

Series: 2 Corinthians
Title: The Groomsmen Message
Text: 2 Cor 11: 1-3
Date: December 14, 2017
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2 Corinthians 11: 1: Would to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me.
[In our next message from this chapter, we will see why Paul says this. Tonight, we will focus on verses 2-3]

Jewish historians say the groom's best man—the *friend of the bridegroom*—held a very important position. From the time the bride was espoused to the groom, the friend of the bridegroom was “the guarantor of the bride's virgin chastity.” The Apostle Paul used this illustration to describe himself as Christ's groomsmen—the *friend of Christ*—guarding Christ's bride.

2 Corinthians 11: 2: 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.

Why was Paul so protective with this godly jealousy? What was Paul's fear?

2 Corinthians 11: 3: But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Subject: The Groomsmen's Message

Proposition: Christ's preacher, as the friend of Christ, preaches only Christ so that our minds will stay only on Christ in faith, that we remain a chaste virgin to Christ Our Husband, to whom we are espoused.

ESPOUSED TO CHRIST

2 Corinthians 11: 2:...I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as a chaste virgin* to Christ.

Every true saint is a member of Christ's church, his bride. God's elect church was espoused to Christ as his bride from eternity. God the Father sovereignly chose a people by his free grace and gave us to be Christ's bride.

According to custom, when a father espoused his daughter to a man, before the wedding even took place, the groom entered into a covenant and she became espoused to him by covenant promise. Before the world was made, Christ entered covenant with the Father concerning his bride—it is the same covenant he makes to us when he calls us:

Hosea 2: 19: And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; [espouse] yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment,

Christ promised to fulfill the law on behalf of God's elect church: to justify us from all our sins, purge us, and make us the righteousness of God in him, while declaring God just and the Justifier of his bride

Hosea 2: 19:...and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

At the same time that Christ satisfied justice for us, he was showing his bride lovingkindness and mercies forevermore. And he continues to do so in all his dealings with us.

Hosea 2: 20: I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

Though we fell in sin, Christ remained faithful to his bride, giving himself for us. Then in faithfulness, he sent this gospel, revealed himself in our hearts, now we know the LORD.

So God's elect church was espoused to Christ in the everlasting covenant from before the foundation of the world. Then Christ came and fulfilled his covenant promise.

THE GROOMSMEN

2 Corinthians 11: 2: 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.

According to scripture, Christ's preacher is like a groomsmen to Christ our Husband as he protects and guards Christ's bride. In his faithfulness, Christ sends his preacher preaching the good news of the gospel and Christ espouses us, personally, to himself—writing the law of this same covenant on our hearts. Christ's true preachers are compared to groomsmen—*the friend of Christ the Bridegroom*—because Christ's preacher has a heart for Christ's bride, the same as Paul had for the Corinthian brethren.

He said, "*I am jealous over you with godly jealousy.*" He watches over Christ's bride, protective of her, guarding her from imposters that would turn her to another. Why?

He said, "*for I have espoused you to one husband.*" Only one, not Christ plus Moses, not that Jesus which is not another—one husband—Christ Jesus the Son of God.

He said, "*that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*" The only way we will be found of him without spot and blameless is to be found in him, not having our own righteousness which is of the law but that which is by the faith of Christ.

Casting all your care on Christ is what Peter meant when he said to the church—*2 Peter 3:14: ...beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.—be found of him, in him!*

So the one means and one message Christ's preacher uses to keep her a chaste virgin to Christ, to keep her believing only upon Christ is: he preaches Christ and him crucified. Paul said,

1 Corinthians 2: 2: For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Colossians 1:28: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

The true friend of the true Bridegroom—Christ's true preacher—keeps her mind focused on Christ to whom we are espoused by constantly declaring her Husband and only him! They tried to make John the Baptist envy Christ because so many followed Christ. But listen to John describe himself as the groomsmen—*the friend of the Bridegroom*.

John 3: 26: And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. 27: John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28: Ye

yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.29: He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, [the best man, the groomsman] which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30: He must increase, but I must decrease. 31: He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 32: And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. 33: He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. 34: For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. 35: The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

So this is why I only preach Christ—I want your mind on Christ; I want you resting in him, looking to no other because *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

IMPOSTER GROOMSMEN

2 Corinthians 11: 3: But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

None of these things are so with the devil's preachers. The devil uses his preachers to turn men from Christ to anything else or to add something in addition to Christ.

The devil uses any means—*lest by any means*. While Christ's preachers use one means—*the devils preachers use many means*: sports, humanitarian works, even religious night clubs. The devil may get your mind interested in searching the scripture for other subjects: *prophecy, end times, supralapsarianism, things not clearly revealed*. When the devil convinces a man that meaningfulness doctrine is life or death, his mind has been corrupted from the simplicity of Christ. He proves he never knew Christ.

About a year ago a few men began to have an idle curiosity. They thought it started harmlessly. But it ended in apostasy, division, pride, falling away!

The devil tricks with subtilty—*as the serpent beguiled [tricked] Eve through his subtilty*. The devil came as the most subtle of all God's creatures, beautiful, attractive to the fleshly senses. Listen to how deceptive and subtle his preachers are described:

2 Corinthians 11: 13: For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14: And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15: Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Pastor David Pledger said, *“The devil's preachers are indeed the ministers of righteousness...but whose righteousness?”*

Most all preachers are adding things to Christ's work that you must do for your good, to make you wise, to make you more holy, to be more like God. The devil tricked Eve with the same things—*“your eyes shall be open and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”*

But doing so, *“your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”* What does it mean *“the simplicity that is in Christ?”*

It means not complicated. They use same words but give them different definitions. When a man asks about “election?” Tell define election. Sanctification? Define it. Redemption? Define. Sinner? Define sinner. False preachers use words no one can understand, complicating. They will say a greek word. Then say, “*it means this.*” Why not just say what it means? He wants to commend himself, impress you with his intellect. And men follow because of it. Paul said,

2 Corinthians 1: 1: And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God... 4: And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Chiefly, simplicity means “*Christ is all, and in all.*” The word “simplicity” means “singleness”—*I fear lest your minds should be corrupted from the single object of Christ our All.*

Concerning the scriptures, “Christ is all and in all.”—the single subject of the whole Bible! Christ said,

John 5:39: Search the scriptures;...they are they which testify of me.

Yesterday, while I was studying this passage, Brother John texted asking me for some scripture about a subject that God is silent about. I am sure John thought I blew a gasket when I texted a sermon in reply warning him to seek no other object in the book but Christ. Why did I do that? *But I fear let your minds should be corrupted from looking for the single subject of this book—in all the scriptures Christ is All and in all!*

Concerning the wisdom of God—Christ is All and in all; he filleth all his people with Wisdom and he is All our Wisdom. We have the mind of Christ that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Concerning righteousness—Christ is All and in all—Christ is the Righteousness of God, the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.

Concerning sanctification—Christ is All and in all. We were sanctified by God the Father electing us in Christ; by the Spirit of God sanctifying us in the new birth forming Christ in you. Christ is that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. That is why Christ in you is the hope of glory. When Christ our Sanctifier is the holiness of the new man. Christ said, “*Thou, [Father] in me and I in them, that they might be made perfect in one.*”

Concerning redemption—Christ is All and in all. “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*” (Ga 3:13) And Christ shall redeem our vile bodies into the glorious liberty of the sons of God that they might be made like unto his glorious body. (Rom 8: 17, 23)

Concerning the believer’s rule of life as we walk through this life—Christ is All!

John 10:27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

John 12: 26: If any man serve me, let him follow me;

John 21:22 [when Peter turned and started minded the business of another apostle] Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

How can we walk by faith except you follow Christ? Paul said, *“Follow me as I follow Christ!”*

Concerning resurrection—Christ is the Resurrection and the Life.

Concerning heaven—Christ is heaven! CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL!

As the friend of Christ, *“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. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”* Hear Christ preached, believe on Christ, search Christ in this book, persevere in Christ, suffer with Christ, and never turn from Christ!

1 John 5: 11: this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Amen!