

Devotion – Pure and Simple

II Corinthians 11:1-15

4/14/02

Intro

- Pray for the team in Africa.

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In these last few chapters in II Corinthians, Paul is dealing with a tremendous threat to the church there in Corinth – the infiltration of the church by those who taught a different gospel.

The problem is still around today in many places. Some of the great Christian movements in history started out so well and yet today, people are leaving these churches in droves because they have lost their spiritual bearings. They've been watered down to the point that many of the people can't see the point of going at all!

We can gain great insights for ourselves as we see how Paul deals with this situation. We would be wise to avoid losing our spiritual bearings.

These verses give us what Paul considers to be some of the most important insights into Christian living – our devotion to Christ.

I. There is great power in godly jealousy.

Vs 2 **A.** Jealousy is probable one of the strongest and destructive forces in the world today.

- But there is a difference between fleshly jealousy and godly jealousy.

- Fleshly jealousy is controlling and self-focused. It is possessive and often dominating. It often insists on its own way.

Illus – Like crushing a rose in your hand because you do not want to lose it – that's the destructive power of fleshly jealousy.

- The driving force behind fleshly jealousy is not love, but rather fear.
- If you want to travel light, take off all jealousies, selfishness, and fears.

Illus - Solieri and Mozart.

B. But Paul was jealous for them with a godly jealousy.

- There are many places in scripture where God is said to be a jealous God.
- Godly jealousy is being deeply concerned about the welfare of the other.
- Paul wanted the church to be a pure and chaste bride for her husband, Jesus Christ.

Illus- Paul sees himself like a father who wants to walk his daughter down the aisle with joy and confidence in her character. This is a godly jealousy.

C. This is also a wonderful example of forgiveness!

- In I Cor 6: 9-10 Paul said that some of them had been fornicators, idolaters,

adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, swindlers, etc.

- Yet now he says, “I have desired to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

Illus – Sometimes people will believe that they have sinned so badly that God cannot forgive them, these verses says in ain’t so.

II. We need to stay centered on the pure and simple devotion to Christ.

Vs 3 A. In other words, the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.

- The main thing is the simplicity of devotion to Christ.
- What is this simplicity? The daily companionship with Christ.

Illus – Someone once asked Karl Barth, who had a deeply intellectual mind and loved to delve into the deepest theological discussions, what was the greatest theological thought that had ever crossed his mind. He said in reply, “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”

Illus- God keeps repeating the same seasons year after year, but we never tire of them.

- One of the things I’ve noticed when people have great theological debates is that the simplicity of devotion to Christ is the first thing to go.

- We say that Christianity is not religion, but relationship. Clearly, it means that at the core of our faith is the purity and simplicity of devotion to Christ.

B. What are some ways that we can lose the simplicity of devotion to Christ?

- Christian activity, Bible study, theological sparring, or scholarship. None of these are wrong of themselves, but none is a substitute for the simplicity of devotion to Christ.
- We can lose it in the pressures of daily living. We can forget the faith that causes us to live victoriously.

III. There is a difference between simplicity and a simpleton.

Vs 6

A. One who is simple in heart can still be very deep.

- The writer of Hebrews challenged the readers to go beyond the ABC’s of faith. (5:11-14).
- Paul says in verse 6 that he was not unskilled in knowledge.

B. It is the Enemy who would want to draw us away.

Vs 3

- Paul says that in the same way the serpent deceived Eve, we could be drawn away.
- It was a three step process – 1) question God’s Word 2) Deny God’s Word 3) replace God’s Word with a lie

C. These deceivers are servants of the Enemy.

➤ False apostles, deceitful workers.

D. One of the most dangerous ways the Enemy comes as an angel of light.

➤ It will require discernment to not fall for the lies of an angel of light.

Conclusion

The key to keeping the purity and simplicity of devotion to Christ is to stay close in the relationship. There is no substitute for devotion from the heart. If our faith is nothing more than an intellectual exercise, we will be vulnerable to the Angel of light.