

Cheltenham
Ps Rob Buckingham
14 & 15 Feb 2015

Vision Weekend 2015

Simplicity

Message Notes

Text: 2 Corinthians 11:1-5

"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. 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. 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. 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."

2 Corinthians 11:3KJV

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

The Corinthian church was no stranger to complexity:

1 Corinthians: complicated fellowship, leadership, morality, business relationships, marriage & singleness, the resurrection, and church gatherings including worship, communion, spiritual gifts & offerings.

2 Corinthians: They were complicating genuine leadership with false leaders ~ the “super-apostles”

The “super-apostles” were guilty of:

1. Masquerading – They looked like the real deal but they weren’t

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves” (Mt 7:15)

2. Moneymaking – These guys were in the ministry for the money...

2 Cor. 11:7, *“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.”*

Paul warns Timothy to also be on the lookout for people *“who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.”* (1Timothy 6:5)

3. Misleading – The “super-apostles” taught three things:

Another Jesus – Focusing on his victory not suffering

A different spirit – It’s easy to pick something that’s from the Spirit of God...

“Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal 5:22)

A different gospel – Probably one in which it wasn’t enough to simply believe in Jesus for forgiveness, salvation & eternal life “And that’s what Paul is addressing in our theme verse...

2 Corinthians 11:3, *“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety [complicated intricacies], so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”*

The serpent questioned the Word of God and the goodness of God (Genesis 3):

¹ *“Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”*

⁵ *“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

Christian pastor and author Ray Stedman wrote, *"The main thing about being a Christian is to see that the main thing remains the main thing!"*

"For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2)

Simplicity!

Whenever I have doubts or confusion or unanswered questions I always bring myself back to the simplicity that is in Jesus – who He is, what He did, what He does and what He's going to do!

Simplicity!

We lose this simplicity when we try and make our faith more complex than it needs to be, when we "serve" God in place of enjoying a relationship with him, and in the pressures of daily life.

We can get so busy and anxious about ourselves – and the things that are happening to us – that we lose the sense that Jesus is with us and that He is more than enough.

Does that describe you? If so, how can you bring simplicity into every area of your life in 2015? Also, let's make the 40-Days of Prayer & Fasting 40-Days of simplicity!