

2 Cor 11:2,3 DIVINE JEALOUSY, DIVINE BOASTING

PRELIMS. I want to speak on Divine Jealousy, Divine Boasting and then something about the true credentials!

DIVINE JEALOUSY

When we think of jealousy we usually think of a husband being jealous of his ‘flirting’ wife! Is this jealousy **wrong**? **No!** If he is not jealous about how his wife behaves towards other men then that reflects on his **commitment/love** to his wife! God is **often** jealous about His people “*you shall worship no other god for the LORD whose name is **Jealous, is a jealous God**”*[Ex34]

Now jealous and **zealous** are the same word! They are interchangeable! Jealousy is actually a **good** thing! We **ought** to be jealous at times. Paul’s jealousy was a **good** jealousy! It was the jealousy that God has for His people “*I feel a divine jealousy for you*”[1]! **Elijah** did all the excellent things he did because “*I have been **very jealous** for the Lord*”[1Kin 19:10]

It is **because** a husband **loves** his wife that he is jealous when she throws her affections around to other men. God is jealous about His people **because** He **loves** them – not because He hates them. It is because God **knows** what will happen to them if they **continue** to be unfaithful – they will get **hurt!**

Many people think God’s commandments are a **kill-joy** – but they are not at all meant to spoil our fun but to **protect** us from what God knows **will happen** – and He does **not want** us to get **hurt!** Thus Paul “*...But I am **afraid** that as the serpent deceived Eve...*” and she was **hurt**, so you may get hurt too![3] Jealousy is **distinct** from **envy** – which **desires** the offender to get **hurt!** Envy is **wishing** the person who makes you jealous to get hurt – but **God’s** jealousy desires us to **avoid** getting hurt!

Paul was **concerned** here (jealous) of the Cors because he saw they were being “*deceived*” by the serpent’s cunning, and

*“your thoughts will be **led astray** from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ”*[3]! He was concerned they would end up in grief. He loved them and **saw them heading** straight for disaster. So he sent them this warning.

APP Paul love for the Cors is a great **challenge** for us! Do **you** see any of **ourselves** as a congregation heading for disaster? And if so, do we have a **godly jealousy** for them? Are we *“afraid”* they will come to grief, as Paul was for the Cors? Are we seeing any of us heading away from the Lord? Becoming **slack** in our **attendance** at services? No spirituality in our prayers? Is our loose **language** a sign of something deeper? Are we concerned about **backsliding** amongst us? Or are we just **‘allowing’** any slack behaviour to continue? You know the natural course for backsliding is to backslide **further!!**

Paul was concerned about the **doctrine** the Cors were believing from the false prophets. But we can backslide in **other ways** also. In fact one of **Satan’s tricks** is to deceive us into thinking that as long as a person still goes to church, everything is fine. But No! It is not just doctrine but **attitude/spirit** that characterizes backsliding. Paul says in [4] *“if you receive a different spirit from the one you received”* at the beginning (from me), then you have been led astray!

That means that if you have another **attitude** from the attitude of Christ then you have been led astray! Paul says *“we have received **not the spirit of the world**, but the Spirit who is from **God**,”* [1Cor 2:12]. There **is** a *“spirit that is now at work in the sons of **disobedience**”*[Eph2:2] **APP** If you are angry when you ought not to be; when you say things you ought not to say; when you are **bitter/vengeful/short-tempered/irritable/miscalling/complaining** then we have been led astray from the Lord! *When we see one another having that *“spirit of the world”* in their language, do we have a **godly jealousy**? Do we **pray** for grace to say the right thing? Pray for them?

GODLY BOASTING

Sol says “Answer a fool **according** to his folly lest he will be wise in his own eyes” [Pro 26:5]! **That** is what Paul is doing here “I wish you would bear with me in a **little foolishness**” [1,17,21b]! ‘I hate this boasting, but it seems to be the only language you understand’! * “*Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast*” [18]! But he does it **reluctantly**! When Paul says he is boasting, he is really just being **honest**! He is telling the truth, exactly like it is! He is **not** exaggerating or ‘blowing his own trumpet’, he is **not** being **proud**!

The false prophets **looked-down** on Paul, so he felt he had to **defend** himself. **First**, they said he was not worth listening to because he did **not charge** for his services! One of the signs of success in Greece was the **fee** you could charge. They believed the **myth** ‘If it was dear, then it was good’! Many people today believe that! Paul did **not charge** anything for preaching! “*did I commit a sin in **humbling** myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you **free of charge**?*” [7] Paul did not want to be a **burden** on his congregations “*when I was with you **and was in need**, I did **not burden anyone**, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I **refrained** and **will refrain** from burdening you in any way*” [9].

The **second** reason they looked-down on Paul was because he **turned upside-down** the **glamorous image** of Greek **heroism**! [Read Clements p214] Alexander the Great, conquered cities by scaling over city walls and capturing enemies and returning in triumphant processions. Paul did the **opposite** – he had to **escape** from **persecution** by climbing over walls “*At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was **let down in a basket** through a window in the wall and escaped his hands*” [32,33]! Paul climbed walls to **escape capture**! *So, Paul felt he had to explain some **facts** of his ministry.

There **is** a **place** and a **time** when we have to tell the truth, for the **truth's** sake! Listen to Paul [5] *“I consider that I am **not** in the **least inferior** to these **super-apostles**. Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am **not so in knowledge**”*!! Extraordinary having just said *“it is **not** the one who **commends himself** who is approved, but the one whom the **Lord commends**”* [10:18].

The Psalmist speaks of his **innocence** (when he has to)! *“The Lord dealt with me according to **my righteousness**, according to the **cleanness** of my hands He has **rewarded** me + “I was **blameless** before him, and I kept myself from my **guilt**”*[Psa 18:20,23] + David = *“Vindicate me, O Lord for I have walked in my **integrity**...I wash my hands in **innocence**”*[Psa 26:1,3]. **APP** Some Xns believe we can **never** please God and we can **never do right!** We are **constantly** great sinners and can do **nothing** acceptably to God! Not true! There is **Godly boasting!** Man can give glory to God on earth!

GODLY CREDENTIALS

So what **did** Paul boast about? *“If I must boast, I will boast of the **things that show my weakness**”*[30]!! **Not** his achievements (of which he had many)! Rather of the many things he **suffered** and **endured** for Christ! When you apply for a job, you have to give your CV! You record all the great things you have done and the excellent courses you have passed. Paul did the **opposite!** Paul's real credentials were what he **suffered** for Christ. “[I had] *“far more imprisonments with countless beatings, and often near death...forty lashes less one...three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned... three times I was shipwrecked...many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst...in cold and exposure”*[23-29]! All this **because** he believed in Jesus Christ! Moses *“choosing rather to **suffer affliction**”*+disciples *“rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name”* What a **challenge!** We must not **deliberately** choose suffering – but **if called**....