Christian Loyalty, Part 2
2 Corinthians 11:3-4
47-73

Well, we're going to turn to the Word of God at this time and back to our subject of spiritual loyalty. For many, many months, really, we have marched our way through 2 Corinthians. We've now found ourselves in chapter 11 of this great letter written by the Apostle Paul to the believers in the city of Corinth.

As you well know, the theme of chapter 11 as we embark upon it is spiritual loyalty. Paul is concerned about the loyalty of this church, their loyalty to their God, their loyalty to their Christ, their loyalty to the gospel and their loyalty to the truth. And it is with that concern in his heart that he pens the beginning of chapter 11.

The matter of spiritual loyalty is a rather large theme on the pages of Scripture. In fact, spiritual loyalty stretches all across divine revelation throughout the Old and New Testament, and all through the life of God's redeemed people since the completion of biblical text. Today the issue of spiritual loyalty is also a crucial issue as shepherds and pastors around the world call their people to be faithful to Christ, faithful to God, faithful to the gospel, faithful to the truth. No more dramatic and no more poignant instruction on the matter of spiritual loyalty has ever come from anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who in Matthew chapter 10 defined spiritual loyalty in some very strong terms. He said this, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth, I did not come to bring peace but a sword, for I came to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

Jesus said spiritual loyalty will become a sword that will sever family relationships. Jesus said spiritual loyalty means loving Me more than you love your own mother, your own father, your own sister, or your own brother. Spiritual loyalty means that you will have to face the reality of enemies in your own household because you will be loyal to Me and thus disloyal to them.

Spiritual loyalty also means, He says, that you must take up your cross and follow after Me or you're not worthy of Me. Simply spoken, that means you have to be willing to die. It may cost you your family. It may cost you your life. He who has found his life shall lose it, he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.

We're talking about a commitment at the most severe level. Loyalty to God, loyalty to Christ, loyalty to the gospel, loyalty to the truth may mean a severing of normal relationships at the most intimate level of the family and it may mean the loss of your life, it has for many through the years...very strong words to describe loyalty. Yet as Christians we are called to such consummate allegiance and such devotion.

Now as we remember, the Corinthians had shown signs of being disloyal. They had shown signs of defecting from their love for God and Christ and their understanding of the gospel, of being seduced away from the truth. You remember that some false teachers had come to Corinth prior to the writing of this letter. They had infected the congregation with anti-Paul material. They had done a full-blown diatribe against the Apostle Paul, a wholesale character assassination to get the people to distrust him and they were ready to step into his place as the recognized teacher and then to teach their damning lies. The people had opened the door given the pulpit to them and were in the process of being seduced into spiritual disloyalty. It is that seduction that prompts Paul to write this letter. He is concerned about this disloyalty. He is concerned about them being seduced away from the truth, away from God, away from Christ, away from the gospel and away from the truth.

So in this epistle Paul does what he really doesn't like to do, he defends himself. It is a bit of folly as verse 1 indicates in chapter 11, "I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness, but indeed you are bearing with me." You've come this far, all the way to the eleventh chapter, you've been enduring my folly. Why is it folly? Because he just detests self-defense. He feels much more comfortable with self-humiliation. He feels much more comfortable speaking of himself as a clay pot, as an earthen vessel, as a nobody, as a nothing. He feels much more comfortable humbling himself as nothing but a simple servant of God, a steward of the mysteries of God, a third-level galley slave, as the Greek word would indicate, huperetes, an under-rower. He doesn't like having to exalt himself as an apostle, but he must do it for the preservation of the truth and the congregation and the matter of loyalty. And so, because of their folly, he himself becomes a bit foolish and defends himself in this long letter.

The letter is long because the issue is grave. It is serious. And in spite of his reluctance, he's left with no choice but to defend himself in order to preserve his place as the teacher of the truth. It's not something to preserve his ego or his reputation or his prosperity in any sense, he merely knows that they must listen to him as the Apostle of Jesus Christ as the spokesman of God or they will be seduced away into lies that cripple and destroy the church. The Christian faith is at stake and their loyalty to it.

Now he defines spiritual loyalty in four ways in the opening six verses, four features. Each of these features is introduced to us by the word "for," f-o-r, it appears at the beginning of verse 2, in the middle of verse 2, at the beginning of verse 4, in the beginning of verse 5. This sets out four features...four features which clearly outlines for us the essence of loyalty. He is concerned about their loyalty to God, and it's the first feature; their loyalty to Christ; their loyalty to the gospel; and their loyalty to the truth. And each of those is introduced by the Greek word gar, translated "for" in your English version.

First of all, as we noted last time, we'll review briefly, he is concerned about their disloyalty to God. "I am jealous for you with...and the Greek text literally says...with the jealousy of God." God, as we saw last time, is a very jealous God. The Old Testament says His name is jealous. In the giving of the Pentateuch, the law of Moses, the Ten Commandments, the first one was, "You will have no other gods before Me, your God is a jealous God." God does not tolerate disaffection, He does not tolerate spiritual adultery. He, you remember, was grieved to the point of divorce in a spiritual sense in regard to Israel. He had espoused Himself to Israel like a husband to a wife. Israel's disloyalty to Him caused Him to write her a bill of divorcement, and as it were, send her away. Great grief entered the heart of God because of Israel's spiritual idolatries as she engaged herself with many false gods and

committed spiritual adultery. God is a jealous God and God judges disloyalty to Himself. Paul is concerned about their disloyalty to God as they are seduced away by false teachers who represent Satan and his kingdom of darkness.

Secondly, and this is where we left off last time, he is concerned about their disloyalty to Jesus Christ. In the middle of verse 2 he says, "For I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin." This is a very graphic description. The language here is full of meaning in the Jewish context. Remember I told you last week that there are two major components to a wedding, or to a marriage. The first is betrothal, the second is nuptial...the first we call engagement, the second we call the marriage ceremony. In the Jewish life when a young woman was given to a young man for marriage, there was a betrothal. And at that point, which we call the engagement, there was a contractual binding agreement that was made that could only be broken by death or by divorce. It was binding and it was for life. And that contract was then made. And about a year would intervene and during that year there would be a time for that virgin bride to prove her loyalty to her husband by her purity and her faithfulness. And there would be a time for that husband to prepare the place to receive his bride, to build her home, sometimes it was an extension on the house of his own father, sometimes it was in the estate of his father. But he would need the time to prepare a place for her so that he could then take her to that place.

And that, by the way, is the beautiful imagery of John 14 where Jesus said to His disciples, "I'm going to go away and I'm going to go away but you don't need to be sad and you don't let your heart be troubled because I'm going to prepare a place for you." He was like a betrothed bridegroom who was leaving the bride to go get the home ready and He said, "Some day I'll come back to get you." You have that same magnificent imagery in Matthew in the Olivet Discourse where Jesus speaks of His Second Coming like a bridegroom coming for his bride, and He talks about the virgins who had come to attend to the bride who would be the maids in honor, maids in waiting and some were ready and some were not when the bridegroom came to take his bride to the house that he had prepared.

He would at the time of engagement generally have paid a price to the father and then had to go and earn whatever he needed to build an appropriate place to receive his bride. And then would come the wedding ceremony. And after that, and only after that, sometimes a week-long ceremony, would come the consummation of the marriage. The father's job in the interval time, that period up to a year, was to keep his virgin daughter safe and protected and in his care and pure so that he might present her to her husband on the wedding day as a pure virgin.

And that's the imagery Paul has here. He says, "When I led you to Christ, when I preached you the gospel, I betrothed you to Christ and until He comes for you, until you are in His presence, I have the responsibility as your spiritual father to keep you pure. I have to protect you from other suitors and other seducers who would come and who would enrapture you with their false affection and draw you away." This is a wonderful duty for a father to discharge in the Jewish community, a wonderful assignment for a father to protect his daughter and to keep her pure and chaste for the man who had been set aside to be her husband. And the Apostle Paul looks at the Corinthians and says, "This is my concern, I espoused you to Christ, I betrothed you to Christ, I engaged you to Christ and I have to keep you pure until Christ takes you to be His bride. I brought you the message of justification which permanently linked you to Christ, an unbreakable covenant and contract, and I know that there is coming glorification by which you will be brought into His eternal presence as His bride. But in the meantime that matter of sanctification is my...partly my duty to preserve you and to keep you pure."

It's a beautiful picture and Paul says I...I betrothed you to Christ and I want to present you to Christ in the end as a pure virgin. I want you to be pure until you meet the Savior, whether He comes for you or whether you die and enter into His presence, I want you to be pure until that moment."

Then verse 3, "But I am afraid..." And therein lies the issue of this text and maybe the issue of the whole epistle. He was operating out of a fear here. All of these thirteen chapters of self-defense, all of this effort to clarify the fact that he was from God and did speak the truth and did represent the gospel and that he did come as a messenger of God and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and he did have the true revelation of God, all of this effort to preserve his position as THE spokesman for God was because he was afraid. He operated out of fear and his fear was very reasonable because they had already shown signs of seduceability. Down in verse 4 he identifies the fact that some had come and preached another Jesus under the power and influence of a different spirit and had formed a different gospel, and he says, "You bear this beautifully." You took it, you gave him the pulpit, you accepted it. You have already shown an immense and deadly vulnerability.

This, by the way, is a pastor's heart. This is the attitude of true pastoral care. When you go down to verse 28 of that chapter and it says, "There is daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches," he's not talking about some administrative duty, he's talking about this fear that exists in the heart of the shepherd that some of his sheep might go astray. It's the defection of the church. It's the waywardness of the church. It's the disloyalty of the church that concerns him. This has certainly been an issue throughout all the years of the church's history. Sad, sad to say there has been immense disloyalty under the great aegis and banner of Christianity. There has been immense disloyalty to God, to Christ, to the gospel and to the truth. And there are strung across this country and around the world churches that name the name of Jesus Christ that are utterly and totally disloyal to Him. It's a heartbreaking thing but it's a reality Paul well knew how susceptible and vulnerable people are to seduction. History has proven that the seducers have taken over churches. They have taken them over from one end of this globe to the other, wherever Christianity established itself the seducers have come and wrested those churches away from the genuine Christians to become places where they ply the errors of hell, the doctrines of demons taught by seducing spirits.

Now no clearer illustration of this matter of seduction is available in Paul's mind than that of Eve. So in verse 3 he says, "I'm afraid lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ." I'm afraid that you're going to get deceived just like Eve did. The serpent, by the way, is Satan, Revelation 12:9 and Revelation 20 verse 2, "The serpent came into the Garden and Eve was deceived." Paul's letter to Timothy, 1 Timothy 2:13 says, "It was Adam who was first created, then Eve. It was not Adam who was deceived but the woman being quite deceived fell into transgression." Eve was deceived.

Let me just tell you something. You all know the story of Adam and Eve and the serpent in the Garden and all of that. I want you to understand clearly, I do not believe for a moment Eve believed she was sinning. I don't believe she was overtly, purposely rebelling against God. She was deceived. And deception means she thought she was being given the right information and that heretofore she had had the wrong information. She thought she had been deceived and now things were clarified and that is always the approach of false teachers, they come and they cast the truth as error and then offer error as the truth. That's the way it always is.

Let's go back to Genesis 3 and see how Satan did that in the prototypical illustration of deception. Genesis chapter 3, and obviously we don't have time to cover everything here but there are some

points that we need to make. "The serpent," it says in verse 1, "is more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." The serpent now has a special identity because Satan, who is a spirit being, an angel, has taken up residence in this serpent and can even speak through the serpent. And so the serpent come to the woman. Finding the woman because the woman is out from under the headship and protection of her husband, he finds her, isolates her, gets her alone and in typical fashion here is the model seduction, here is the model religious seduction. Here's how it goes. "Indeed, has God said you shall not eat from any tree of the Garden?"

Now God had said that, clearly God had said don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Clearly God had said that. Satan knew God had said that. But he brings it up as if it were unclear. And the first thing you want to do with the truth is to cast doubt on it. And that's what all false teaching does. And Satan just says, "You don't really mean that God said you can't eat of something in the Garden? I mean, you understand now, there's nothing there but perfection, why does there have to be prohibition? Since there's no such thing as wrong, how can anybody do it? Surely you don't understand what God had meant. You must have missed that, Eve. I mean, God said you shouldn't eat of some tree in the Garden? You couldn't have heard it right. You know, what is a prohibition and why would there be one? I don't think you understood that."

Well, "And the woman said to the serpent, I think I understood it, from the fruit of the trees of the Garden we may eat, but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the Garden, God has said you shall not eat from it. I think I got it right." And then she threw in this. "Or touch it." Now we don't know if she added that, or Adam added that just to keep her away from it for her protection, but that's added. "No, we don't eat that one lest you die."

Die, what's die? What's die? There's no death. What does die mean? "Surely God is so good, God is so gracious, so loving, so kind, so merciful, so wonderful, He's put you in this magnificent place and He's given you all of this. You must have misunderstood this thing about don't eat that and die. What does die mean? You...you're not going to die. Surely you're not going to die. You must really...you've really gotten confused about this. The truth is, let me give you the truth. Now you realize you really haven't understood God, let me tell you the real truth. God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil."

Now how do we understand this? I'll tell you how we understand it from Satan's side. This is right down Satan's alley. Satan wants Eve. He wants Eve out of God's hands. He wants to wrench Eve out of the hands of God. And he knows how. All you have to do is get her to take steps to be like God and she'll get thrown out of paradise. How does he know that? That's exactly what he did. He knows that very well because when he wanted to exalt himself to be like God, he got thrown out of paradise, now he wants her out of there, too.

From her standpoint she doesn't understand the motivation of Satan. He's trying to rip a soul out of the hands of God. He's trying to damn a soul. But from her viewpoint, it sounds like...Oh, you mean if I do this I'll be like God? This is the original Gnostic heresy. I'll have the elevated knowledge? I'll have the super-knowledge? I'll have the transcendent knowledge? I've been so confused. I thought I understood about the tree and I thought I understood about the fact that we would die even though I don't know what prohibition means and I don't know what it means to disobey and I don't know what it means to die because nothing around here dies. I...I...maybe I have misunderstood it and now you're telling me if I will do this I can be like God? My.

If I said that to you as a Christian...if you do this you'll be like God. You'd say...I want to do that because the goal of my life is to be like Him, isn't it? So from her standpoint it sounded perfect, absolutely perfect. And that's always the way. The false teacher comes and says, "We'll show you the true knowledge, we'll lift you up, we'll make you like God." Like the Mormons say, "We'll make you into gods. We'll lift you right up and you'll forever and eternally rule your own planet as the god of your own planet." That's always what the false teachers say.

Well, the woman thought...I better check this tree out. So she saw the tree was good for food, saw that it was delight to the eyes and it was desirable to make her wise. And certainly God would want her wise, wouldn't He? Always false teachers offer the transcendent elevated information. They come along, "Oh, yeah, well we have new information, we have the

ScienceandHealthand the Key to the Scriptures. We have the writings of Annie Besant, Madame Blavasky and Judge Rutherford, we have the Book of Mormon, we have the writings of Joseph Smith, The Pearl of Great Price, The Doctrines and the Covenants, we have the traditions. See, we have the secret knowledge, we have the transcendent truth. We have the new revelation. Jesus told us this, God spoke to me, God told me this...always, always, always there's new information and it will make you wise, it will take you from the low level sort of misinformation you've got now, to the transcendent.

So, she ate. She ate. And in probably the single greatest commentary on the stupidity of men, it says, "She gave also to her husband with her and he ate." And that stupid guy wasn't even seduced. Now, men, remember that, will you, when you get to thinking how great you are. Why did he do it, you say? Because there was only one woman in the world and he wanted her. I believe that, I believe she had the power to seduce him, to draw him to her. That's the seduction. Let's go back to our text.

Back to 2 Corinthians. Paul could see this happening in Corinth. I see it happening all the time around us. Paul could see it. The serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness. Now how did he do it? By leading a mind astray, by confusing her thoughts. And that's what he says, verse 3, "Your mind should be led astray, I'm afraid that your minds are going to be led astray." Your noema, your thoughts, literally in the Greek, I'm afraid they're going to get in your mind and confuse you. That's why when people ask me, "What is the single greatest problem in the church?" The answer is very easy, lack of discernment...lack of discernment. People say, "Well you talk too much about doctrine." Doctrine is truth, truth is the criteria by which you discern. If you don't know truth, you can't discern. If you can't discern, you get seduced. If you get seduced, you then become unfaithful to Christ. My job as a shepherd is to protect you from that and if I don't do that, I haven't discharged my job. Paul says, "I'm afraid that you're going to have your minds led astray."

As we saw...go back to chapter 10 for a moment...spiritual war, you meet all these people today talking about spiritual warfare, they're chasing demons all around and trying to do things with the supernatural realm that are beyond our comprehension...true spiritual war is in verses 4 and 5 of chapter 10, "The destruction of fortresses," those fortresses are defined in verse 5 as speculations, the Greek word is logismos, ideologies, theories, ideas, religions, viewpoints, philosophies, psychologies, whatever. They're mental things. So spiritual war is the destruction of ideologies, ideas, concepts. "Even every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God," any anti-God idea, any satanic lie, any doctrine of a demon. Anything raised up against the knowledge of God we have to smash and "take every thought captive to Christ." This is an ideological battle that we're engaged

in. This isn't some hocus-pocus magic that we're trying to ply on some invisible spirits, we're dealing with the eternal souls of men and women and the battle is in the mind. It is a cognitive battle. And Paul says I'm afraid that your minds are going to become diverted, in the Greek, or corrupted, led astray from the simplicity, from the singlemindedness and purity of devotion to Christ.

The point here is loyalty to Christ. That's his point. The pure, chaste church betrothed to Christ must not be seduced into violation of love for Christ alone. And it's amazing to me how ignorant believers even can be tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, can't they? Like little children. Listen, the Christian life is simple. The Christian life is living Jesus Christ supremely and only as Savior and Lord. I'll say that again. The Christian life is simple, it is loving Jesus Christ supremely and only as Savior and Lord. And if you deviate from that then you are disloyal in any sense to Christ because you're loyal to some other spirit-teaching, some other thing. That constitutes a serious issue. The danger of false teachers in their subtle focus is they shift you off of Christ, they shift people on to rituals, ceremonies, works, miracles, experiences, psychology, entertainment...you name it, whatever, rather than knowing and loving the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said in Philippians 1:21, "For me to live is Christ."

I'll say it again. The Christian life is simple, it is loving Jesus Christ supremely and only as Savior and Lord. And 1 Corinthians 16:22 says, "If anybody doesn't love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed" Loyalty to God, loyalty to Christ. I grieve in my heart when I see through the history of the church how much disloyalty there's been to God and Christ and how false teachers have run rampant through the church to the dishonor of Christ.

Third point, and this is as far as we'll get, we'll finish next time...the third point, loyalty to the gospel. Verse 4, here's another word "for," introducing again by the Greek garthe third reason for Paul's concern about their loyalty. "For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully." Why am I concerned about you? I'm concerned about you in the matter of spiritual loyalty because I've seen evidence of disloyalty to God and I've seen evidence of disloyalty to Christ and I've seen evidence of disloyalty to the gospel.

He starts the sentence by saying "For if one comes and preaches..." and I just stop there long enough to say it could be translated "since" because it's really not hypothetical. One had come and more than one had come, he's not talking about a hypothetical situation really, there was a real situation. They had come, the false teachers had comes, the false apostles had come, they had come on their own. And by the way, it's important just to note, he says, "For since one comes" is in distinction from "one being sent." He who comes is in direct contrast to he who is sent by God, namely an Apostle like Paul. They had come on their own and the Corinthians had given them the pulpit, accepting the preachers who had come with their lies. They came and they preached another Jesus whom we had not preached. It was not the Jesus Paul had preached.

Oh, I don't think they came and said, "Jesus is not the Savior, Jesus is not the Messiah, it's actually some guy named Abraham Ben something down in south Judea." No. No, they talked about Jesus, they affirmed Jesus.

I was at a dinner the other night with Knute Gingrich and some others and they asked to bring the invocation and he was from the Jehovah's Witnesses and he stood up and he prayed to Christ, proclaimed his faith in Christ and his love for Jesus. Went through the prayer and you would have

thought he was a fundamental Baptist. But the Jesus of the Jehovah's Witnesses is not God, he's a creation. I said to the Mormon man that I met with, I said, "I want you to tell me who Jesus is. You love Jesus." They said yes. "You believe Jesus is your Savior." Yes. "You believe Jesus died on the cross." Yes. "You believe He died a substitute for your sins on the cross?" Yes. "You believe that salvation comes by faith in the death of Jesus on the cross?" Yes. "You believe that's gracious of God to give you that?" Yes. "You believe Jesus bore your sin in His own body on the cross?" Yes.

I said, "That's...that's true, that's all accurate. You sing praises to Jesus, you long to serve Him, you love Him?" They said yes. I said, "Who is Jesus?" They said Jesus is the created spirit child of God. I said, "That's another Jesus, that's not the Jesus that we preach."

Here came these false teachers, subtle but it was another Jesus. It always is. You can always tell error because of its Christology. They always corrupt who Christ is. Mormonism believes that Jesus is the spirit child of God and so are all of us. So he's one of us. He was...he came in the flesh but he was a spirit child of God, we're all spirit children of God so we're all creatures, he's a creature like us. That's another Jesus, that's not the Jesus, Paul says, whom we preach.

I don't know what the false apostles said about Jesus, it doesn't tell us. Really Paul never does outline error for us, it's not helpful. They came into the Corinthian church from the outside just as Satan did in the Garden of Eden which was the paradise of God. And likely they were Palestinian Jews who allegedly sought to bring the Corinthians under the correct teaching and they said they came from the Jerusalem church. They were, in a sense, Judaizers seeking to impose Jewish customs on the believers, but...but different from Judaizers because they made no issue out of circumcision and they made no particular issue out of the usual legalism. Actually they encouraged licentious liberties. They exalted rhetoric. They were heavy into oratory. They were charmed by Greek philosophy and culture. They claimed to be the apostles of Christ and representatives of the Jerusalem church and they said Paul was a fraud.

They identified somehow with Jesus, the name Jesus, but it was a different Jesus. We don't know anything more about the particulars of their religion and I'm glad Paul didn't waste any time defining their defect. They had somehow invented another Jesus. You have to listen so carefully because Satan is so seductive. They talk about Jesus. They love Jesus. Jesus is the Savior. But it's not the true Jesus.

Secondly, he says, "If one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached or you receive a different spirit which you have not received." Now what Spirit had they received when they believed? The Holy Spirit. At the time a person believes they receive the Holy Spirit. But the false apostles came with a different spirit. When the Corinthians received those preachers and their defective Christology, when they received the damning heresy about another Jesus they were not receiving the Holy Spirit whose presence was already in their lives, they were receiving a different spirit.

What spirit? Well false teaching comes from where? Satan. First Timothy 4:1 says, "Doctrines of demons are propagated by seducing spirits...seducing spirits." There was a spirit, believe me. I'll tell you something, if you pick up false material, you pick up cult material with its defective Christology, or whatever, you pick up any false cultic material, anything that is defective about Christ, anything that purports to be a new revelation, some new nuance, some new understanding, some elevated, some Gnostic concept, that means...the Greek word for "know" the super-secret knowledge, you pick

up any of that, any of that cultic material and you will read it and you will conclude what I always conclude...this is beyond the capability of human authorship. Men couldn't write this. They couldn't do it. No single man could pull it off and no committee could do it.

So where does it come from? It comes from spirits. False doctrine is propagated in the bowels of hell by ancient spirits who were created at the creation of the rest of the universe, who had been around for a long time and whose intelligence is far beyond ours. That's why that stuff is so potent and so powerful and so convincing and so seductive. False teachers come with a different Christ under the power of different spirits. And as a result, you've got a different gospel which you have not accepted. We preached one Jesus, they preach another. You received one Spirit, the Holy Spirit when you believed, they come under the power of another. You accepted one gospel which in believing saved you, they preach a different gospel...a different gospel. No doubt defined this way...salvation is not a matter of grace through faith alone, you have to add...what?...works. There's only two religious forms in the world...the gospel of grace and every other one where somehow you cooperate with God to earn your own way to heaven.

Paul said in Galatians 1 verse 6, "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel." Churches defect. Paul says, "Look at the...I look at the Galatian church, I can't believe it, I haven't been gone very long, you've already defected toward another gospel." Read the letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, churches in Asia Minor founded by the Apostle Paul's influence, founded out of the church at Ephesus, all those seven churches. By the time you get to the 90's or first century and John is writing the book of Revelation under the inspiration, you have seven letters to seven churches, five of those churches have already defected. And here he says to the Galatians, "I'm amazed, you're already being lured away to a different gospel which is really not another, there is no other gospel. It's not good news, it's bad news." They're distorting the gospel of Christ, he says in verse 7, "But even though we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed." If any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed. He pronounces a curse on anybody who touches the purity of the gospel.

Paul says to these people..."Look, these guys come and they preach to you another Jesus, and they come in the power of a different spirit, developing a different gospel...at the end of verse 4...you bear this beautifully and you just take it." Maybe somebody gave a speech about "let's be one, let's have unity, let's just love everybody." I don't know. "You bear this beautifully." Isn't that amazing? They should have thrown the guys out, right? You put up with it very well, meaning you accept it, you just take it all in. You have no difficulty accepting men with a false Christ, seducing spirit and a spurious damning gospel. Now you know why he's afraid? Sure. I'm afraid, I am afraid for you.

Loyalty to Christ, loyalty to God, loyalty to the gospel. That's essential in the life of the church. Why? Because we want to get you from the engagement to the wedding pure, right? There's one more, loyalty to the truth but that's going to be for next time. Pray with me.

Father, Your Word is so sharp, so powerful, so penetrating. We just...we're overwhelmed. We thank You for its clarity. We thank you, Lord, that You have given us a protector...amen...You've given us the Word. We have that advantage over those Corinthians of long ago who had only the beginnings of the writings of the New Testament, we have them all. Certainly to whom much is given much is required and here we are the rich when it comes to truth. And yet, Lord, through the history of Your church how easily it has been seduced. Churches, church denominations, colleges, universities,

seminaries have been seduced and have manifested disloyalty to God, disloyalty to Christ, disloyalty to the gospel, disloyalty to the truth. Lord, how heart breaking this is for the true shepherds whose desire is to keep Your people pure and keep the church a chaste virgin to present some day to the glorious Bridegroom. Father, we would...we would just pray that You would work in Your church. One writer said, "The church is like a ragged Cinderella and the only hope is for a miraculous transformation." Father, how we pray that You would keep Your church pure, keep this church pure, keep it faithful to You, to Christ and to the gospel until that great day when the bridegroom comes for His own. We pray in His name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org

COPYRIGHT (C) 2016 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).