

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com

www.lightfordarktimes.com

God's Word to a Hesitating Church

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. (7:1)

*“The Lord Jesus Did Not Come
in a Private Jet”*

March 1, 2015

Sermon Text: 2 Cor 11

Scripture Reading: Acts 9:1-25

Introduction-

The False Teachers: Creflo Dollar
May 29, 2014
(Tim Challies blog)

“Creflo Augustus Dollar, Jr. was born in College Park, Georgia on January

28, 1962. Though he was raised in a church-going home, he did not have a conversion experience until the summer following his freshmen year at West Georgia College. Even after this experience he felt no pull toward full-time ministry as his heart was set on being a professional football player. It was only after that football career was cut short by injury that he began to consider other options. In 1984 Dollar received a Bachelor of Science degree in education and soon began work as an educational therapist. The next year he married Taffi, with whom he would eventually have five children.

While recovering from his football injury, Dollar had begun to lead Bible studies among his fellow students and he gained a reputation as a skillful and charismatic teacher. He called his study “World Changers Bible Study.” By 1986 he had determined that he was not meant to be a therapist but that the Lord was calling him into full-time preaching ministry.

He and Taffi founded a church and they held its inaugural worship service in an elementary school cafeteria. Only eight people attended that service, but the congregation soon grew and was renamed World Changers Church International (WCCI). In less than ten years the church had grown exponentially and Dollar's sermons were being broadcast over the radio through Creflo Dollar Ministries. In 1995 WCCI moved to its current location, the 8,500-seat World Dome in College Park, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta.

Today World Changers Church International serves nearly 30,000 members each week through the main campus, 6,000 through an affiliated congregation in New York City, and thousands more through many satellite campuses across America.

Dollar is known for his extravagant wealth which includes two multi-million dollar homes, expensive cars, and even a private jet. Creflo Dollar Ministries made headlines several years ago when it was one of six ministries audited by U.S. Senator Charles Grassley. "My goal," he said, "is to help improve accountability and good governance so tax-exempt groups maintain public confidence in their operations." The ministry was deemed uncooperative. MinistryWatch, an

organization that reviews Christian ministries based on their financial accountability and transparency awarded Creflo Dollar Ministries an F rating and has added it to their Donor Alert listing. Dollar made headlines again in 2012 when his daughter called police to their home, charging that Dollar had choked and hit her. Dollar denied the charges which were dropped after he completed an anger-management program.

FALSE TEACHING: PROSPERITY GOSPEL

Creflo Dollar is one of the foremost proponents of what has become known as the prosperity gospel. This doctrine teaches that God has promised his people financial and other forms of prosperity in this life, if only God's people will take the necessary steps to claim it. A uniquely American creation, this false teaching has since been exported across the world where it has especially taken root in the developing world. In one of his Bible studies Dollar lays it out:

'As the righteousness of God, your inheritance of wealth and riches is included in the "spiritual blessings" (or spiritual things) the apostle Paul spoke of in Ephesians 1:5. Based on Psalm 112:3, righteousness, wealth and riches go hand—in—hand. You have every

right to possess material wealth—clothes, jewelry, houses, cars and money—in abundance. It is that wealth that not only meets your needs, but also spreads the Gospel message and meets the needs of others. The Bible says that wealth is stored up for the righteous (Proverbs 13:22, New American Standard). However, it will remain stored up until you claim it. Therefore, claim it now! You possess the ability to seize and command wealth and riches to come to you (Deuteronomy 8:18). Exercise that power by speaking faith-filled words daily and taking practical steps to eradicate debt. Like God, you can speak spiritual blessings into existence (Romans 4:17). Remember, doubt keeps silent, but faith speaks!

The way such prosperity is activated is by the planting of seeds, so that the person who wants financial prosperity must plant a seed of financial prosperity. Needless to say, such seeds are usually through a donation to a ministry like Dollar's. Dollar continues:

'You can say, "Oh, God, I need money! The rent is due. The baby needs shoes. And what about my breakthrough?" But if you haven't sown financial seed, how can you expect a financial harvest?

If you wanted to grow apples, would you plant cucumber seeds or pumpkin seeds? You would not! So why do people expect to receive financial increase when they purposely plant anything and everything but what is needed? They will plant hope seed, shout seed, dance seed, and even claim it" seed! All of these are good things, but alone and without the appropriate seed, they are unproductive.'"

Our Scripture text this morning plainly identifies who people like Creflo Dollar are:

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. (14) And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. (15) So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Dollar and his kind are nothing less than the serpent in Eden, offspring of their father the devil and are his disguised plants among God's people. Just as the Apostle Paul was aghast at how easily the Corinthians chased after these enemy agents, so it is today. We must be wise and develop the ability God gives us by His Spirit and in His

Word to discern the Spirit of truth from the spirit of error.

I am going to read the rest of chapter 11 in sections, commenting on each part as we go. As you hear and read God's Word, take special notice of the difference between the false and the true. What does a true servant of Christ look like? What does a false agent of the enemy look like, even though they come disguised as servants of Christ? -

2 Corinthians 11:1-33 I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! (2) For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. (3) But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (4) For if someone comes and proclaims **another Jesus** than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive **a different spirit** from the one you received, or if you accept **a different gospel** from the one you accepted, **you put up with it readily enough.**

We looked at these verses last time. You will recall that when Paul speaks of himself as “boasting” or speaking “foolishly” he is emphasizing that he

does not like to have to speak about himself – yet here he must do so for their benefit. The enemy is undermining Paul's office as an apostle. Here he lays out very plainly exactly what the nature of these evil ones is: they are *the serpent leading the Corinthians away from Christ*. The Jesus they preach, the spirit that animates them, and the gospel they proclaim is entirely different than the Lord Jesus Christ whom Paul preaches. That is to say, Creflo Dollar and his kind preach a false Jesus. They are preachers of “anti-christ.” And they don't have to be the millionaire flamboyant TV preachers like Dollar in order to be these children of the devil. They come to us at all levels. Most of them come as seekers of power and control and self-glory in small churches just like this one. And yet their methods are the same, as are their goals. They deceive us and lead us astray from Christ.

Humility Used Against Paul

(5) Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. (6) Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things. (7) Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I

preached God's gospel to you free of charge? (8) I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. (9) And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way.

Think about this carefully. You can see from Paul's words here the nature of the allegations being made by the wicked against Paul. Remember, their motive is always to discount God's truth, to distance us from Christ, and to win our loyalty to themselves. So, they were telling the Corinthians that Paul was "inferior." They presented themselves as "true" and "superior" apostles of Christ, claiming they were sent by Him. They put Paul down for not using haughty, high oratory, and – here is where they all run to – *they used Paul's self-denial and humility against him. They called it a sign of weakness that Paul had not taken any money for his "services" at Corinth.*

What had happened? As Paul says, he received his support from other churches. By their sacrifice, he brought the gospel to Corinth so that he did not "burden" the Corinthians. He did not want to place any kind of stumbling

block to their reception of the gospel. He came to give, not to take.

This is a very wise method when it comes to missions and church planting. At some point in a church's life it must itself become self-supporting. But at the start, I believe we should follow Paul's method here. As soon as a missionary or church-planter accepts financial support from unregenerate people, all kinds of obstacles can arise. Motives can be questioned. But the point here is that Paul, out of love for the Corinthians, took nothing from them. And these evil, false apostles are using that love against him. This is a very typical and common motive of the devil and his agents. Using kindness and love and humility of the real servants of Christ to manufacture accusations.

Paul Refuses to be Quiet

(10) As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. (11) And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! (12) And what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do.

This is good. Really, really good. Be sure to get a firm grip on what Paul is saying here. Let me translate:

“I have no intention of shutting up about this!”

This “boasting” is what Paul is saying about himself and his pure motives. I am sure there was lots of pressure from the enemy for him to be quiet about it, but he would not yield to that. He says he is going to announce his true apostleship and his true motives, along with the enemy’s evil motives and methods, all through the region of Achaia! He will continue to do this, *with the full and stated intent of undermining these wicked ones!* They make a false claim to be apostles of Christ and to be on mission for Him. But it is a lie and Paul is going to announce it wherever he can.

Think this through. We have seen this very same thing over and over and over down through the years in this church. Whenever you begin to expose evil, evil pushes back with things like this:

- You can’t talk that way about a fellow Christian. Stop it.
- What you are saying is gossip and slander.

- We (the enemy agents) can talk about YOU all we want, but you cannot talk about US!

And now Paul pulls out all the stops in exposing them for what they really are:

Servants of the Devil in Wool

(13) For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. (14) And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. (15) So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Here is a stark reality that we must be willing to face up to and not only admit as true, but to be ready and willing to announce it right along with Paul. Pastor Dollar, for example, is –

- A false apostle
- A deceitful workman
- Wearing a disguise as a servant of Christ
- But in reality under the disguise is a servant of Satan.
- He will end in hell

This isn't the only place Paul has put it right out there for us regarding these secret agents of Satan –

Galatians 1:6-10 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- (7) not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. (8) But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. (9) As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. (10) For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

“Let him be accursed. Set apart for God’s damnation. Anathema.” Notice that to “let him be accursed” means that we must acknowledge that he is accursed. This means openly saying so. This is not popular with people.

The Allure of Worldly Power

(16) I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. (17) What I am saying with this boastful confidence, I say not with the Lord's authority but as a fool. (18) Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. **(19) For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! (20) For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face.**

Here is one of the ways that we can see through the deception of these liars who disguise themselves. Here Paul describes their character and countenance there at Corinth. He does so as he reproves the Corinthians for “bearing with” these wicked ones so readily. What is the “style” of these enemies? –

- They enslave people to serve them
- They consume people, using them for their own selfish desires and glory
- They rip people off. Take advantage of people (this could well include financial gain)
- Strut around putting on “airs.” These guys exude a false

“loftiness” that says “we are better than and superior to all of you.”

- They are violent. They use *fear* and *threats*. They use intimidation to control others.

When you see these things, you are NOT looking at a servant of Christ. Take note here and be emboldened! When you *sense and feel* these things when you are around these kinds of people, it is not your imagination. THE PROBLEM IS NOT YOU! Do not disregard these feelings. The Holy Spirit in you will enable you to see these things, to pull off the disguise.

Yet our tendency is to fear man, to try to please man, and do what these Corinthians had done – *gladly bear with them! Let them do their thing! Let them take another whack at you and bite another chunk out of you.* See it? This is why these kind get into power. Sooo many churches are totally enslaved to ONE person!! No one dare make a move without thinking “I wonder what so and so will say?”

Notice again what Paul is saying here, and take heart in it. This should be very encouraging to you! *It is wrong for a Christian to permit narcissistic, abusive, wicked agents of the devil to continue to abuse them. It is wrong (Paul is chastising the Corinthians*

here remember) for us to allow someone in the church to lord it over us, use us, enslave us. We are called here by Christ Himself to fight against such people and stand firmly in opposition to them. That is our commission, and that should be good news to you.

Now, let’s also carefully note something else! *Most of us have been wrongly taught that we ARE to submit to such people!!* Right? To not cause trouble. To just love them and to never, never, EVER question that they are Christians! Well, if you embrace that kind of thinking then you are guilty of rejecting God’s Word right here. I trust no one here fits that category. Mark it down once again – the Apostle Paul is identifying such people as servants of Satan. He is rebuking Christians for not seeing that they are, and further he is rebuking them for not doing battle against them as he is.

I suspect that with some of the things that have been going on of late in our association, we are going to have opportunity to put into practice some of these lessons Paul is teaching us about here.

Finally now, contrast the description of Satan’s “plants” among us with the experience of the Apostle Paul, a true

servant of Christ. Here is how you recognize the true from the false:

The Character and Experience of a True Servant of Christ

(21) To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that! But whatever anyone else dares to boast of--I am speaking as a fool--I also dare to boast of that. (22) Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I.

[Note: This would indicate that they are Jews]

(23) Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one--I am talking like a madman--with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. (24) Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. (25) Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; (26) on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; (27) in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and

thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. (28) And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. (29) Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? (30) If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. (31) The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. (32) At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, (33) but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

There it is! We have often asked this question and it bears asking once more:

If the Apostle Paul (or the Lord Jesus Himself) submitted a resume to a local church today for a pastoral position, would that church call him?

Because that really is what we have here. Paul's resume. And yet because the very same error as was present among the Corinthians is so widespread today in our churches, namely – evaluating God's work, God's people, and God's servants according to the world's standards of greatness – I have little doubt that Paul

would be rejected in most cases and a servant of the devil embraced. May it never be so among us!

Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. (26) It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, (27) and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, (28) even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."