

Simplicity In Christ

2 Corinthians 11:2-4

FOCAL Read Responsively 2 Corinthians 11:2-4 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. {3} But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. {4} **For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.**

What is the difference between *jealousy* and *envy*? Envy is *creepy and devious*, seeking to steal that which belongs to another whereas Jealousy rightfully guards its own possession.

The best definition of envy is seen in Biblical illustrations. King David looked on Bathsheba and, consumed with envy and greed, crept about in conspiracy and deception until he murdered her husband. Satan, the father of all sin, “crept” into the Garden of Eden as a serpent. He planted the seed of envy in Eve's heart, then stood back and watched while evil destroyed the relationship that Adam had with God. Envy caused Joseph's brothers to creep around while plotting to sell their own flesh and blood into slavery (**Acts 7:9**). Creepy religious leaders plotted the death of Christ, but had no problem with releasing a known murderer back into the population (**Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10**). Creeping and envious Jewish leaders led God's Israel to contradict and blaspheme the preaching of the Gospel (**Acts 13:45; 17:5**).



Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Pastor David Buffaloe
731-845-6104
online at bibleteacher.org

God despises envy, and classifies this sin alongside of “backbiting, murder, sexual sin, conspiracy, and every other form of evil” (Romans 1:28-32). Like termite infestation, envy destroys the place that houses it, then spreads outward to other sound structures to attempt to infest them. Envy leads to perversion and to every evil work. The Bible says:

Titus 3:3 ... For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. ...

Envy is a false love that says “what's yours is mine”. Jealousy, on the other hand, says “what's ours is ours”. Jealousy stands guard over two hearts bound together in righteous love. If you have been saved by faith in Christ then God's heart is bound to your heart. The Lord says

Exodus 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:

God is *jealous* over His people, and expects His people to be jealous over Him. Don't anyone come between you and the love of God. You, dear Christian, are bought with a price. Tell Satan that he has nothing in you. You belong to God, and He belongs to you.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.

1. There Is A Simplicity To The Christian Faith

FOCAL 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 ... I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety¹, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity² that is in Christ. {4} For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

The Apostle felt that he was fighting an uphill battle with the local Church of Corinth. In the first letter to the Corinthians Paul battled the false idea that Grace exists to allow us to *sin with impunity*. Following this false doctrine the local Church of Corinth fell into sins that were so base they shocked even the unbelieving world. (see **1 Corinthians 5:1-5**). Paul warned the Corinthians that God holds His people accountable, and warned that *there is a sin unto death* (**1 Corinthians 11:30**). Many of the Corinthian believers were dying because of their loose lifestyle. Paul helped get them back on course by telling them:

1 Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

His message was “do what you have seen me do, for I

1 G3834, *πανουργία*, panourgia, (pronounced *pan-oorg-ee'-ah*), From G3835; *adroitness*, that is, (in a bad sense) *trickery* or *sophistry*: - (cunning) craftiness, subilty.

2 G572, *ἀπλότης*, haplotēs, (pronounced *hap-lot'-ace*), From G573; *singleness*, that is, (subjectively) *sincerity* (*without dissimulation* or *self seeking*), or (objectively) *generosity* (*copious bestowal*): - bountifulness, liberal (-ity), simplicity, singleness.

follow the Lord". Yet the devil stood at the ready with false apostles who, coming behind Paul, they came in and preached **another Jesus, another Spirit, and another Gospel**.

How can we tell the difference between false apostolic teaching and True Christianity? The main difference is found in these two words: **subtlety** and **simplicity**.

The word translated **subtlety** in verse 3:

“as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety”

literally means *cunningness or craftiness*. The devil's tactics are always revealed in how cunning and confusing they are. The Bible tells us:

1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

You can easily see the confusion factor in Satanic counterfeit religion. God says:

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast.

that Grace is entirely of Him. Jesus purchased our salvation on Calvary – period. His Blood was shed – period. He died so that we who believe in Him might live

– period. Then Satan comes along and says, “Oh yes, salvation is **by Grace through faith – and that not of yourselves**. Salvation is a **gift of God, not of works**. BUT if you do not make an effort to *keep your salvation by works* you will not retain your salvation.

Huh?

Anytime man adds his portion to the work of God that which should have been *simple* and *uncluttered* becomes confusing and complex. You can always tell false religion because it becomes *unsimple* and divorced from Jesus Christ. Christianity is not complex, it is not convoluted, it is not cluttered nor confusing.

Christianity is quite simply a love story. The simplicity of our faith means that we who believe do what we do because God loves us – and we have been led to fall in love with Him. Simplicity means a **sincere and pure devotion to the One Who saved you**. The Christian exists to glorify God!

God loved you so much that He was willing to lower Himself into the depths of humility and degradation. God was willing to put *all of Himself* on the line for you. God so loved you that He was willing to take your punishment on Himself. God is in love with you – and wants you to fall in love with Him.

God has never made Christianity hard – we make Christianity hard. The false apostles make Christianity hard. They come in with their *additions* to Scripture, just

as the Pharisees added human traditions and called them the commandment of God. God said of the Pharisees:

Mark 7:7 Howbeit **in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

The false apostles never understand the **simplicity of Christ**. If you are a Christian you have – at one point in your life – found a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. You *fell in love* with Jesus because He first loved you. You – because of that relationship – felt the weight of your sins removed.

Simplicity. He loves me, I love Him. Simplicity!

2. There Is A Correct Spirit In The Christian Faith

FOCAL **2 Corinthians 11:4** ... or **if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received** ...

Our Lord Jesus was getting ready to go to Jerusalem, and He planned on passing through Samaria on the way there. But the Samaritans had an ancient feud against the Jews, and Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel. When the Samaritans heard that Jesus was going to Jerusalem the old feud flared up once more. Though they had previously received Jesus with love, they now turned away from Him.

Jesus' disciples were infuriated! They asked the Lord:

Luke 9:54 **And when his disciples James and John**

saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did?

Jesus looked at His disciples and rebuked them, saying:

Luke 9:55-56 ... **Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. {56} For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.**

Some of our more “modern” translations omit these verses, as they say they are not in some of the Gnostic manuscripts – but I believe the witness of the King James text here. The disciples were working from a base of retaliation and vengeance – yet thus was not what our Master teaches us to do.

We cannot receive the loving Grace of God, and yet be ungracious ourselves. If you have received Grace you are called to a life of graciousness and truth.

Illustrate There is someone I know who frequently embarrasses me, but I must love him anyway. There is someone I know who is often arrogant and prideful, but I love him anyway. This person has, at times, betrayed me badly. I have followed his bad advice, and found myself in equally bad situations. This person, by the way, is in this room right now. This person is ... me.

Each and every one of us are sinners – I pray that all here are saved by faith in the *finished work* of Christ. Yet

saved people, no matter how well intentioned, no matter how hard we try, *still sin*. I remember one time talking with a member of the modern day Pharisee crowd who told me that he no longer sinned. He had grown *beyond* the point of sin. Imagine that! I looked at him and, with a serious look on my face, said “I bet you're proud of that”. He quickly replied “Yes, I am”. Beloved, pride is the sin of sins. When God listed the sins that were abominations to Him He said:

Proverbs 6:16-17 **These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: {17}**
A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

There is no place for pride in the Christian way of life. In our following context, the Apostle Paul said:

2 Corinthians 11:29-30 **Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? {30}** **If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.**

Paul said “**What will I glory in? What will I boast of? I will boast of MY INFIRMITIES.**” He repeats this in the next chapter as well:

2 Corinthians 12:5 **.... yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.**

“**I will glory in MY INFIRMITIES**”. The Apostle brings this “**glory in my infirmities**” to its logical conclusion in

2 Corinthians 12:9 **And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

What is the “Spirit” that God's children have received? Have we received a “Spirit” that brings fire from Heaven down on our enemies? No, absolutely not! The Spirit we have received is the Spirit of Love. God Who is love indwells each and every believer in Christ. We are saved – though we do not deserve that salvation. We are delivered – though we continue to fail God. We are **saved to the uttermost because we came unto God by Jesus, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25).**

Jesus saved His disciples, though they would *all* abandon Him – just as the Samaritans did – but for different reasons. James and John who wanted to call fire from Heaven down on the Samaritans would fall asleep in Gethsemane, and run and hide when the soldiers came to capture Jesus. Yet God saved James and John, and both believers went on to do great things for God *because of God Who indwelt them.*

If God saved you, can't He save Samaria? If God loves you enough to save and cleanse you, can't He do the same thing with the drug addict, the prisoner, the prostitute, the lost?

The Spirit you received, dear Christian, is the Spirit of Love. Jesus taught from the beginning:

Matthew 5:43-45 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. {44} But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; {45} That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

What did Jesus say? “God shows His love to all – He sends sun and rain on both good and evil. You do the same to others. Love passionately and without reserve all, just as God loves. Then the world will see that you are indeed the children of your Father which is in Heaven”.

This is the Spirit you have received! If you are saved, you are saved because God loved you – and you loved God back. You called upon Jesus – and God came into the framework of your life. If you are children of love, then God expects you to show this to one another and the world beyond the walls of this Church.

If people do not see the love of God supernaturally displayed through you, do you believe that they will seriously consider the Gospel we preach?

3. There Is A Correct Gospel To The Christian Faith

FOCAL 2 Corinthians 11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth ... another³ gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Paul feared that “another” gospel would come in – a false or imitation gospel – and that this gospel would be accepted in place of the one true Gospel. The Gospel is the central message of the Church that Christ died for. If we get this message wrong – or we accept *another kind of message* in its place – then we cease being the Church. This is because

The Church exists to proclaim the Gospel. The Gospel is the central message, the Truth that we have been ordered by God to proclaim.

The Great Commission that we often quote is in **Matthew 28:19-20**, and begins with the words “Go ye therefore and teach all nations”. The Apostle Mark expands what Jesus said by giving us more of Christ's Great Commission:

Mark 16:15 Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

ILLUSTRATE Why is *counterfeiting* wrong? Why do you think the United States government spends so many millions of dollars per year seeking out and imprisoning

3 G2087, ἕτερος, heteros, het'-er-os, Of uncertain affinity; (an-, the) other or different: - altered, else, next (day), one, (an-) other, some, strange.

counterfeiters? If a counterfeit bill looks like the real thing, why not just allow people to produce it, and merchants to accept it? Why not? Because counterfeit currency dilutes the economy. It is not backed by the United States, or any, treasury. It is false, without value, and destructive to the economy of our country.

A *counterfeit gospel*, like counterfeit money, is not issued by God. It comes from the heart of deceived and gullible man, and is spawned by the devil who desires to damn each and every one of us. The counterfeit gospel takes the words of the Scripture then, twisting them ever so slightly, it re-presents the simple message in ways that God Himself never intended.

The counterfeit gospel is running through various congregations in America today, and this gospel has poisoned the effectiveness of the local Church. The counterfeit gospel has no power to save, for it was not issued from Heaven. The counterfeit gospel takes many forms. It was present when I heard a well known speaker preaching just the other day. As the man preached I noticed that – at no point in his sermon – did he ever refer to the Holy Scripture. The counterfeit gospel is fresh off the press of human wisdom and knowledge, and has none of the *supernatural Word of God* in it. People are eating up this Gospel like it was manna from Heaven. Yet it is bread from the ovens of the tempter, not from God.

What is the true Gospel? It is quite simply this: Man is not able.

The Apostle said in another place:

Galatians 1:8-9 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. {9} As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Let the cursing of God abide on the person who preaches the false gospel. The true Gospel is simplicity in itself. Jesus Christ created our universe and our planet. **The Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:1-3)**. But man obeyed Satan rather than the Lord Who loved him, and in so doing plunged all of creation into the abyss of spiritual death. **As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one (Romans 3:10)**. Man brought death on himself and was unable to fix that which he had destroyed. Jesus Christ came into His own creation becoming *man* so that He might take our penalty of disobedience on Himself. It is Jesus Christ alone, the Son of God and God the Son, Who is the means of salvation for all who will believe in Him.

1 Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

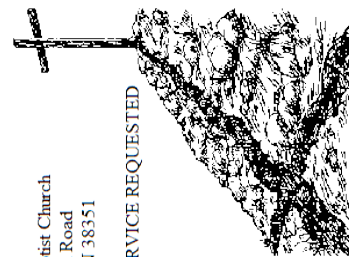
A person is not saved because he gets better, or works

harder, or strives longer. A person is saved by recognizing that he is dead in trespasses and in sins, and is totally unable to do anything about it. A person is saved by clinging by faith to Jesus Christ. A person is saved by calling on the name of the Lord, and trusting in Him.

What is the true Gospel? Man is not able, but God is!

God has made the only way for you to be saved by coming to and believing on the finished work of Jesus Christ. Will you not believe on Him? Will you not trust in what He has done for you on Calvary?

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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Lexington, TN 38351

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