

2 Corinthians Ch11v1-15 - Pure Devotion To Christ

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[0:00] Chapter 11, 1-15. 2 Corinthians 11, 1-15.

Page 1165 if you have the church Bible. It's titled Paul and the False Apostles.

I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness. Yes, please put up with me. I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband to Christ so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

But I'm afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the snake's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

I do not think I am in the least inferior to those super apostles. I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.

[1:27] Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you.

And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way and will continue to do so.

As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do.

And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal widows in the things they boast about.

For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

[2:32] It is not surprising then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. Thank you, Connor.

Let's keep our Bibles open. Thanks, Rob. As we pray this morning, before we hear God's word, I don't know if you know that, on Tuesday, this coming Tuesday, it will be four years since the war started in Ukraine.

I sent a message this morning to somebody who we know through Radstock, Yaroslav, who's a pastor, and just said that we would pray for them today as they mark another year of much violence and death and hardship.

So let's pray for them as we look at God's word. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for our brothers and sisters in Christ, in Ukraine, and those who are also in Russia.

We pray, Father, for Yaroslav and his church, that you would give them great courage, as in the midst of such violence and such sadness and pain, they would continue to hold out the hope that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

[4:31] Please encourage them as they meet as we are meeting today. Father, love them and pour out your compassion upon them and keep them strong, always following you, not turning to a different Jesus, but holding to the truth of the gospel.

Father, as we pray for them, we pray for ourselves this morning. We thank you that you know us. You know what is in our hearts.

You know what is on our minds. And we need to hear from you today. And you have given us your word so that we can hear.

And so we ask, Father, that by your spirit, that you would take the word that we have listened to and the words that I speak, may they be as your words, speaking hope and encouragement into each of our lives and together as your people.

we ask this for our good and for the glory of Jesus Christ. Amen.

[5:59] So complete the sentence. I'm afraid of doing exams, losing my soccer match, the dark, spiders.

I'm afraid of I'm afraid of getting sick or dying. Well, I'm afraid of being led astray.

That's the fear that Paul has for the church in Corinth. Look at verse 3. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the snakes or the serpents cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

You remember how Eve listened to the serpent and believed his lies? We just had it read to us a moment ago. The serpent said, you will not certainly die.

For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil.

[7:31] Well, Eve was deceived and was led astray from her pure devotion to God. And that's Paul's fear.

He's afraid that the church will do the same thing that Eve and Adam did. Look at the end of verse 3. That somehow they would be led astray from their sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

I wonder if that's your fear today. Do you fear for those around you who you're sitting beside?

Do you fear for those who you haven't seen for months and used to come along? You see, fear can be a healthy emotion because it can express genuine love and care.

Look at verse 11. Why? Why is Paul talking like this? Because I do not love you? God knows that I do.

[8:43] I do love you. It shows that if we fear for one another, we are deeply concerned about their relationship to Christ.

Christ. But not only is there a fear of being led astray, there is a connected and related fear. I'm afraid of false teachers.

I'm afraid of those who deceive and lead people astray. Look at verse 5. Paul says, I do not think I am in the least inferior to those super apostles.

Well, who are they? Who are these super apostles? Do they have magic powers? Well, they were the movers and shakers of the day. They were visiting preachers who would come into town and they really didn't have much time for the apostle Paul.

They claimed he was unimpressive and untrained. Look at chapter 10 verse 10. For some say his letters, speaking of Paul, are weighty and forceful but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.

[10:11] His preaching is awful. Or have a look at 11 verse 6. the accusation there, I may indeed be untrained that he is an untrained speaker.

But far from being super apostles, these people are actually super dangerous. Verse 13. Speaking about them he puts it like this.

Verse 13. for such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ and no wonder for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

It is not surprising then if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. their satanic tentacles have gone deep into their church.

They present themselves to everybody as Bible believing, Christ loving, church serving people but they are deceivers. Verse 15.

[11:29] they masquerade as an angel of light, servants of righteousness. Now we shouldn't be surprised that there are people like this.

Jesus himself warned, watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

You see a false teacher can look just like me. They can sound like me. They can use the Bible like me. They can sing songs of worship like me.

They can even be baptized and be members of a local church. But here's the subtle difference. Rather than lead people to Christ they will lead you astray from your sincere pure devotion to Christ.

Just as it was for Eve in the garden where the serpent's words sounded right and felt right but it was super dangerous.

[12:47] So how can we today guard our pure devotion to Christ? How can we be prepared for when false teachers scheme their way in and want to lead you away from your pure devotion to Christ?

How can we be prepared and guard ourselves? Well we're going to look at two things. Remember your true love and remember the free gospel.

So here's the first one. Remember your true love. Look at verse 2 of chapter 11. I hope you will put up with sorry verse 2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy.

I promised you to one husband to Christ so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. the picture here is beautiful and intimate.

It's saying that the Christian life is like one long engagement. On the one hand Christ is the husband and the church is the bride or the wife to be.

[14:12] And this relationship will be celebrated in a marriage feast when Christ the true husband comes again for his bride the church. This will happen at the end of time.

The engagement period will be over and the marriage between Christ and his church will begin. You see Christ is our husband who is full of love for his bride the church.

In fact the Bible uses this imagery to describe God's relationship to his people. This comes from Hosea chapter 2. Look at the words that are used.

In that day declares the Lord you will call me my husband. You will no longer call me my master. I will betroth you to me forever.

I will betroth you in righteousness and justice in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness and you will acknowledge the Lord.

[15:22] You see God is saying my love for you is steadfast and loyal. I am committed to you in a marriage relationship.

Now if Christ on the one hand is the husband and the church on the other side is the bride then Paul in some ways has been the matchmaker hasn't he?

Because through the gospel Paul has introduced the Corinthians to Christ. Verse 2 he says I promised you to one husband as they trusted Christ so they were committing themselves to Christ. so he was the one who introduced them to one another but that's not the end of Paul's role look what it says at the end of verse 2 so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him as Paul continues to teach the word and encourage the church so he wants them to be clean and pure one day Christ the husband will come again for his bride one day that wedding feast is going to take place but until that time through the engagement period he is saying I want you to be ready like a pure virgin his concern is that they would not be led astray from their pure devotion to Christ Christ now if you're a Christian here today that's how we should see our relationship to Christ I wonder what image comes to mind when you say yes

I am in Christ well here's the image we're to have we're in a long engagement waiting for our true husband to come so that the marriage can begin for all eternity and as we wait we seek to become pure and more beautiful and more righteous ready for Christ when he comes but we're not only waiting for our husband we are to be watchful of those deceiving teachers or deceitful lovers look at verse four for if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached or if you receive a different spirit from the spirit you received or a different gospel from the one you accepted you put up with it easily enough here he's speaking to the church they've believed the true gospel they've received the true spirit they've accepted the true

[18:27] Jesus but it's now their heads are turned or literally their hearts are beginning to drift away they've been deceived or seduced by different Jesus or a different gospel and look at the end of verse four they don't seem to be bothered they just put up with it now the picture here is really quite striking it's like a bride who is pledged to be married carrying on with every man that makes eyes at her in and out of every bed being deceived by the promise of false love despite the fact

that she's engaged and has a faithful groom waiting for her she just carries on as she pleases well that's what Paul is presenting here to the church he's saying you're engaged to Christ he's your true husband but look at you you're messing about with false lovers

I wonder if that's true of you or me promised to one husband who is Christ but flirting with other loves and passions being deceived by a different gospel and a different Jesus the message that says something like this Jesus wants you to be happy so choose the way you want to live or as long as you're following Jesus you don't have to bother with the church or listen to what Jesus is saying to your heart today and don't worry about the Bible oh I like that kind of Jesus I like that gospel that sounds good like Eve we can become so easily deceived and led astray from our sincere and pure devotion to Christ or are we becoming more beautiful and pure and falling in deeper love with our true lover you see we all need to come back to our true love look at verse 2 do you see the way Paul presents himself verse 2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy jealousy can be healthy in the right context especially when it comes to relationships so you could imagine a father who has an only daughter who's engaged to be married to a good man well how does he respond when other admirers come knocking at the door out of jealousy for his daughter he will kick them out and protect her well Paul is jealous for the church he's like a father to them the church is like his only daughter and he loves her so much that he will do whatever it takes to keep her for her true love now that's a beautiful picture of the jealousy that we can have for one another not wanting anyone to come between our pure devotion to Christ that's why we here at this church have a membership we're giving permission to one another to watch out for each other so if

I'm going astray I expect you to come alongside me because you love me and you're jealous for me Johnny remember your true love you have one husband Christ don't be led astray come back to your true love well how do we do this practically how do we come back to our true love how do we remain and not be pulled away well second we remember the free gospel as we've read there were false teachers lurking around the corner but Paul reminds the church what he has to offer verse 6 I may indeed be untrained as a speaker or preacher but you know what

I've got knowledge he's not particularly impressive he's not sophisticated he's nothing special but he does have knowledge and what's the knowledge that he has what's this information what does he have well we're told at the end of verse 7 the knowledge is the preaching of the gospel of God the knowledge is beginning at verse 10 the truth of Christ that is in me the knowledge that Paul has been given is the gospel the good news the truth about Christ you see it's through the gospel that we are introduced to Christ as our true love and in Christ we experience the truth of the gospel that in

[24:45] Christ we find life not death reconciliation not condemnation forgiveness not fear eternal glory not just temporary joy we have been made righteous and we have become rich our true love has committed himself to us and we find it all contained in the knowledge of the gospel as we believe it and trust it and the good news is this gospel truth is absolutely free you see the false teachers that were around about the church were charging a sum of money and the larger the price you put on your ticket well the better the speaker you were so you could imagine we put a sign outside

Johnny Grant preaching today only 50 euro would people come well in those days if you fixed a high price well people came to hear you but Paul isn't going to do that is he look at verse 7 was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge verse 9 and when I was with you and needed something I was not a burden to anyone for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way and I'm going to continue to do this I'm going to keep preaching this true gospel free of charge so that you will not be led astray from your pure devotion to

Christ but there's something else about this free gospel this free gospel is a picture of the gospel itself Paul preaching without putting any charge on it was also a demonstration to show that the gospel is free that the love of Christ our true love has given his life to us freely Martin Luther from the reformation explained it like this he said Christ speaking of Christ Christ is like a rich king who marries a wicked harlot and in that marriage a wonderful exchange takes place whereby the rich king takes all the shame and debt of his bride and the harlot receives all the wealth and royal status

of her bridegroom commenting on the picture

Luther says for if Christ is a bridegroom he must take upon himself the things which are his bride and bestow upon her the things that are his and so the bride can say all that is his is mine and all that is mine is his what a beautiful picture of the gospel that Christ would take all our mess and all our sin and all our shame and all our debt and give us the riches of himself remember what the gospel is look back to chapter 8 verse 9 this is how Paul puts it chapter 8 verse 9 for you know the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you through his poverty might become rich the great king who was rich took our poverty of sin and gave us his riches you see here by coming to the gospel by remembering the free gospel we guard ourselves against false teachers by reminding one another of our true love that in Christ we have been eternally loved and we will be loved for an eternity and that love is steadfast and that love will never end and will never break we have been promised to one husband the Lord Jesus Christ who gave his life so that we can share in his life by bringing us back to our true love we will not be led astray from our sincere and pure devotion to Christ let us always be reminding ourselves of the gospel so that we are firm in the love of Christ forever let's pray

[30:36] Lord God we asked at the beginning of this sermon that you would speak to our hearts according to our need I pray that each of us would understand something afresh of your unfaithful your faithful steadfast love who never lets us go would you keep us looking unto Christ so that we would never drift away but remain firmly devoted to Jesus thank you that you have us in the grip of your loving arms and that you will never ever let us go amen