

True Teacher in contrast to the false

At camp 2 weeks ago we talked about the traits of a false teacher. I was hoping last week that Mike would be able to finish Jude, so I decided to share a passage that gives us a direct contrast from the false teachers described in Jude. The passage is II Cor 4,5. Paul reveals his heart for ministry, a true heart for ministry.

2 Corinthians 4

¹Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.

Now what ministry does he refer to? That is found back in chapter 3.

Chapter 3: ⁴And we have such trust through Christ toward God. ⁵Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Remember how the so called ministers in Jude were self-appointed like Korah in the wilderness. Remember how Korah thought that he had just as much right to lead the Israelites as Moses had.

Paul here describes where real ministry comes from. It is something that we have. The word for have means to hold. It is something we possess. It is something that has been given to us by God.

And with it comes a sufficiency that God provides. Both the sufficiency of the minister and the message itself are God given.

There is no room for creativity in determining what the message is. It is a new covenant. And it is accompanied by the Holy Spirit.

There is no room for self-appointment or self-sufficiency. It is all of God. So just like Moses, Paul saw himself and all true ministers as being appointed for the task by God and given the message to be spoken by God.

Because that is true, Paul didn't lose heart. If God has given us this

ministry, the outcome is up to Him. We just keep doing it until He lets us know it is done.

²But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

We saw 2 weeks ago that the false teachers reveled in shameful things, sneaking, deceiving, whether sincerely or intentionally. Paul describes true ministers as doing the exact opposite.

Paul says that he and his fellow ministers have already renounced those things. They were given up at the onset.

Rather than defiling the flesh,
rather than holding secret selfish motives for what they do,
rather than working to present a certain image that will help them have the effect that they want,
rather than using God's word to say what they want it to say,
rather than all those things the true minister focuses on
manifesting the truth.

The word for manifest is to make known what is hidden. Do you see how that is the opposite of the false teacher?

The false teacher wants to keep his motives hidden

He wants to keep his methods hidden.

He wants to keep his goals hidden.

And he manages to keep the true gospel hidden.

But the true minister wants to manifest the truth about all of those things.

In the shipping industry a ship will have a manifest. The manifest makes clear what is hidden in the holds of the ship. That is what a true minister does. He takes what is true and makes it visible. A true minister can reveal his motives, his methods, his goals, and his gospel without shame. There is nothing to hide. There is nothing to manipulate. There is no image to maintain. And he can do that because the ministry, the message and the sufficiency are all provided by God. It is God who is in charge of the outcome. That is why he can go on to say this

commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

To commend is to put together by way of composition or combination. Basically the true minister lays it all out there and lets the listener decide. He trusts the Holy Spirit in the hearer to affirm the integrity of the minister and the ministry of the teacher.

The false teacher, just like a false sheep, spends a great deal of time and effort in their self-marketing. They work hard to create an image that will sell. They are careful to display only that which will be received positively. They are careful to say only that which will give them an advantage. They work very very hard at hiding things.

The true minister is free of that burden. A true minister spends his time manifesting and commending. He reveals the truth and trusts God for the results. It is a completely different focus. The false teacher has to concern himself with the **effect** of what he teaches and does. The true minister concerns himself with the **truth** of what he teaches and does.

Now, what if the truth doesn't get through. How would that happen to the minister manifesting truth?

³But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

The veiling is not the problem of the minister. The veiling is the problem of the hearer, just like Christ often said, "To him who has ears, let him hear." So if the truth is manifested but not received, the problem is spiritual, not tactical. The problem is the devil has this listener blinded to the truth. They are spiritually dead. They are not tuned into the station and can't pick it up.

So even the true minister's apparent failures to have an effect on some listeners aren't a problem. They are exactly as can be expected. And no change in presentation will fix the problem.

⁵For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

Here we see it again. Jude called himself a bond servant. And as

Brad pointed out, a servant was the exact opposite of how these false teachers saw themselves. They wanted to be big shots, the center of GETTING, not GIVING. But Paul is the little shot giver. He is the slave boy of the group. His job is to serve all those under his care.

We see in this one little verse both the heart of the message and the messenger.

We preach Christ- There are no dreams needed. There is no creativity needed to discern the message. The core message is that Christ lived, died for our sins, and lives again and we can have his provision of salvation if we will believe in Him.

We are Christ's bondservants- We only do what we do for one reason- we believe the Gospel ourselves. And the result of true belief in Christ is an offering up of ourselves as living sacrifices. We can do nothing less. And we can do nothing more. It is our reasonable service. And if we are serving Christ, where does our service get focused? It gets focused on Christ's people. Where else could it go. Most manmade religions come up with grand ways to serve God directly by things like walking on your knees up 500 steps and that sort of thing. Or maybe meditating on nothingness for hours on end. Yeah, that's real valuable. (sarcasm)

But Christ directs that service to Him be service to His people. So Paul was the Corinthian's bondservant because of Christ. Think about that a little bit this morning.

Question- How can you express your gratitude for what He has done for you?

Answer- Serve His People!

We all have that capacity. We all have that opportunity. We all have that responsibility. So like the Nike slogan- Just do it!

We at Ferndale are in the position to splinter or grow. God took Mike for a reason.

Maybe God wants the teaching we received to be disbursed into other churches. Or maybe He wants his truth to be displayed and spread by our gathering.

I would like you to pray and think about this in the next coming weeks. We will soon meet to assess what our commitment is to the Ferndale assembly to determine our future course.

⁶For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Just in case we get the idea we came to Christ because we were so smart Paul reveals what really happened. Instead of staying like those that the Devil had blinded, God shone in our hearts supernaturally to allow us to see. We saw that the salvation from God came in the person of Jesus Christ. And for some miraculous reason God imparted faith in us and we believed. That is why the minister can be so confident in just manifesting. It is only God who can do the rest.

⁷But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

The false teachers have a brute beast mentality. Everything is centered on them and their talent and their power and their advantage. True ministers know they don't share any of that burden or motive. True ministers, and true believers for that matter, have true faith housed in their skin and bone bodies. The body is frail and weak. It gets sick. It lets us down. There is little inherent power in it. Maybe a man can lift 400 pounds off the ground. Big deal. A single cell mutating can take his life. The earthen vessels are weak.

But it must be emphasized we DO HAVE a TREASURE in this body. We have eternal life in us. We are assured beyond a shadow of a doubt that everyone who has this faith has an eternal reward that is infinitely better than anything that we experienced here. The things of this planet that have any value, the love we have received from brothers and sisters, will remain in heaven as well. But all of our suffering and uncertainty. All of our pain and distress. All of our doubt and fear. It will have nowhere to live in heaven. All our tears will only need to be wiped away just one more time. And those who have gone on before us know just what a treasure it is that we have in these bodies. Because they have, in essence, cashed it in on their eternal retirement plan.

Now why does God put this treasure in flesh? That the excellence of the power may be in God and not in us. No one is going to ever think that they made it to heaven by their effort. They are never going to think that their faith survived this life due to their own power. The sustaining power for the Christian is displayed in our day to day living

BECAUSE of the weakness of our flesh. It becomes more obvious as we live how frail we are and how strong God is. And he wants it that way. So we will be wasting the time we spend cursing our weakness, our frailty, our inability to save ourselves. We should instead praise God for his power and his sufficiency.

⁸We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—¹⁰always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ¹¹For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹²So then death is working in us, but life in you.

Paul is primarily speaking of faith housed in weak vessels facing awful circumstances. And as we do that, part of the treasure we carry is the dying to ourselves and living to Christ, that His power would be displayed in our living.

You will never hear a false teacher talk about how good this process is. This is exactly what they want to avoid. They don't want to die to themselves. They want the world in their pocket. They want to gain an earthly advantage. But true spirituality teaches us that the earth is temporary and not worth our investment. It teaches us that living for Christ is all that matters.

Life is short and soon is past

Only what's done for Christ will last.

¹³And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "*I believed and therefore I spoke,*" we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

This treasure is the treasure of faith housed in our present weak bodies. It is the same faith that believed and spoke so it is appropriate for Paul to believe and speak.

And this is what he knows:

He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with

Jesus, and will present *us* with you.

This is the promise for us to claim this morning. This is the truth that puts all the suffering in perspective. This is the truth we can cling to while facing the harshest of circumstances. This is the truth that God has for you and I this morning.

Since God raised Jesus, God will raise us, every one of us who is a believer. We are all dying. We don't all know how soon. But our bodies are certainly destined for the earth. But they are not destined to remain in the earth. God gave us the great blessing of displaying the miracle of bodily resurrection by resurrecting Christ. We know He can and He promises that He will. So no matter what we must face before that happens, Christ will raise us up! Christ will raise us up!

I have developed two questions I always ask when facing a stressful situation. They are simple and some people don't like using the. But the questions are:

1. What is the worst that can happen?
2. Can I, by God's grace, handle that?

That helps me to put things into perspective.

Well, we are all living and breathing here this morning. And we are all going to die. Those of us who are believers can apply these two questions. Death is what is going to happen to us. If we are in Christ, God has it covered. We will raise again and live an eternity in Glory. I will see Mike, my Dad, and my Grandfather and Grandmother and Russel and eventually every believer I ever knew. And better still, I will see Christ and I will no longer struggle with sin. I will be at rest, finally. Can I by God's grace handle that? There is nothing to handle. It is all handled for us.

This morning, if you are a believer, that is your destiny. That is what is going to happen. We all need to keep that perspective as we face the next difficult thing in our path. For us, death is the worst that can happen. And that problem has been licked by Christ. We are the only people on this planet that are really free to live. Because we alone are prepared to die.

¹⁵For all things *are* for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory

of God.

Again we see the contrast between the false teacher and the true. The true minister can say "All things are for your sakes". They can say, everything we are doing we do for your benefit. The false teacher cannot. If they were honest they would say, "All things are for my sake." But they won't be honest.

¹⁶Therefore (Since we are prepared to live and die, since we have such a rich reward.) **we do not lose heart.** (That is we don't lose heart if we believe this and cling to it.) **Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.**

(That is our condition every day of our spiritual lives. Flesh is dying and we are being inwardly renewed as we believe truths and disbelieve lies.)

¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

2 Corinthians 5

1For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. (Notice it doesn't say death there. It says life. Mortality is swallowed up by LIFE at the time of our death. That has really got to get the devil's goat.) **5Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.**

6So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

9Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be

well pleasing to Him. 10For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

The day of judgment is the day we must all orient to. It should be the therefore that the next decision is based upon.

Notice how the thinking of a true minister runs.

I am going to die.

I am going to live forever with Christ.

I want to please Christ with all I do.

God will punish the unsaved.

Therefore I will do all in my power to persuade men to avoid that punishment.

Notice what he **does not think**.

I am going to die.

Christ took care of my sin.

Therefore I will live this life filling my life with as much pleasure as I can but avoiding those things that are technically sin. Because after all my sin is covered and my salvation is secure.

When our goal is to please Christ, the things that are most central to Christ's heart take precedence over the things that are simply lawful. We stop asking what is lawful and begin asking, how can I best please Christ today.

For our church to continue, we are all going to need to live like the church in Acts. We are all going to need to live by asking ourselves, "How can I best please Christ?" And we are going to need to be in the Word more than ever before. If that is the direction that the congregation decides to go, all of us will need to exercise our gifts and all the gifts will be needed. There will also be tasks needing done by others.

In light of our eternal life

In light of the concerns of Christ

Will we make it our aim to be as pleasing to Him as we can possibly be?

That is only reasonable.

And if you are not in Christ- apply for yourself the test I mentioned earlier and consider the worst that can happen. I can assure you that you cannot, by the grace of God handle that. Repent while you have breath.