

THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST

2 CORINTHIANS 11:3 • TV097B

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2 Cor. 11:3

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

I have a title for this message and I have a text. The title for the message is: **“THE SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST.”** And the text from which I’m preaching this morning is found in the book of **2 Corinthians chapter 11:3.**

Now, if you will take your Bible and open it and read the Scripture with me I’ll be speaking to you on the **“SIMPLICITY THAT IS IN CHRIST.”**

Let’s look at the text, **2 Corinthians 11:3:** *“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Jesus Christ.”*

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Now, there is no substitute for two things in preaching, one is sincerity. God help a man who's not sincere who makes merchandise of the souls of men and women. God be merciful; and yet he won't be to the man who is not genuine and honest and sincere in his efforts to glorify God and bring men and women to knowledge of the Son of God, sincerity in preaching Christ.

And the second thing is simplicity. There is no substitute for simplicity in the preaching of the Gospel. Our Lord preached the Gospel in language that people could understand. You know; Paul said this, *"I don't come to you with enticing words of man's wisdom (or eloquence) lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."*

Our Lord, perhaps they didn't believe Him but they understood Him. Perhaps they were unwilling to bow to His royal claims but they understood Him. Perhaps He crossed their tradition and their pride but they understood Him.

On one occasion in **Matthew chapter 15** our Lord had dealt with the Pharisees and their hypocrisy. You know, in the Old Testament there were certain meats that the people could not eat. There were certain ceremonies that they had to conduct or that they had to observe.

And there were certain traditions that they had to practice; one of them was the washing of the hands before eating. Now, this is good; this is a good practice, but these Pharisees made it a form of righteousness, this washing of the hands and this eating of certain things.

They made it a way to become righteous before God by doing these different traditional ceremonies like washing their hands before they ate. And one day they saw the disciples and the Lord eat without washing their hands and they were excited and upset.

They said to the Lord, "Your disciples don't wash their hands before they eat." And our Lord said to them: *"It's not that which goes into the mouth that defiles a man. (It's not eating pork, it's not eating with unwashed hands, and it's not drinking certain liquids that defile a person. You're not righteous because you wash your hands before you eat or you leave off certain meats or certain types of drink; that doesn't make you righteous nor does it make you unrighteous) but that which comes out of the heart; that's what defiles a person; out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, adulteries, blasphemies, and all of these things."*

Oh, these Pharisees understood what He said and they got angry. And the disciples came to the Lord and said: *"Don't you know that the Pharisees were offended by what you said?"* Well, they didn't believe Him and they didn't walk in His commandments but they understood what He said.

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On another occasion our Lord was preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth where he was brought up and out there before Him were all of these religious Israelites. And it was on the Sabbath morning and they were there in their form, tradition and ceremony to make an effort at worshipping God, at least with their lips.

And our Lord stood before them knowing that these people were of the opinion that because they were Abraham's seed, then they were children of God (because they were Jews they were God's chosen people).

That's what they thought. They thought because they were descendants of Abraham that they belonged to God and they were in the kingdom of God. Now, folks think that today. They think because they are Catholic or because they're Baptist or because they are Presbyterian or because they are something else that therefore, they are children of God.

And our Lord told them; *"I'm going to tell you a truth; there were many widows in the land of Israel in the days of the prophet and God fed none of them during the famine but a Gentile woman."* They understood that.

He said: *"There were many lepers in the land of Israel in the time of the prophet and God healed none of them but one and he was a Gentile. And they were filled with wrath and they rose up to throw him off the cliff."* Now, they understood Him. That was language they could understand.

Then, on another occasion in **John 10** he said: *"I and my Father are one and they took up stones to stone him."* So what I'm saying is; there's no substitute for simplicity. Let's preach so that people can understand what is said; though they may not believe it.

The apostle Paul said in **Galatians 2:21**: *"I do not frustrate the grace of God (complicate or confuse, I do not frustrate or distort) the grace of God."* Paul sounded a clear note and preached in plain language.

I can't force men to turn from their idols but I can tell them they should. I cannot force men to bow to the claims of King Jesus but I can command them to. I cannot make men believe the Gospel of Christ but I can at least preach the Gospel of Christ and warn the indifferent and warn the careless and warn the rebel in a language he can understand and invite men to Christ.

The Scriptures are very plain on what happened in the Garden; very plain. The Scriptures are very plain on what happened at Calvary. The Scriptures are very clear and plain on what happens in a sinner's heart when he meets the Lord.

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These things are very plain and that's what I want, two things in preaching the Gospel, a godly sincerity, a real, honest burden that men know God. Paul said: *"I have great heaviness and continual sorrow for my brethren according to the flesh. My earnest prayer to God for them is that they might be saved."*

And that's what we need, but we also need simplicity. Now let me say several things here:

First of all: I don't know whether you will ever repent or not but I do know this; except you repent you'll perish!

Now that's so; can you understand that? I don't know whether you'll ever repent or not. And the apostle Paul said; the whole message is summed up in a two-fold way, repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ.

I don't know whether you'll ever repent or not but I do know, *"except you repent you'll perish."* I can tell you what repentance is, define it for you, and preach it to you, but only God can give it. Repentance according to **Isaiah 55:7** is a change. It's a change of mind, it's a change of manners, and it's a change of masters.

Our Lord said in **Isaiah 55**; *"My thoughts are not your thoughts. My ways are not your ways. Let a man forsake his thoughts, turn from his wicked ways and seek the Lord."* You see; that's a change of mind, thoughts; change your thoughts about God. Who is God?

Change your thoughts about sin. Change your thoughts about yourself, your pride, your arrogance, your haughty spirit. Change your thoughts about Jesus Christ. Change your thoughts about salvation by grace.

Let a man change his thoughts into a 180 degree; into a 180 degree turn and go back the other way. Let a man change his ways, a change of manners. A believer is a new creature, a new person, a new attitude, a new spirit, and a new conduct. And he changes his masters too, sin is no longer his master, self's no longer his master, Satan is no longer his master; Christ is his master.

I don't know whether you'll repent or not but I do know that *"except you repent you will perish"* and I've got no right to tell you anything else.

Secondly: I don't know if you will ever be born again but I do know this: *"Except a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

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Now, you can ridicule “*born again.*” You can laugh about it and you can make jokes about it. It has become popular today to make fun of different people saying they’re born again, but God’s Word still stands, whatever this means, “*except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” Now God said that and our Lord said that.

And this new birth; it’s not traipsing down an aisle and shaking a preacher’s hand; this new birth is of God. “*We are born of God;*” it’s a work of God. It’s a supernatural work.

Thirdly: It’s a work of the Holy Spirit using the Word of God!

“*Of his own will begat he us through the Word of truth;*” and this new birth is a new life, and it’s a new creature. It’s not just what a man says he is it’s what he really is. It’s not what a man professes to be on paper, it’s what he is in his heart. That’s what the new birth is.

I don’t know, my friend, whether you will ever be born again. You can ridicule it, laugh about it, talk about it being 1st Century Gospel but our Gospel’s older than the 1st Century. Our whole Gospel goes back to the foundation of the world when Christ was the Lamb slain in the purpose and plan and council and covenant of a holy God. It’s an old Gospel; it’s an ancient Gospel and it’s an everlasting Gospel.

And I don’t know whether you will ever seek the Lord or not but I do know this and I can make it plain to you; “*they shall seek him and find him when they search for him with all their hearts.*” I do know that.

I do know that you will be found of the Lord when you search for Him with your heart, not just with your feet but with your heart. Salvation is a heart work: “*With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. With the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*”

Salvation is a heart work and He will be found of you when you seek Him with all your heart, when you want Christ more than you want anything else, more than you want health and wealth and prosperity, more than you want success and fame and popularity. When you want Christ above all things you will seek Him and you will find Him.

Like David said; he described that hart (h-a-r-t), the deer that was panting for the water brooks. I can see that deer out there in that wilderness panting, his tongue hanging out, weary, tired, dusty, panting for the water brook, panting for a stream of cool, clear, refreshing, water.

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And David said: *“As that deer panteth for that water; so my soul panteth for the living God.”*
Seek the Lord.

I don't know whether you know Him or not but I do know no man has ever been found of God who did not seek Him. You won't be saved by accident; I guarantee you that. God will make you willing. You'll seek the Lord.

Where would you seek the Lord? Seek Him in His Word. Seek Him in the assembly of His people. Seek Him in the sermon where the Gospel is preached. Seek Him; seek the Lord.

Fourth: I don't know whether you will ever be clothed in the righteousness of Christ or not!

But I do know this; *“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.”* I do know this, that except your righteousness exceed that of the most religious Pharisee who ever lived, you shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God.

The apostle Paul wrote about some people in **Romans 10**; he said: *“They had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge.”* They had a zeal and enthusiasm for God but it wasn't according to right knowledge. The reason Paul knew that; he said: *“It's because they had not submitted to God's righteousness and they were going about to establish their own righteousness before God.”*

They were trying to get a holy, righteous God to accept them because of the deeds they had done, not knowing that their very good deeds were *“filthy rags in God's sight.”* Not knowing that their very deeds were permeated with sin. Not knowing that their very deeds of righteousness were tainted with self and sin and iniquity.

And they were trying to present these dirty rags in the presence of God for a spotless robe and Paul said, that's the reason I know they are ignorant of God because they are trying to establish their own righteousness.

Christ is our righteousness. Why do you think He became a man and lived on this earth 33 ½ years? Why do you think, *“he was tempted and tried and tested in all points as we are?”*

Why do you think Satan tried and tempted Him? Why do you think that even the Heavenly Father tried Him, all types of infirmities and adversities, why? It was for our sake. He was working out for us a perfect righteousness and He completed it. And we have in Him that perfect and holy righteousness:

**“With His spotless garments on
We are as holy as God’s own Son.”**

And I don’t know my friend whether you will ever rest in Christ’s righteousness, trust in Christ’s righteousness, find your sanctification in Christ’s righteousness, look for your acceptance with God in Christ’s righteousness or whether you will go on trying to establish your own.

But I have an obligation to simply declare unto you *“that Christ is the end (or goal or consummation) of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.”* And if you would be justified by the law; you remember what the law says; it requires perfection.

Fifth: And then I don’t know whether you will ever believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour or not!

I don’t know whether you ever will or not but I do know this; *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life for the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

I don’t know how it could be any plainer than that (if words mean anything at all). Listen to the Word of God, **1 John 5:11**; *“This is the record, God hath given to us eternal life; this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*

That’s clear isn’t it? That’s simple and that’s plain and that’s the way we need to preach, with deep sincerity. I don’t know whether you will ever embrace Christ, whether you will ever believe on him, whether you will ever trust him but that’s so.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Sixth: Then, I don’t know when you will die, but I know you will!

And I don’t know when you will stand before the great white throne judgment of God almighty but I know you will because God’s Word says: *“It’s appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment.”*

Seventh: And I don’t know whether your names in the Lambs Book of Life or not but I know this, *“Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life shall be cast into hell.”* You see; that’s

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simple and Satan will do everything in his power to keep us from stating these facts about Christ, God, truth, sin, salvation, heaven and hell, and the Word of God. He will do anything to corrupt your mind and keep you from the simplicity that is in Jesus Christ.

Eight: I don't know when Christ is coming; I just know He is!

He said: *"If I go to prepare a place for you I will come again."* When He ascended to heaven the disciples were standing there looking up into heaven and the angels appeared and said: *"You men of Galilee; why stand ye gazing into heaven; this same Jesus which is taken up from you shall so come in like manner as you've seen him go."*

My friend; the Gospel of God's grace has been preached. It is being preached and it will be preached. God has not left Himself without a witness. Somewhere there is a prophet who dares to look men in the eye and tell them the truth about God and the truth about themselves and the truth about Jesus Christ and the truth about salvation.

And I want to be that man by God's grace to deal with what is sincerely and simply that God in His grace may be pleased to deal with your heart in mercy.

Now men may say, "Well preacher, it's difficult to find the grace of God." Well, that may be so but my friend, it's no secret where the grace of God's found; it's found in Christ.

Now I know there may be mysteries. The Gospel is called a mystery and it's hid from the eyes of them who are blinded by Satan. But I'm telling you this, it may be difficult to hear the grace of God and to find the grace of God and to preach the grace of God but my friend; it's no mystery where it is; it's in Christ. That's where it is!

If you can get to Christ, you'll have all that God has. Everything God has is in Christ. He's vested the whole, as one old preacher use to say; "he's vested the whole shooting match in Jesus Christ." That's where it is, righteousness, redemption, sanctification, life, beauty, love, and glory. Everything's in Christ. Get to Christ and you have it all.

And then, men may be baffled as to why God saves sinners. But we needn't be; we needn't be in doubt about how He saves them. He saves them by His Son, by the Lord Jesus Christ.

I may not be able to answer for you why God saves sinners; all I can say is *"he does it according to the good pleasure of his own will"* and He does it for His glory and He does it that His grace for eternity may be praised.

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I don't know why God saves sinners but I know how He saves them, by the cross of Christ. And it may be difficult for proud men to bow to the royal claims of King Jesus. It may be difficult for them to bow but they will sooner or later.

There's no question about that; they will sooner or later because Philippians says, "*That God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven, earth, and hell.*"

There won't be a creature in the Universe that will not bow to the royal claims of King Jesus someday, you and everybody else. So, it's not a matter of if you'll bow to Christ; it's a matter of when.

Now, so, if these Gospel lines are clearly laid down, these Gospel claims are sincerely and simply set forth; well, the lines will be drawn. And I know that folks will choose up and take sides but I know this; God will be glorified and sinners will be saved and believers will get some assurance.

If Gospel claims are faithfully, sincerely, and simply laid down and folks will quit covering them up with all our programs, covering them up with our ceremonies, covering them up with our special holy days, covering them up with all of our processions and all this; there's so much junk in religion today that men can't hear any Gospel.

But you know I found this out; the less a man has inside the more he has to put on outside. The less real fellowship and communion he has with God on the inside the more show he has to put on, on the outside.

And I guess that's why we have to have our robes and our candles and our processions and ceremonies and all of our liturgies and all of these other things is because we've got nothing in the heart and we've got to put on a show for somebody hoping that God will take notice of it, but He won't.

Simplicity; it's the simplicity that is in Christ. We need to get back to the simplicity that is in Christ. All of the fancy backgrounds, music, entertainment, showmanship, dim lights, soft music, candles burning, stained-glass windows, and high steeples pointing to the heavens and all this external show is nothing in the world but a revelation of our empty hearts.

If we had a heart full of God we wouldn't need all these things. I'm telling you the truth; I'm telling you the truth. There's not many folks today telling people the truth but I'm telling you the truth.

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Here's the shocking thing; most of you know it's the truth and you won't do anything about it. You'll stay in that bondage and in that slavery, and in that tradition, and in that custom, and in that refuge of lies. One day the judgment of God will sweep down upon you like it did in the days of Noah.

Peter stood on Pentecost and told those religious people that they had better save themselves from this religious and perverse generation. Paul in **Galatians 4:16** asked this question: "*Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?*" Is a man your enemy because he dares to tell you the truth? Am I your enemy because I tell you the truth about God?

Whatever views you have of God the Bible and the Word of God only reveals God as an absolute, almighty, eternal, immutable, infinite, and Holy God sovereign in creation. "*He made all things according to his own will,*" just like He pleased to make them.

He took no council or advice from any creature. He's sovereign in providence. "*He worketh all things after the council of his own will.*" David said, "*Our God is in the heavens and whatsoever he pleased; that did he in heaven, earth, and the seas, and all deep places.*"

Our God is sovereign in salvation. He said: "*I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.*" "*Am I your enemy because I tell you the truth about God?*"

God's not an idol. I see things on church bulletins: "God has no feet but your feet, no hands but your hands, no eyes but your eyes." That's foolishness! God was God independent of the creature before you ever came along. God doesn't need me and you but we need God.

He's sovereign; He's almighty. He reigns in heaven and earth. He's sovereign in salvation; He planned it, He executed it, He applied it, He sustains it and He will perfect it. Am I your enemy because I tell you the truth about yourself, about what happened in the garden, how you were affected by the fall of Adam and how your nature, the root of it, the fountain of it, the source of it is corrupt and therefore the whole being is corrupt?

"*In your flesh dwelleth no good thing.*" God looked down from heaven to see if there was one righteous man and He couldn't find any, "*none that doeth good, none that seeketh after God no not one.*"

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Not only is the root evil but the fruit is evil, not only our sin but our sins, not only our source but our product is evil, thought, word, and deed; not only our sin and sins *“but our righteousness’s are filthy rags in God’s sight.”*

“In the flesh no man can please God.” We need help and we need mercy. We need God to do something for us which we cannot do for ourselves. God is not pleased; *“he is angry with the wicked,”* is what the Scripture says.

Am I your enemy because I tell you the truth about sin, about yourself, about Christ? Who is Jesus Christ? He is the eternal God, the God-man.

Why did He come to this earth? He came down here to perfect a righteousness for believers and to die on the cross to put away their sins. And He did it that *“God might be just and justify the ungodly.”*

Do you know where He is now? *“He’s on the right hand of God.”* He’s not leaning over the banisters having cried His eyes out hoping somebody will let Him have His way. He’s a sovereign and satisfied Saviour. *“He’s seated waiting for his enemies to become his footstool.”*

And we better fall at His feet like the leper of old and say: *“Lord, if you will you can make me whole. If you will, you can make me whole.”*

Am I your enemy because I tell you the truth about salvation? It’s not just traipsing down the aisle shaking a preacher’s hand and telling you believe some facts. Salvation is a new birth. It’s a resurrection, it’s a new creation, it’s a vital union, it’s a living fellowship, and its Christ enthroned in a man’s heart.

God almighty makes him over again from the soul of his feet to the top of his head and he will never be the same. And whether this ever happens to you I don’t know but I just know it’s so!