

#16_Bible_Study~06-28-21~2_Cor._11.1-15

Paul frames a rather strange reasoning to warn the Corinthians about what some false teachers have brought them. He stresses an important theological point which is often overlooked: The church becomes the bride of Christ in God's final consummation of history when Christ returns.

He starts off by proclaiming a 'divine jealousy' for them. Like an earthly father who had arranged a marriage for his daughter in those days, Paul felt he had brought the bride of Christ to the Christ, but just as Adam's bride was deceived by Satan, Christ's bride (the Church) is being deceived by false teachers who are leading them away from Christ.

Then in v. 4 he lays out some of the alternatives: another Jesus, a different spirit, or another Gospel. As you read this remember what Paul said in Galatians 1:6-7 (ESV) ***6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.***

There is no other Jesus, different spirit or another Gospel, but false teachers can distort the story so that it seems as if there a better or improved version than the one Paul and his co-workers had shared with them. Paul is saying, "I may not be a skilled speaker, but I am skilled in knowledge and we shared it with you in a plain and understandable way.

Perhaps these "super-apostles" were some of the first "gnostic teachers" who claimed to have some secret or inside information that others didn't know. The other likely false teachers were the "Docetist" who thought the body was bad and only things of the spirit were good. That is a teaching we refute every time we say the Apostles' Creed when we proclaim our belief in "the resurrection of the body."

The next example Paul uses fits the modern worldview of today: "You get what you pay for!" He asks them if he made a mistake in preaching God's gospel to them free of charge. He even sarcastically says he robbed other churches because he let them support him and his ministry so he could serve them.

He said the brothers in Macedonia had provided his support whenever he had a need, they helped him. He reminds them that he never asked them for anything. Paul felt that since God's grace is free, his preaching and teaching of God's grace to people who did not yet know Christ should be free also. That is why the churches, those who already believe send out the missionaries.

We don't say we will send someone to preach the gospel to you if you send us enough money. NO! We who have come to know and experience the free grace of God want the Gospel freely proclaimed to all who do not know the love, mercy, and grace of God, freely given through Jesus, the Christ.

That is why we do not charge admission fees to Worship Services or Bible Study. Some have even been so bold to suggest that this is also a good reason not to have public offerings where everyone is given a chance to give. Supporting the preaching of the gospel is always the responsibility of those who already believe.

Paul promises to continue that sort of ministry throughout Achaia. He does this out of his love for the people with whom he is sharing Christ. Just as Jesus freely and willingly came to this earth as our brother to fulfill the law of God for us and to pay the penalty of sin (death) for us, so he will free proclaim this life giving, good news to all.

The world keeps on saying, "There's no free lunch." Every time we come to the Lord's Supper, God laughs at what the world says. The Lord says, "Come and taste and see that the Lord is good (and loves freely)". The he gives us a powerful reminder. "Don't forget! Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. His false teacher will

come disguised as servants of righteousness.” Fret not, at the end, they will meet the judge and receive their reward.

Next: 2 Cor. 11:16–33.