**A PURE VIRGIN BRIDE TO CHRIST**

2 Corinthians 11:1-15

Key Verse 2

 “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.”

**Introduction**



Today’s passage shows that Paul loved the Corinthian believers very much. His love was not based on self-centered or worldly way, but on God’s love and godly jealousy. For this reason, he wanted them to be united to their true Husband, Jesus Christ. He wanted them to be like pure virgins who were fully devoted to Christ and Christ alone. Paul did not lead them to himself, but to Christ. May the Lord have mercy on us so that we may share such hearts over many weak and vulnerable believers today!

1. Read verses 1-2. Why does Paul call it ‘foolishness’ to defend his apostleship?

(1) What does Paul mean by ‘godly jealousy’? (2a, Exodus 20:5) How did he

present the Corinthians to Christ? (2b)

1-1, Read verses 1-2.

 I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness. Yes, please put up with me! **2** I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

1-2, Why does Paul call it ‘foolishness’ to defend his apostleship? (1)

 ***I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness. Yes, please put up with me!***

* Paul here defends his apostleship. Some of the Corinthian believers considered his apostleship to be foolish from worldly point of view.
* From their human point of view, Paul’s weakness was considered to be foolish. But Paul was not sensitive to what other thought of. Rather, he endeavored to help them out so that they may come back to the true Husband, Jesus Christ.
* Paul wants to spend time on far better thing than defending his apostleship. But he wants to help them to overcome misunderstandings.
* It is important that the Corinthian believers understand and trust Paul’s apostolic credentials from God’s point of view.

1-3, What does Paul mean by ‘godly jealousy’? (2a, Exodus 20:5)

 ***I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy.***

* Paul is jealous with a godly jealousy for their hearts. His godly jealousy is a good thing. He will be offended if they are seduced by a false understanding about his apostleship.

Exodus 20:5 reads,

 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

* Jealousy is an angry, strong, powerful emotion that refuses to tolerate a rival. It can be a very powerful motivator to aggressive action. It is one of the most frequent causes for broken homes, broken hearts, and broken bodies in the world.
* Yet Paul mentioned on today’s letter that he feels a godly jealousy for some of the Corinthian believers who were seduced by false teachers.
* False jealousy is always selfish. It is concerned with your own feelings. It is possessive, and it wants to control another person. It is therefore often dominating and even cruel and tyrannical. It usurps the rights of others and insists on its own way. It is imposed upon someone else whether that person likes it or not. Because it is so vicious in its cruelty and its tyranny, jealousy perhaps is the most destructive force in the world today.
* A true jealousy, a godly jealousy, on the other hand, as Paul felt for the Corinthians, is one that arises from a deep passion for the welfare(holiness and purity) of another. It becomes careless of self, and it is always manifested in a tenderness and a thoughtfulness about someone else. It may never cease, because it is a powerful motive, just like the jealousy in both God's and Paul's hearts.

1-4, How did he present the Corinthians to Christ? (2b)

***I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.***

* Paul likens his jealousy to that of a father who has betrothed his daughter to a young bridegroom.
* Throughout history, fathers have had the privilege of giving their daughters away in marriage. Every father longs to be able to present his daughter, having raised her in a careful, nurturing home, as a lovely virgin to the young man she loves.
* In 1 Corinthians 6, their impure backgrounds were mentioned somewhat in detail.

 “Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men **10** nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **11** And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

* And that is what some of you were. And yet now he says, I have promised to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

2. Read verses 3-4. What was Paul’s concern for the Corinthians believers? (3)

 What should their attitude have been towards false teachings? (4)

2-1, Read verses 3-4.

But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. **4** For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

2-2, What was Paul’s concern for the Corinthians believers? (3)

 ***But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.***

* As a shepherd and a pioneer of the Corinthian church, Paul had a deep concern for them. He saw through what is going on in spiritual war.
* Satan wanted to lead them astray through false apostles or so called “super apostles”. As the following verse indicates, the false apostles kept using the words, “Jesus” and “gospel” and “grace”, but they gave them a completely different meaning that what is written in the Bible.
* The Corinthians had failed to discern their spiritual error and danger into which they were being led in a wrong way.
* False apostles appear to be somebody, and they speak eloquently. But they lead people to false hope and finally, to destruction just as Eve was deceived.
* Paul must have prayed a lot for them that they may have a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

2-3, What should their attitude have been towards false teachings? (4)

 ***For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.***

* Their attitude should have been easy towards false teachings. Why?
* The Corinthian Christians didn’t admire Paul’s apostolic credentials because they thought in a worldly way, not having the mind of Jesus.
* They didn’t like Paul’s apparent weakness and unimpressive appearance. This was an important point because Paul’s apparent weakness was shared by Jesus who, being in the form of God, did not consider it to be equal with God, but coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ([Philippians 2:6-8](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Phil%202.6-8))
* It wasn’t only the apostolic credentials of Paul that were under attack; the very nature of Jesus was attacked. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus: It is important that the Corinthian Christians understand and trust Paul’s apostolic credentials because Paul knows they are attracted to the false apostles who preach another Jesus.
* The troublemakers among the Corinthian Christians who stirred up contention against Paul didn’t only attack Paul; they also attacked the true Jesus by preaching another Jesus.
* Who was this “other Jesus?” Because of the way the Corinthian Christians despised Paul’s image of weakness and unimpressive appearance, the “other Jesus” was probably one who knew no weakness, persecution, humiliation, suffering, or death. A “super Jesus” is another Jesus, not the real Jesus, and another Jesus cannot save.
* Paul emphasized that the Corinthians and we must believe the Jesus of the Bible and the gospel of the Bible. The Bible says that there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5)
* There is only one way to God for Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. (Jn 14:6)
* No one can solve our sin and death problem except Jesus Christ who died for our sins and rose again. Jesus is the unique Savior and the true Husband. This is the gospel!
* You put up with it easily enough. - They were gullible. They were supposed to be stand firm on the truth instead. They can not blame others. But they should keep their faith by holding the truth they had received.

 3. Read verses 5-15. How did Paul defend himself as an apostle? (5-11) How did

he expose false apostles? (12-15a) What will be their end? (15b)

3-1, Read verses 5-15.

I do not think I am in the least inferior to those “super-apostles.” **6** I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. **7** Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? **8** I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. **9** And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. **10** As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. **11** Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

**12** And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. **13** For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. **14** And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. **15** It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

3-2, How did Paul defend himself as an apostle? (5-11)

***5 I do not think I am in the least inferior to those “super-apostles.” 6 I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. 7 Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. 10 As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. 11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!***

* Paul explained here about the reason why he serve the Corinthian believers free of charge. Ironically, it had become a point on which some people criticized Paul.
* False apostles claimed that their teachings were so valuable that people should pay for it, and they accepted material support shamelessly.
* However, Paul taught the gospel free of charge to the Corinthians, and when they needed something, he received help from the Macedonian churches.
* Paul knew that the Corinthians were not mature enough to support their shepherd, Paul, financially. In everything, Paul did for the best benefit of the Corinthians. His motive was love for Christ and love for them. God knows it!

3-3, How did he expose false apostles? (12-15a)

 ***And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. 13 For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 15 It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness.***

* Here Paul exposed false apostles about who they really were. They were “deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ.
* It is not a surprising thing, for Satan himself deceives people like an angel of light. But their fruit can’t be hid.

3-4, What will be their end? (15b)

***Their end will be what their actions deserve.***

* By their fruit we can recognize who they are. (Matthew 7:20) Their end will be what their actions deserve!

**Conclusion**

 In this passage, we learn that our enemy Satan is working diligently behind the scenes to make us go astray from Jesus. We must hold on to the gospel and the Jesus by asking the Spirit of the truth. When the gospel truth rules our hearts, we can grow like a mature servant, apostle Paul whose heart was led by the godly jealousy to rescue the gullible believers from the hands of Satan. May the Lord help us to have God’s love and passion in this confusing generation so that we may present our children and young students as pure virgins to Christ only. Amen.

**One word: Pure Brides to Christ!**