

2 March 2023

2 Corinthians 11:1 ~ The Subtlety of Satan and the Simplicity of Christ

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**Last time we were in 2 Corinthians, we had finished (C10): But to get our minds back to where we were: 2 Corinthians 10:1-2**

Paul and his fellow ministers were being accused by SOME (who were false teachers) in the church of walking (or being motivated and governed) by the flesh in their ministry.

Paul responded to their accusations by teaching them that although he was still robed in a body of flesh, his ministry was not motivated by the flesh or carnal reasonings, his ministry was God exalting and spiritually focused on obedience to Christ! 2 Corinthians 10:3-6  
These false teachers commended Paul's letters, but they insulted His bodily appearance, and his inability to speak: (10:10): "His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

What we also learn about these false teachers is that they were focused on "outward appearances" rather than on faith in Christ. (10:7).

So, you can see that THEY were the ones who were guilty of what they had accused Paul of...it was their method of ministry that was "carnal and according to the flesh".  
. 2 Corinthians 5:12

It was easy to identify them in the church, they were the conceited ones who were always "commending themselves and boasting and glorying in each other" rather than in Christ. And then, they "measured themselves BY THEMSELVES, and compared themselves among themselves".

It's a terrible thing when men will use the church of the Lord Jesus Christ as a platform and stage to promote their own honor and glory, rather than to exalt, honor, and glorify Christ, and to point both saints and sinner to Him by preaching His Word and His message!

Paul warned the Corinthians, these men are not of God, nor is their ministering and wisdom... or as James wrote: "This wisdom descendeth NOT from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish."

To conclude our review: 2 Corinthians 10:12A,17-18, Jeremiah 9:23-24. Paul now continued: 2 Corinthians 11:1-4

**2 Corinthians 11:1: "Would to God ye could bear WITH ME a little in my folly: and indeed, bear with me."**

Was Paul being a fool? No, he wasn't, and yet, at this point, he must vindicate his ministry in Corinth; THIS, to protect the church from the false teachers who had infiltrated it, who were doing their worst to infect it by bringing the world into it... that is the context of why Paul said:

"Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly."

Paul was forced to do something that he must do to protect the church from these false teachers... In a sense, "commending himself" to prove that the church at Corinth was the result of his work and labor in the gospel of Christ, and that he was THERE because Christ commanded him to stay there and minister!  
Acts 18:7-11

We also know that these false teachers boasted and took credit for what Paul had done in Corinth...2 Corinthians 10:13-16  
This why Paul wrote, "would to God that you would bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed, bear with me".

**Because of these false teachers, and because Paul loved the church at Corinth, He became "A Jealous Spiritual Father". 2 Corinthians 11:2: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy." 1 Corinthians 4:14-16**

Paul's jealousy wasn't sinful, it was "godly jealousy"! We ought to know that we serve a God who is jealous when we begin to love, serve, or worship other gods, other things, other persons rather than God. In fact, one of God's Names is "JEALOUS". Exodus 34:10-14

You should ALSO KNOW that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to (in the scriptures) as a woman... the bride of Christ... when God saved you from your sins and from the captivity of Satan, you became His own child, and His own bride! God is your Father, but He also is called your husband!

When you believed in Christ, you were united to Christ; a spiritual marriage union now exists between you and God.

As a born-again child of God, you are now in an intimate relationship with God! He is your One and Only God!

Paul, here in 2 Corinthians 11:2 wrote: "for I have espoused to one husband"! Isaiah 54:5-6, Ezekiel 16:8, Hosea 2:19-23

The chief end of Paul's ministry to the church at Corinth, (and any other church for that matter) was to make sure they were "solidly" united to Christ and Christ alone, and to no other!

To betroth here means to give in marriage, as a father gives his daughter. This betrothal of the church was exclusive, and for ONE MAN, the Lord Jesus Christ!

My work and ministry in pastoring you MUST ALSO BE carried out with a "godly jealousy" ...my heart must be focused on strengthening your union with Christ, like Paul, that you would be espoused to one husband... Christ!

And then, equipping you spiritually so that you would walk by faith and in obedience to Christ, warning you about the dangers of straying in your hearts and minds from Christ, or giving your intimacy to other things, rather than to Christ!

"Set your affection on things above, NOT on things..."

ALL OF THIS: "SO THAT you would be properly adorned and ready to be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Beloved in your Christian life, you are to CONSTANTLY ~ BE ~ BEING conformed to the image of Christ. You are no longer of this world, but you are to BE ~ BEING sanctified, purified, and prepared for heaven! THIS was Paul's ministry to the church at Corinth, and (by God's grace) THIS will be the ministry of the church in Springfield!  
Ephesians 5:25-27, Colossians 1:21-28, Jude 20-24

**This was Paul's calling from Christ; this was Paul's mission and his heart:**

But where the work of Christ is flourishing, be assured that the wicked one will also show up to try and take the high ground and destroy the work of Christ. Paul was NOT ignorant of Satan's devices. He knew that the wicked one had sent his minions to Corinth. 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 PAUL'S FEAR was that they would give ear to the false teachers, that they would tolerate, listen to, and bear with them; and the result would be that their minds would be corrupted from the simplicity of Christ and the gospel of Christ!

Just as the serpent beguiled (or seduced and deceived) Eve by his subtilty, (by his craftiness), MY FEAR is that he will (in the same way and by any means) deceive you and turn you away from Christ.

Listen...Eve was unfallen, not a sinner when the serpent seduced her, she had every reason to obey God...and especially Adam... but Satan by his subtlety was able to deceive Eve from the truth of God to believe his lie!

This is Satan's primary mission against you Christian...

YES, you're saved, BUT he wants to corrupt you in your mind and turn you from Christ to believe his lies!

This is why it is imperative for us as Christians TO KNOW the Word, and like we said on Wednesday, that you BELIEVE what you KNOW to be true of Christ from the Word! And that you turn away from Satan's lies by TRUSTING God's Word!

THIS: So that you wise enough in the Holy Scriptures TO KNOW when you are hearing a false teacher, one who is (by subtlety) trying to undermine your faith in Christ, and in the gospel of Christ! Matthew 13:24-28, 38

**Paul, in 2 Corinthians 11:4, rebukes them for bearing with (or tolerating) these false teachers who had infiltrated the church.**

You and I need to know when "another Jesus" is being presented to us. Paul warned the Corinthians here, of "another Jesus, whom we have not preached", "another spirit, which ye have not received", and "another gospel, which ye have not accepted".

Acts 15:1, 24, Galatians 1:6-12, 5:1-4, 6:11-15.

If anyone would present God's message of salvation to you, to be anything else but by Jesus Christ and Him crucified, YOU

MUST NOT TOLERATE those who preach it. Many there are in the world of religion who use the Bible and the Name of Jesus Christ, but who are ministers of Satan! One of Satan's most convincing weapons is a preacher standing behind a pulpit.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15, 1 Timothy 4:1-2

**Applications:**

Christian, you're married to Christ... when you call yourself, what you're also saying is, I have an intimate relationship with Christ. I am the bride of Christ! With that thought, also remember that God is a jealous God!

To be a Christian is to be espoused to Christ. In your Christian life, you are being prepared for Christ, as a bride prepared for her husband.

Be careful of being seduced away from Christ by the wicked one through a false teacher or by false teaching! That is His primary mission against you child of God, to corrupt your mind from the simplicity and purity of the gospel of Christ, and from your fidelity and faithfulness to Him!

(2) THINGS to remember as we close, SIMPLICITY and SUBTLETY

This morning, be so careful of being corrupted away from the SIMPLICITY and truth of Christ by the SUBTLETY and lies of Satan.