

# “*Doctrine Really Does Matter!*”

## 2 Corinthians 11:1-15

**Intro.** – P.T. (Phineas Taylor) Barnum was credited to have said, “There’s a sucker born every minute.” History has pretty much confirmed this point. According to an article in “U.S. Air” magazine, the history of hoaxes demonstrates that people are vulnerable in 2 key areas – gullibility and greed. Some hoaxes go beyond our imaginations.

In 1835, Richard Adams Locke reported to the *New York Sun* that through a 7 ton telescope he had discovered life on the moon. This hoax was so convincing circulation for the *Sun* went up 10 times and women in New England began a fund to send missionaries to the moon.

In 1980, Rosie Ruiz entered Boston Marathon a mile from the finish line and then claimed to have won.

On April 1, 1996 the fast food chain Taco Bell took out a full-page ad in *The New York Times* to announce their purchase of the Liberty Bell. The full page add read as follows: “Taco Bell Buys the Liberty Bell: In an effort to help the national debt, Taco Bell is pleased to announce we have agreed to purchase the Liberty Bell, one of our country’s most historic treasures. It will now be called ‘The Taco Liberty Bell’ and will still be accessible to the American public for viewing...” Reaction to this announcement had calls flooding the National Historic Park of Philadelphia where the Liberty Bell is housed to angrily protest the decision to sell the bell. The hoax paid off, however as Taco Bell’s sales spiked upward to over half a million dollars compared to the week before.

April 1, 1998, Burger King had a full-page ad in *USA Today* announcing a new item on their menu: a “Left-Handed Whopper” specially designed for the 32 million left-handed Americans. According to the advertisement, the new Whopper included the same ingredients as the original Whopper, however the left-handed Whopper had “all condiments rotated 180 degrees, thereby redistributing the weight of the sandwich so the bulk of the condiments will skew to the left, thereby reducing the amount of lettuce and other toppings from spilling out the right side of the burger.” Following day Burger King issued a follow-up release revealing the left-handed Whopper was a hoax, but that thousands of customers had gone to their restaurants to request the new sandwich, with many others making it a point to order right-handed Whoppers.

Could go on with other examples of hoaxes... Point is that people fall for hoaxes every day. But the most dangerous ongoing scam in history is the perpetrating of false doctrine. In our text, Paul is dealing with the danger of being duped by false teaching. While some of the hoaxes mentioned above are harmless, the “hoax of false doctrine” has devastating consequences. Why? Eternal life is at stake>

*Purpose: to better understand that doctrine in the church really does matter*

## **I Be ZEALOUS for the Truth (vv 1-2)**

### A. Zealous is Like Jealous

1. V 2 reads: “*For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.*”
2. We normally think of jealousy as an all-negative emotion...
  - a. but there is a healthy jealousy = proper desire for loyalty on part of people we love.
  - b. word itself used in our text literally means to be *zealous* or *ardently devoted*
3. Paul told Corinthians he was their spiritual father. They were the Bride of Christ, and he promised them to one husband – X; therefore, he was responsible for their purity, thus he was jealous for X..
4. Application is clear – when we are dealing with significant matters, we want people to be zealous for the truth. We want that surgeon to be zealous... that pilot... contractor... etc.

### B. False Teachers Are Not Zealous

1. Corinthians were not being zealous for the truth. Why? False teachers filling people bad doctrine...
2. Xianity deals with *most important issue in world* – eternal life! Doctrine matters – not be cavalier
3. Who then do you think are the most dangerous false teachers in world today? Anyone that minimizes the authority of God’s Word and waters *The Truth* down

- a. this includes those who teach everyone is going to be saved
- b. there are theological circles encouraging a casual approach to doctrine suggesting to the world there are no absolute standards of right and wrong... such a message impacting millions...
- 4. Listen to what Bible says: John 14:6 "*Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'*"
- 5. Acts 4:12 "*And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.*"
  - a. Romans didn't imprison, crucify and execute Xtians because they believed in Jesus – Romans believed in many gods... they had many religions... what would one more matter?!
  - b. Xtians were killed because they insisted there was no way to be saved other than thru Christ!

Brethren, we too must be just as zealous (jealous) for *The Truth!*

## II Be AWARE of Satan's Schemes (v 3)

### A. Satan Deceived Eve (3 steps used to change the mind of Eve)

- 1. Step #1 – Satan questioned God's Word
  - Genesis 3:1 "... *'Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?'*"
- 2. Step #2 – Satan denies God's Word
  - a. Eve – "*From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'*"
  - b. Satan – "... *'You surely shall not die!'*" said Satan to Eve. (Genesis 3:2-4)
- 3. Step #3 Satan reverses God's Word
  - Genesis 3:5 "*For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil.*"
- 4. In review, Satan questioned God's Word, denied God's Word, then said opposite of God's Word – Eve yielded, brought Adam into the mix and the rest you know... physical death introduced...

### B. Satan Deceives Today (same 3 steps used today)

- 1. "Has God said you ought to spank your kids when they disobey? That doesn't make sense. Kids ought to be allowed to express themselves, do as they please. The opposite is true. Spanking them will hurt their psyche. People who spank their kids are barbarians. Dr. Phil says so."
- 2. "Has God said it's wrong to drink and get drunk? Really?! It's not wrong. Everybody else is doing it. Why, have you even tried it? It's fun to get drunk..."
- 3. "Has God really said the husband is to be the head of the home? How antiquated is that? This is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Assert yourself as the wife, after all you have rights too!"
- 4. "Does God really have requirements for leadership in His Son's Church? How unreasonable! The fact individuals have influence, money and attend church half consistently more than qualifies them. After all, it's a matter of power and not responsibility."
- 5. "Has God said that greed is evil? That's not true. Greed is good. Success is everything!"
- 6. "Has God really said that sex belongs only in marriage? That's not true. When you're totally uninhibited with any kind of relationship, you're more fulfilled. After all, marriage is no big deal."

Be alert to Satan's schemes. He questions the logic of God's Word; he denies its validity; and then he asserts the opposite of what is true. Doctrine really does matter, but Satan wants you to think otherwise.

## III Be DISCERNING About Leadership (vv 4-15)

- here text gives 5 contrasts between Paul and false teachers – gives 5 distinct ways discern true/false:

### A. True Leaders Teach/Preach the Gospel (v 4)

- 1. The Gospel of Christ/grace never changes – God created man, man sinned, God sent His Son to...
- 2. True leaders will always rely on the power of that Gospel for it is *the power of God unto Salvation* according to Romans 1:16. May not be newest, may not be most appealing, but it is power of X...
- 3. The false teacher is always trying to intro. a new Jesus, a new way, at the expense of God's Word!

- B. True Leaders Rely on Substance Not Style (vv 5-6)
  - 1. Appearance over substance – our culture is most vulnerable to *charisma* and *charm*...
  - 2. Illus. – during 1960 Presidential race, those listening to debate between Nixon and Kennedy concluded Nixon won handily. But those who watched the debate said opposite... thought Kennedy came across “more presidential”
    - a. ever since that time Presidential races have never been the same...
    - b. A. Lincoln would never make it as a modern day candidate for President...
  - 3. Use this to illustrate the great need Christians have for being more discerning when it comes to evaluating leaders. We need to evaluate people by substance and NOT by style – i.e. from God’s perspective and Not the world’s perspective.
- C. True Leaders Have a Servant’s Heart (vv 7-9)
  - 1. When Paul started church in Corinth he didn’t exploit the people in anyway...
  - 2. Kept himself from being a burden – had a true servant’s heart...
    - a. Fulton Sheen, “Civilization is always in danger when those who have never learned to obey are given the right to command.”
    - b. Jesus said it the best in Matthew 23:11-12 *“The greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”*
- D. True Leaders Exalt Christ Alone (vv 10-12)
  - 1. Paul was asking the brethren to be patient with him because he was going to have to defend himself. He felt uncomfortable doing that; nevertheless, it was necessary in order to exalt Christ!
  - 2. True leaders must be able to say with John the Baptizer, *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”* (Jn 3:30)
- E. True Leaders Are Transparent (vv 13-15)
  - 1. True leaders don’t have to fake it or wear a mask. False teachers have an air of mystery – professional, slick and greasy... you never know where they really stand... can’t pin them down...
  - 2. Illus. – Boston preacher observed a group of boys around a stray dog. Asked them what they were doing. “We’re seeing who can tell the biggest lie. The one who tells the biggest lie gets the dog.” “Why boys, when I was your age I never even thought of telling alie.” “Here, mister, “ said one of the boys, “You win!”
  - 3. Satan is an imitator... “father of lies”... His servants masquerade as servants of righteousness: they’ll quote Scripture, talk morality and put on a good “show.”...
  - 4. We must be far more discerning, brethren and friend. Examine the doctrine. Is it consistent with Scripture. 1 John 4:1 *“Test the spirits to see whether they are from God.”*

**Conclusion:** Does doctrine really matter? Is what a church believes and practices all that important? Don’t statistics say people aren’t really all that interested in doctrine when choosing a church?...

The answer is “Yes” to each of the above questions. So in summary to this message, I want to conclude with Paul, under the inspiration of God, writing to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:16) *“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”*

Brethren, doctrine really does matter; therefore, may we be zealous for the truth, aware of Satan’s schemes and discerning about true leadership!