

Series: 2 Corinthians

Title: Three Marks of False Preachers

Text: 2 Cor 11: 4

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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. 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. 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. [Here is why he said, “Bear with me.”] 4: For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

Paul says, “Bear with me” because those at Corinth were bearing and receiving false preachers. False preachers are not to be received and listened to by God’s church:

2 John 1: 9: Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10: If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: 11: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

This was one thing that caused the Corinthians such monumental problems.

Every true preacher sent from God must declare to sinners: the necessity of repentance from dead works to faith in Christ Jesus; the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ; and we must warn sinners of false preachers. If we would preach the same message Christ preached we must preach what he preached when he said,

Matthew 7: 15: Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16: Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17: Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Today, most cry up love in the name of saying all men are right and no one is wrong. No! If salvation is by God’s will and Christ’s works according to God’s word then the man who preaches salvation by man’s will and man’s works is wrong! We are not both right; we are not all right because there is one God, one spirit and one gospel and the rest are wrong! Simple as that!

We are not saved by any man-made creeds, not by any man-made denominations, not by man-made deeds, not by certain levels of emotions required by men. The word of God declares we are saved by God in Christ through God-given knowledge, taught us by the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the gospel—everything else is lies.

But how can we recognize a false teacher? What are their fruits? In verse 4, Paul gives three marks of a false preacher.

Proposition: A false preacher can be detected by one or all of the following.

Divisions: 1) he...preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, 2) he has another spirit--or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, 3) he preaches another gospel, which ye have not accepted.

Subject: Three Marks of False Preachers

FALSE PREACHERS PREACH ANOTHER JESUS-- *“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus.”*

Our Lord warned that there would come many false Christ's—*“There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”* So when men come to you and say, *“Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not.”* (Matthew 24:24, 23). You may think you have never experienced this/ but we experience this constantly. Folks say, *“Come to my church, our preacher preaches Christ.”* Another says *“Come worship with us, we preach Christ.”*

How do we discern when men are preaching another jesus which is not another?

First, if they preach that he is only a man—it is another jesus. The Lord Jesus is the sinless born GodMan, begotten of the Holy Spirit through a virgin's womb.

Secondly, if they declare lies concerning what Christ came to do and did then they preach another jesus. There are several things that differentiate the true Lord Jesus Christ from a false jesus but let me give you four things.

- One, the true Lord Jesus Christ is the Wisdom of his people. In the new birth *“of God is Christ made unto you Wisdom.”* Thus we are given *“the mind of Christ.”* Thus we are taught by the Holy Spirit *“that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”* We are first brought to believe on Christ and we learn all doctrine in light of him. Men preach another jesus when they make wisdom to be of men and their gaining knowledge of themselves.
- Two, the true Lord Jesus Christ is the Righteousness of his people. On the cross by himself he purged our sins, justified his people, and brought in everlasting righteousness for his people. Men preach another jesus when they say righteousness is dependent upon the sinner making Christ's work effectual by their faith and/or works.
- Three, the true Lord Jesus Christ is the Sanctification of his people. On the cross, *“by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”* Then in the new birth, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and makes us holy when Christ is formed in you and we are made partakers of the divine nature. Men preach another jesus when they make sanctification to be by man's works.
- Four, the true Lord Jesus Christ is the Redemption of his people. If the Son shall make you *free from the law* you shall be free indeed; if the Son shall make you *free from the dominion of sin in your flesh* so you can believe on Christ then you shall be free indeed; if the Son shall make you *free from the body of this death in resurrection* you shall be free indeed; if the Son shall make you *free from every consequence of sin in glorification* then you shall be free indeed. Men preach another jesus when they make redemption dependent upon something done by the sinner.

To put it simply, the true Lord Jesus Christ was first trusted by God the Father to do all things necessary in the salvation of his people and Christ shall not fail. He has, is and shall successfully save all the Father trusted to him. All glory and all praise belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

FALSE PREACHERS PREACH BY ANOTHER SPIRIT—*“or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received”*

Christ said that false preachers do not preach by his Spirit but by the spirit of the devil. The three things that Christ said the devil does are the things the devil's preachers do: they murder as they destroy the souls of men; they abide not in the truth corrupting the word of God; and they speak lies, not of the Spirit of God, but of their own selves.

John 8:44: Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Under all, this devilish spirit causes false prophets to preach for covetous gain. The motive of everything a false preacher preaches is for covetous gain.

Jeremiah 6:13: For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one *is* given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

One, they covet *the praise of men*. By what Paul says in verses 5 and 6 he shows that the false preachers were seeking the praise of men by their intellectual manner of speaking. This is why they accused Paul of being rude in speech and in knowledge. But Paul said,

2 Corinthians 11: 5: For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. 6: But though *I* be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been throughly made manifest among you in all things.

Two, false preachers covet *monetary gain*. This is why Paul declared in verses 7-12 that he did not take money from the Corinthians. He preached from a spirit of love for them. Paul would not allow the false preachers to use Paul to extort money from the Corinthians. He said if they want to glory let them be found to preach from the same spirit as God's true preachers rather than from a covetous spirit.

2 Corinthians 11: 7: Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? 8: I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you service. 9: And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*. 10: As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. 11: Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. 12: But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

Three, false preachers preach from a spirit which *covets glory for what they make men do by their law-mongering*. In Galatians Paul said they do not keep the law but they make others keep the law that they might glory in what they make other men do. In verses 18-21, Paul describes the false preachers at Corinth who preached law. They reproached Paul as being weak because he did not use the law to lord over God's people smiting them with the law as they did. But Paul's spirit was truly bold because he preached Christ and trusted Christ to make his people obedient in the heart through faith in Christ constrained by Christ's love.

2 Corinthians 11: 18: Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. 19: For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye *yourselves* are wise. 20: For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take *of you*, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. 21: I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

For these covetous reasons, as well as many more, false preachers handle the word of God deceitfully, take advantage of the people, moving from one church to the next each time seeking bigger and better for themselves.

FALSE PREACHERS PREACH A FALSE GOSPEL—“*or another gospel, which ye have not accepted*”

The true gospel declares all sinners are totally depraved by nature. It means we must be born irresistibly of the Holy Spirit. Christ must give us a new will in the day of his power by giving us a new nature. The Spirit must teach us the truth, make us repent from false works and believe on Christ.

But false preachers preach some goodness in man saying salvation is a step-by-step salvation. Some say it starts with you: come to the front of the church building, repeat a prayer that the preacher tells you to say, be baptized and you are born-again and saved. Others say it ends with you: they tell you that God must give you a new heart and faith to believe on Christ by grace but then you must sanctify yourself by your law-keeping.

Understand, any work we do by which we think we make ourselves to differ from others is to be under law.

The apostle Peter merely got up from a table of Gentiles and moved over to a table of Jews so he would not be seen eating meat the law forbid. Paul called it “*walk[ing] not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel*.” It was the great sin of *dissimulation*, of bringing believers back under the law. Paul was speaking of that act which Peter did as a believer when he spoke of us not being *justified by our works*. Peter was not attempting to justify himself before the judgment seat of God in justification. He was attempting to *justify himself before men*. He was showing men that he was holy, eating only what God commanded in the law. This is important to note because men will say, “We are not justified by our works before God! But in sanctification by our works we become more and more holy.” Paul declares that man’s self-sanctification is an attempt to justify themselves before men by their works. When Paul said if while we claim to be justified by the faithful obedience of Christ we are found to sin he was speaking of Peter’s sin of trying to justify himself before men by moving from the table of the Gentiles to the table of the Jews. Paul said if we are found to commit such sin did Christ work that in our hearts? God forbid. That is not the sanctification Christ works in the holy heart of his people. Most of what men call works of holiness are nothing more but sin. Christ sanctifies his people from such sin of attempting to justify ourselves before men. It was that sin of self-sanctification by our works that Christ condemned the Pharisee’s for when he said,

Luke 16:15:…Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Christ is the Way! He said, “*No man cometh to the Father but by me.*” That is why Christ said the gate is straight and few enter in.

Luke 13: 23: Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 24: Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Matthew 7: 14: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

The wide way in which most go is “*adding something of themselves to Christ.*” The narrow gate is Christ himself. We enter through faith in Christ alone, apart from any works we do.

Another thing false preachers declare is that Christ died for all men and only made salvation possible so it is dependent upon you to decide by your will to believe on him and then you make his work effectual for you. Thus they make redemption and godliness to be by the will of man, by outward acts, by forms, and by religious performances

2 Timothy 3:5: Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

The truth declares Christ made satisfaction for a particular number of sinners that God elected to save by his grace from eternity. Christ did not die for all men, only the elect. Christ did not make salvation possible, Christ paid the price of his precious blood and accomplished the redemption of his people.

Therefore, God's own justice demands that Christ shall call his purchased people through the Holy Spirit to faith in him and preserve us till the end so that none shall be lost.

Understand, false preachers may use the words "grace" or even "free and sovereign grace" but they always include requirements you must do: works, law, morality, feelings, and/or experiences. But the truth is that salvation is by Christ alone by grace alone through faith alone apart from our works.

Ephesians 2:8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

2 Timothy 1:9: Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10: But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:"

But men will say does not the gospel declare his people serve him? Indeed! It declares we serve him and we do good works. But we do so by God working in us, by Christ making us fruitful, by the irresistible Spirit of God.

Philippians 2:13: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

So it is God who makes us utterly confident in Christ, who gives a heart devoted to Christ alone, who makes us surrender to Christ as our Lord and Savior. If any man come declaring any other Jesus, with any other spirit, preaching in other gospel do not receive him, do not hear him, from such turn away. "*Salvation is of the LORD!*"

Amen!