark 15:29; Luke 22:65; 23:39. Other common words in the same semantic domain are: ὀνειδίζω κτλ. (seven occurrences in the Synoptics, see esp. Matt 5:11; Luke 6:22; Mark 15:32), λοιδορέω κτλ. (ten occurrences in the Synoptics), and καταλαλέω κτλ. (eight occurrences, though none are in the Synoptics).

36. BDAG, 765n5. Other uses of παρακαλέω in Pauline letters cover a wider range of meaning to express: a summons to aid (2 Cor 12:8), the making of an appeal (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 4:16 *et al.*), a strong request (2 Cor 12:18; Phlm 10), comfort or encouragement (2 Cor 1:4; 7:6 *et al.*) or speaking to one in a friendly manner (1 Thess 2:12). The final definition makes the most sense of the antithesis at 1 Cor 4:13; it is the semantic opposite of being spoken against or insulted.

slander. Jesus urged his followers to "bless those who persecute you" (Luke 6:28a) and Luke has Jesus himself bless those who finally crucified him when he prays for their forgiveness from the cross (Luke 23:34).[37] Although the gospels fail to record how Jesus publicly responded to insults or slander in line with his own imperatives, at the crucial moment of experiencing horrendous physical torture and severe verbal abuse, the gospels, despite whatever redactional interests each author might have, consistently perpetuate the memory of Jesus' silence and endurance of suffering without returning evil for the evil he experienced.

Paul faced nothing quite like Jesus' passion, at least by the time of writing 1 Corinthians (although he does claim to have been stoned at 2 Cor 11:25, which *could* have occurred before he wrote 1 Corinthians). And there is not a historically reliable extant record of how he responded in what is traditionally thought to be his death as a martyr. Still, Paul claims to have encountered his share of hostility to which he responded after the pattern of Jesus. In 2 Corinthians Paul famously catalogues the afflictions he (and Timothy[38]) experienced as servants of Christ (6:4–10); among them he lists beatings and imprisonments, and in response he lists the qualities which commend their ministry: patience, kindness, and truthful speech.

As evidence of Paul's intimate knowledge of Jesus Tradition, 1 Corinthians 4:12–13 may be circumstantial or even merely suggestive, but when taken with other more clear parallels or allusions to Jesus Tradition, it supports the view that Paul knew details of the teachings and example of Jesus, and he implored his communities to become imitators of himself just as he was of their Lord (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1).

37. It should of course be noted that Luke 23:34 reflects Luke's redactional interests and cannot with confidence be traced back to the historical Jesus. It is, after all, unique to Luke. Moreover, the verse itself is suspect, not included in many early witnesses. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 154, noted that this bracketed saying, "though probably not a part of the original Gospel of Luke, bears self-evident tokens of its dominical origin, and was retained . . . in its traditional place where it had been incorporated by unknown copyists relatively early in the transmission of the Third Gospel."

38. It is worth pointing out that one avenue of future research along these same lines would be to trace where Paul's letters make claims about the endurance of suffering of his coworkers. That is, my thesis is focused primarily on how Paul changed from a violent persecutor to non-violent apostle, but it is worth considering whether support for my thesis can be garnered through viewing how Paul's coworkers responded to persecution. It would be rather surprising for all of his coworkers to have responded to strong opposition (possibly violent opposition) non-violently unless non-violence was a fundamental commitment of early Christians generally.