

As the truth of Christ is in me

Description

This is a slightly modified transcript of a sermon I preached at South Parade Baptist Church in Headingley, Leeds on 08/05/2005

2 Corinthians 11:10 *As the Truth of Christ is in me*

When I first read this passage, I thought no way can I preach on this. If you have read this chapter you will see that it is all about Paul's defence against accusations made against him by false teachers that the church at Corinth had entertained. It seems that the church at Corinth was incredibly gullible when it came to discerning what and who was sent from God. It is from this backdrop that Paul finally speaks out and defends himself. He speaks bluntly and sets out to put the record straight. He hits the accusations head on, he does not put his head in the sand and hope that they will go away. He does this for one reason and one reason only, that is, he says, *because I have loved you with a Godly jealousy* and *lest you get corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ* 2 Corinthians 11:2-3

Paul clearly wants to protect the church from false teaching and sets about in this chapter to defend, partly with tongue in cheek humour, but also with a forced commendation of himself.

Paul arrives at verse 10 and qualifies the previous verses with a statement that demonstrated his security in Christ, 2 Corinthians 11:10 *As the truth of Christ is in me no man will stop me of this boasting*

There are times in our lives when we need, by the Grace of God invested in us, to clearly commend and defend *the truth of Christ in me(us)*.

To that end I would like to dip into this chapter to see what are the issues for us to defend and also see if by the Spirit's help and guidance we can draw out some truths, some little gems that are hidden in this chapter.

So as Paul sets out in 2 Corinthians 11:1 *I hope you will be patient with me as I keep on talking like a fool, please bear with me* (Living Translation).

In 2 Corinthians 11:2 we see these words, *I am jealous over you with Godly jealousy*, that's why I am so concerned for you, that's why I need to defend the gospel I preach. Right at the outset of this chapter Paul presents this picture of a pure bride, a virgin being presented or promised to a bridegroom.

Let us consider this point for a bit. Turn with me to Genesis 24, the story of where Abraham the great father sends the chief of his servants, Eliazer, to find a bride, Rebecca, for his son Isaac. Let us see what Abraham wants for his precious son, the son of promise, the one of his old age, the miracle son.

God called Abraham out of Ur, a place that was surrounded by materialism and idolatry.

Genesis 24:4 *but you shall go to my country and to my people, and take a wife for my son Isaac*

Genesis 24:5 â??And the servant said to him, Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you cameâ?•

Genesis 24:6 â??But Abraham said to him, Beware that you do not take my son back thereâ?•

Abraham is emphatic, NO donâ??t take my son back there.

Abraham was doing three things here by sending Eliazer to Haran:-

1. *Keeping the family line pure*
2. *Recognised the folly of taking Isaac back into the life he had left behind*
3. *Mercy mission to bring the bride out of a materialistic, Idolatrous situation.*

God wants to bring us out of the situation we are in and present us to His Son with no hooks attached or connections to our past. It is not that God doesnâ??t want us to remember our past, He doesnâ??t want us to live there, He brings us out of bondage into freedom. We have to know where we have come from, what we have been saved out of before we can defend the truth of Christ that is in us.

Rebecca demonstrates this in her response.

Genesis 24:58 â??Then they called Rebecca and said to her, Will you go with this man? And she said I will goâ?•

I will leave my family, all I know, and go with this man. I will trust and follow his leading, she was determined.

Genesis 24:61 â??So the servant took Rebecca and departedâ?•

She followed Eliazer, the representation of the Holy Spirit of God, and went his way not her own way.

For the the truth of Christ to be apparent in our lives we have to be willing to leave all we know. This is the basis of Faith, a firm foundation. To follow the Holy Spirit, the comforter, the paraklete, the one who comes along side, requires that we leave what we know and follow the Holy Spiritâ??s leading, we donâ??t know where, but we know where we are going. We need a simple childlike faith.

This is what Paul is referring to in *2 Corinthians 11:3 â??the simplicity that is in Christâ?•*

This is why Paul was so concerned about what these false teachers were doing to the church at Corinth because he knew that unless the church of Jesus Christ followed these principles and understood where they had come from and know where they were going then they had no chance of defending the truth of Christ that was in them, the truth received when they first believe.

2 Corinthians 11:3 Paul is obviously very concerned that this church at Corinth is being attacked by Satan himself.

Paul knew what it meant to defend â??the truth of Christâ?• we can read in other accounts where Paul found himself in situations where he needed to defend the gospel.

Acts 18:6 But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, â??Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentilesâ?•.

Paul had a lot of opposition from the Jews, so much so that he withdrew from the synagogue and took the message of salvation to the Gentiles.

Paul had another encounter with the Lord in Corinth. This encounter confirmed to him that what he was doing was right, in taking the gospel to the Gentiles (non Jews)

Acts 18:9-11. Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision. â??Do not be afraid, but speak and do not keep silent, for I am with you and no one will attack you to hurt you, for I have many people in this city.â?•

It is this that he defends here in this chapter. Paul knew the power of the risen Christ in his life.

â??The truth of Christ in meâ?•

â??The word of God that had come personally to a man.â?•

Do we have this boldness when we are called upon to defend the gospel that has been entrusted to us?

To have this boldness we need to be sure of our foundation and our inheritance in Christ, we are the sons of God, co-heirs with Christ himself. It is then that we can say with Paul in:-

Romans 1:16 â??For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to Salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greekâ?• (I am not ashamed)

We can only do this if we really know and experience the power of God through the Holy Spirit so my question is, as we read in Acts 19:2, *â??Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?â?•*

Have we entertained the Holy Spirit in our lives as Rebecca did in Genesis 24:23 when asked the question *â??Whose daughter are you? Tell me, please, is there room in your fatherâ??s house for us to lodge?â?•*

And in Genesis 24:25 is our response Rebeccaâ??s response? *â??Yes, we have plenty of straw and feed for the camels, and we have room for guests.â?•*

Have we cast caution to the wind and really entertained the Holy Spirit? Do we know our foundation or are we distracted and turn away like the Corinthian Church when presented with something that may look and appear like the truth?

2 Corinthians 11:10 â??As the truth of Christ is in me, no man will stop me boasting.â?•

Is that true of us? Do we know what we have been saved from and what we have been saved to? Are we like Rebecca, willing to go to the Bridegroom, leave all we know and step out in simple childlike trust and follow the man Eliazer, the representation of the Holy Spirit, to lead us to Christ.

I ask again as Paul asked those 12 men in Ephesus, *â??Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?â?•* Are you walking daily in the power of the gospel and goodness of our resurrected Lord and are you able to give an account of the truth of Christ in you and are you also able to defend the truth of Christ in you?

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1. Uncategorized

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