

Message #28

II Corinthians 11:1-6

Two of the most powerful men of God who ever lived in the 1900's were C.I. Scofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer. Dr. Scofield and Dr. Chafer became good friends and it was Dr. Scofield who actually became the great scholarly influence on Dr. Chafer. Dr. Chafer was an evangelist and because of his connection with Dr. Scofield, he became one of the great theological scholars to ever live.

C.I. Scofield was actually born here in Michigan in 1843, but moved away with his family as a boy. He ultimately came to faith in Jesus Christ at the age of 36 in 1879. He had been a hard drinking lawyer in Kansas and Missouri when he believed on the Lord. Dr. Scofield had a mind that was very relentless and very systematic and he approached the study of the Bible in the same way. In 1909, he produced his famous dispensational and pre-millennial *Scofield Reference Bible*, which is still the great backbone of all dispensational study Bibles.

When Dr. Scofield produced that Bible, he came under serious attack. Many religious leaders started verbally attacking Dr. Scofield and the Bible he had produced. When that happened, his old friend, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, came to Scofield's defense. I have actually listened several times to a lecture from the Ray Stedman collection that Dr. Chafer gave, that defended the godliness and the scholarship of Dr. Scofield and his reference Bible. In that lecture, Dr. Chafer said that C.I. Scofield was the greatest man of God he had personally ever known.

There is a place for this kind of thing. There is a place for standing up and defending what is right before God and who is right with God. There is a place for loyalty and for defending one another.

The problem for the Apostle Paul is that he didn't have anyone who would come to his rescue. Paul was taking the amazing grace Gospel to the world and the religious leaders of the world hated the message and they were attacking Paul. Since no one was coming to his rescue, Paul had to defend himself. That is what we see right here in these verses:

EVEN THOUGH IT IS NOT SOMETHING A REAL MINISTER WANTS TO DO, THERE IS A PLACE FOR A TRUE MINISTER OF GOD TO SPEAK UP AND DEFEND HIMSELF AND HIS DOCTRINE AND WHEN HE DOES, GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD LISTEN AND BE SUPPORTIVE.

As we have already pointed out, Paul will devote the remaining chapters of this book of II Corinthians defending himself. That is the theme of the final four chapters.

Paul did not like having to do this. He did not like to have to speak about himself. In fact, he called this in **verse 1** a "little foolishness." That word "foolishness" (αφροσύνη) means that Paul thought this was something that most of the time was senseless and without reason (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 72). But we must remember that Paul is in war for the truth of God so defending himself was important because Paul was the apostle presenting Grace Age truth.

Years ago, in a pastoral theology course, our teacher taught us that if we wanted people to love us all we had to do was to get them to talk about themselves and then quietly sit there and listen. He said, when you leave they will think you are the greatest minister in the world. People love to talk about themselves. But many times it is obnoxious. Here was one time it was necessary.

Let's face it, most of the time it is foolish to talk and brag about yourself. In fact, it is offensive. Boasting is usually the mark of one who is not spiritually right with God not one who is. But because God's grace message presented by Paul was under attack and the Corinthians were being influenced by false religious preachers and poachers who were opposed to Paul and grace, he had to do this.

Now he introduces this by presenting three reasons, which all begin with the conjunction "for" (γὰρ), why the Corinthians should listen to Paul speak about himself:

REASON #1 – Because Paul was jealous for them and afraid for them. **11:2-3**

Most of the time jealousy is a terrible sin. When you study the Bible, jealousy is almost always bad and never good. Jealousy is driven by ego and envy. It is selfish and it is possessive. But there is a place where jealousy is right.

God is a jealous God. He will not accept nor tolerate any false god or false doctrine contrary to His Word. He is jealous in a good and right sense that people know Him and His truth.

Paul had a right kind of jealousy for these Corinthians. In fact, he had what he described as a "godly" jealousy and zeal for these Corinthians. The Greek text literally reads that Paul's zeal or jealousy was "of God." The genitive case means that God was the one who was the source of the zeal or jealousy. **So this jealousy was not a jealousy produced by someone's sin nature, this jealousy was a jealousy that came directly from God.**

It was a fatherly kind of jealousy. We may recall that he was the first one to go to Corinth in Acts 18 and preach the grace Gospel. Paul says at the end of **verse 2** that I am the one who came and presented grace to you and actually betrothed you to Jesus Christ.

In other words, Paul had gone to Corinth and preached the pure Gospel of Christ to the Corinthians and they had entered into that wonderful union of being joined together with Him and all He accomplished on the cross. Paul's motive was to present these Corinthians as having a pure and wonderful relationship with God.

We have had many couples in this church over the years that have met, fallen in love and then were married. In these past 12 years, I have officiated many times at the weddings. Many of these couples are still in the church. They love each other, they love the Word and God is blessing them. Every now and then for one reason or another a couple leaves the church. They think they are going on to bigger and better things. There are times when I want to scream, don't you get it.

We come here and start teaching the Word of God and you fell in love with the Word of God and met your mate and then married your mate and you are ready to jump ship. That is exactly what Paul was up against.

Paul came and taught them the true grace of God and they believed on the Lord. He taught them pure grace because he wanted them to develop properly into purity. Listen, the grace of God does not lead one to antinomianism, which is a lawless lifestyle. It leads to a true, real biblical spirituality.

However, Paul says in **verse 3** that he was afraid that Satan would use these Judaistic leaders to lead them astray from the purity of the grace message. We will learn later that they were Hebrews (11:22) and that they were false apostles who were presenting a works as opposed to grace message (11:13-15). They were very crafty in the way they could twist the Word of God.

In fact, you will notice in **verse 3** that he brings up Eve. How exactly did the serpent trip up Eve? The episode to which Paul refers is in Genesis 3:1-6. Satan tripped up Eve by talking to her and by her listening to him. He started questioning her about what she actually knew about what God's Word said and then he twisted the Word of God in a very crafty way and pulled Eve away from truth.

That is what Paul feared with these Corinthians. Satan was using these false ministers to attack the Pauline doctrine of grace. They were trying to put people back under the Law and under their legal code system and they were pulling people away from the simplicity and the purity that is found only in Jesus Christ.

These teachers looked good. In fact, they looked better than Paul. They had charisma. They sounded good. In fact, they could actually speak more eloquently than Paul. They were very religious and seemed to be kind. They looked successful, they sounded like a religious scholar but **they were nothing more than satanic seducers**. Paul saw it clearly and he wanted the Corinthians to see it.

They were attacking Paul and saying that his idea that you are complete in Christ and have everything you need in Jesus Christ by the grace of God was wrong. They said they had a better way for the Corinthians to really go on in their spiritual life.

Ladies and gentlemen, the best defense against satanic deception is to know the Word of God, know the doctrines of God and know the books of the Bible thoroughly and completely.

The first reason why Paul defends himself is because he had a jealousy that was from God and a fear that they would be lured away from truth by satanic deceivers.

REASON #2 – Because the Corinthians were tolerating a different gospel. **11:4**

Another reason Paul needed to speak up for himself is because these Corinthians were willing to embrace and beautifully receive some religious leader who came and preached another gospel. Now **verse 4** is interesting because these are false apostles (11:13) and the verse says “if one comes.” This is a great tip-off because a true apostle is sent by God. In fact, that is what the word “Apostle” means. False people just show up, they just come to the church and are not sent by God to it.

Furthermore, the three pronouns “another” and “different” tell an interesting grammatical story. The first pronoun “another” (αλλος) means another of the same kind. The next two pronouns translated “different” (ετερος) means another of a different kind.

What these pronouns reveal is that the religious leaders that came to Corinth came and were speaking about the same Jesus Paul was speaking about, but they were preaching and presenting a different kind of Jesus and a different kind of gospel .

This is very important to see. When people speak about believing in Jesus they are talking about the same Jesus we believe in, but we need to realize that their Jesus that they believe in is a different kind of Jesus that we believe in and they may believe in a different kind of gospel.

As we pointed out, these leaders were Jewish religious people preaching some sort of works system. That tells us they did not understand the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Because if you think for one second that your religious works can save you, you have not really grasped who is hanging on that cross. Jesus is God. The theanthropic (God-man) Person. The second member of the Trinity. He is on that cross because He is the only one who can save us and the resurrection proves His sacrifice was fully accepted and when we believe in Him we are fully justified.

We know from verse 22 that they were telling these Corinthians that they had a Jewish heritage and they were trying to get the Corinthians to buy into their credentials. Furthermore, we know they added works to grace. They taught people they needed to believe in Jesus Christ, but then they also needed to keep the O.T. Law and be involved in their rituals and ceremonies. All of this was pulling these believers away from the truth of Jesus Christ.

Learn a very important point here; false ministers talk about the same Jesus as we do, but they preach a different Jesus than the one who is revealed in the Word of God.

There is the Jesus of cults—Mormons, Jehovah’s Witness, 7th Day Adventists, Muslims.

There is the Jesus of liberals—good teacher, good moral example.

There is the Jesus of prosperity—the Jesus who wants you healthy and wealthy.

There is the Jesus of love—the Jesus who would never judge—he is love, love, love.

There is the Jesus of religions and denominations.

There is the Jesus of rituals—Catholics and Episcopalians.

There is the Jesus of the Charismatics—the Jesus who wants you speaking in tongues and the Jesus who wants you to feel the Spirit.

Then there are different gospels.

There is the gospel of peace and prosperity.

There is the gospel of good works.

There is the gospel of keeping the Law.

There is the gospel of following men's traditions.

There is the gospel of faith in Christ plus Lordship.

Those are not what was presented by Paul. He taught faith alone in Christ alone. Faith plus nothing. Anything else was another Jesus and another gospel.

REASON #3 – Because Paul is a knowledgeable Apostle. **11:5-6**

When Paul says in **verse 5** that he is not inferior to any apostle, Paul probably has a couple of things in view. **First**, he has in view the false apostles whom he will refer to in verse 13. Paul was not inferior in any way to any of them. **Second**, Paul was not inferior to any apostle—whether Peter, James or John. In fact, the adverb “eminent” (υπερλιαν) refers to the highest ranked, exceeding and pre-eminent apostle (*Ibid.*, p. 459). No matter what apostle you want to talk about, no one outranked Paul.

What Paul is saying is that he had complete apostolic authority and was not inferior to any who claimed to be an apostle or any who actually was an apostle.

Now this is important because this shows us that Paul's apostolic writings are authoritative.

What we need is an understanding of apostolic, Pauline grace instruction because Paul is superior on this point over any other apostle. Paul is superior on grace to any apostolic writing. So if it comes down to thoroughly understanding grace doctrine we must focus on Paul, and not James or any other apostle.

Now **verse 6** is important. Paul was being accused of lacking eloquence. Paul admitted this point. He did not use oratorical tricks. He did not try to come up with philosophical arguments that would “wow” an audience. He did not use emotional verbal tactics to try to sway an audience. Paul says, I may not be the greatest speaker in the world, but I am very skilled in “the knowledge.” Paul says I know the Word of God. I am skilled in my understanding of God's Word and God's grace. Paul's words were, as Dr. S. Lewis Johnson said, “thunderbolts of reality” (*II Corinthians 11:1-6*, p. 8). Paul knew God's Word and he preached God's Word.

We seem to be in a time when some ministers today want to so connect with an audience that they will start applauding in the message. This kind of thing is not new.

Chrysostom claimed in the 4th century that there were ministers who complained if the audience did not applaud when they got done speaking. There are ministers today who love it when crowds applaud or clap. They think they have really connected if the audience starts clapping.

Paul said I never operated like that. Paul did not have audiences applaud him. Paul did not even try to get an audience to applaud him. What Paul says is I will tell you what I do have. I have tremendous knowledge. I have knowledge of grace. I have knowledge of Jesus Christ. I have knowledge of God's Word. His ability was in his knowledge and in his walk with God.

Don't kid yourself, Paul was a powerful speaker, but he did not pride himself on tricks of rhetoric or speech. His power was in his substance. Paul was very skilled in his understanding of the Word of God. He knew God's Word and he preached it and lived it.

What he taught was if you will believe on Jesus Christ, you are forever saved and complete in Him.