A Pastor's Heart

(Paul's Concern for the Corinthian Believers)

2 Corinthians 11:1-15

10/16/2011

Introduction:

- ***Every good pastor will have right concerns for the state of his flock***

The concerns Paul had for the Corinthian Church should be the concerns of every good pastor for the flock entrusted to him:

I. ***A Good Pastor will be*** **<u>Zealous</u> for their <u>Purity</u>** (v.2)

II. ***A Good Pastor will be*** **<u>Anxious</u> for their <u>Devotion</u> to Christ Alone** (v.3-4)

III. ***A Good Pastor will be*** **<u>Conscientious</u> about his <u>Testimony</u>** (vv. 5-12)

IV. ***A Good Pastor will be*** **<u>Cautious</u> about <u>False Teachers</u> and <u>Cultists</u>** (vv.13-15)

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Ezekiel 34:2-10

Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because *there is* no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek *after them*. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

Although boasting is not something Paul wanted to do, he felt it necessary to remind the Corinthians of his credentials and conduct (v. 21-33), which would clearly contrast his ministry with that of the false apostles (v. 4, 13-15).

- ***Every good pastor will have right concerns for the state of his flock***

The concerns Paul had for the Corinthian Church should be the concerns of every good pastor for the flock entrusted to him:

I. ***A Good Pastor will be*** **<u>Zealous</u> for their <u>Purity</u>** (v.2)

"Jealous" = zealous; Paul had a zeal not for what the Corinthians had, but for them. He was zealous that they not leave Christ but stay devoted to Him.

God's jealousy is not to be understood as if we had something He wanted. He has everything ; He is not jealous over anything you have that He wants. He is not jealous over what belongs to you; He is jealous over you.

"Godly jealousy" - It wasn't a selfish, carnal zeal, but a zeal for that which God would want.

God is jealous over His children, or "His bride" (cp. Ez. 20:5, 34:14; Dt. 4:24, 5:9, 6:15; Josh. 24:19; Ja. 4:5).

Exod. 20:5 - "I . . . am a jealous God."

James 4:5
Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

The Holy Spirit "Lusteth" (yearns; greatly desires your affection) for you with jealousy against all others that would try to steal you away.

God (like a good spouse would be) is unwilling that you share your affections with the world.

God refuses to share you with another. The Holy Spirit, imparted to us by God at conversion, yearns enviously for our total <u>loyalty</u> and <u>devotion</u> to Jesus Christ.

"Espoused" = betrothed; like our engagement period but a stronger bond (the only way to end a betrothal was by a legal divorce – Mt. 1:18-19 – because a couple was considered legally married husband and wife)

"to one husband" = God (specifically Jesus Christ); the believer's marriage is exclusively to the Lord Jesus and to no one else.

"Present you" – just as a father would give away his virgin daughter at the wedding altar, Paul desired to present the Corinthian Church to Christ in purity.

"Chaste virgin" - a holy/pure/set apart virgin. After salvation we ought to remain purely devoted to Christ; separated from the world's system and from all contaminating impurities. To yoke up with this world's carnality is in a sense to commit spiritual adultery against our god.

James 4:4
Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Like Paul, a good pastor will desire purity in his flock. He will preach on holiness and separation from the world.

"I fear" - When you care about God's children you will genuinely concern yourself with their spiritual faithfulness to Christ. Paul truly had a care for all the churches (2 Cor. 11:28).

II. ***A Good Pastor will be*** **<u>Anxious</u> for their <u>Devotion</u> to Christ Alone** (v.3-4)

v. 3

"Lest by any means" – the devil has many ways to deceive and we must not be ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11).

Paul's concern was that Satan might trick the Corinthians by his craftiness just as he succeeded in Eve's life.

[Note: Paul did not view the Adam and Eve story as a myth!]

How did Satan beguile Eve?

Genesis 3:

Satan DISGUISES his true identity
("the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field")

Satan DIRECTS HIS ATTACK at the most favorable line of resistance
("And he said unto the woman")

Satan raises DOUBT as to what God really said
("Yea, hath God said")

Satan DISTORTS the truth about what God said
("Ye shall not eat of <u>every</u> tree of the garden?")

Satan DISTRACTS our attention from God's provision to God's prohibition
("Ye shall not eat of every <u>tree</u> of the garden?")

Satan DENYS the consequences for yielding to temptation
("Ye shall not surely die")

Satan provokes DISTRUST in the goodness of God
("For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then…")

Satan dangles DESIRE in front of our eyes
("your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good & evil")

Satan's 3 points of attack:

I John 2:16	The Lust of the FLESH	The Lust of the EYES	The Pride of LIFE
Genesis 3:6	And when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**,	and that it was p**leasant to the eyes**,	and a tree to be **desired to make one wise**
Luke 4:3-7	And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made **bread**	And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, **shewed** unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.	And the devil said unto him, All this **power** will I give thee, and the **glory** of them…If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

Satan's package of basic lies has never changed; he uses the same techniques but simply disguises them in new wrappings.

Note the steps to sin:

1. She "saw" . . . (It looked okay)
2. She "took" . . . (It felt okay)
3. She "ate" . . . (It tasted okay)
4. She "gave"

v. 3 - "Minds. . . corrupted" - people's thoughts can literally become defiled and destroyed in regards to simple faith in Christ.

"Simplicity" - speaks of a simple single-ness. To not have more than one; no duplicity (cp. The eye's single focus (Mt. 6:22; Lk. 11:34). Keeps us from the snare of having a double treasure and consequently a divided heart (Vines, p. 578).

"The simplicity that is in Christ" - Several truths are implied:

1) The Gospel is not complex (Christ and Him crucified – 1 Cor. 2:2)

2) No additives are necessary to Christ for salvation (not saints nor sacraments)

3) There is only one way to Heaven (Jn. 14:6)

4) Satan is the instigator of false doctrine which detracts from Christ

5) It is possible for some who profess faith in Christ to be led astray.

A good pastor will keep attending to maintaining the simplicity and singleness of Christ and His Gospel.

v. 4

In this verse, Paul sarcastically rebukes the Corinthians for opening themselves up to false teachers who could convince them to receive another Jesus, another spirit and another gospel. In reality, there is no other -

Galatians 1:6-9

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

III. ***A Good Pastor will be*** **<u>Conscientious</u> about his <u>Testimony</u>** (vv. 5-12)

"Today in the academic and business and political worlds speaking fees are determined by your status. Certain people, like ex-presidents and star CEO's can garner as much as $100,000 for a single speaking engagement.
The practice is as old as Greece and Rome. And the church has not escaped. The advent of agents (an idea imported from the media and literary industries) has drive Christian speakers' feeds to scandalous levels – sometimes $30,000 for a single event. What imprecations would Paul rain down today?
Traveling speakers and professional philosophers in Paul's day were accorded status by the fees they charged. In fact, a cheap fee was thought to imply that the message wasn't important. Therefore Paul's refusal to accept money for his ministry in Corinth was negatively interpreted to mean either 1) an admission that his teaching was of low caliber, 2) that his message wasn't worth much, 3) that he gave the gospel away because nobody would pay for it or 4) that he was not really an apostle. Add to this the fact that the "super apostles" charged for their renditions of the gospel and you have the picture." (Hughes, p. 196).

v. 5
Paul was in no way inferior to those elite apostles. He was on par with Peter and John. But here he may be referring to the <u>so-called</u> "super apostles" (NIV), those who claimed to be apostles but were not (v. 13).

2 Corinthians 12:11
I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

(cp. Gal. 2:6)

v. 6
Although Paul appeared to be unskilled in public speaking (10:10) and lacked human rhetorical polish, he was in no way lacking spiritual knowledge and the Corinthians knew it.

His divinely inspired writings and his Scriptural wisdom was clearly revealed to the Corinthians in every way (whether in his evangelism, discipleship, counseling, public preaching, etc.).

For the Gospel's sake Paul would make accommodations and give up personal rights so as not to be a stumbling block and so as to win people to Christ (1 Cor. 9:17-23).

v. 7
Paul asks, Was it a sin for me to humble myself by ministering the Gospel free of charge? They somehow viewed him as being less than the other "ministers" because he did not charge for his ministry.

While a pastor should be remunerated for his full-time ministry (1 Cor. 9:14; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim . 5:17-18), he should not minister for filthy lucre (1 Tim. 3:3).

However, Paul chose (when among the Corinthians) to not accept a shekel from them, so as not to be misrepresented as ministering for money.

v. 8
"Robbed other churches" - speaking sarcastically, Paul refers to how he had accepted financial gifts from other poor churches who could not really afford to give, so that he would not have to be a financial burden to the Corinthians (who could, in fact, afford to give him much).

v. 9
When Paul ministered in Corinth, he reminds them that there were times in which he needed financial help. Yet he would not ask them for money. But other brothers, from Macedonia would supply his needs.

v. 10
Apparently some mockers throughout the whole region of Achaia had a suspicion of Paul in regard to his money and motives, so he formed a habit of rejecting any personal financial offers. They would not trap him by making false accusations against him.

v. 11-12
Paul didn't reject their financial gifts because he did not love them, but because he did. He was not being spiteful. He wanted to cut off any opportunity for the false apostles to elevate themselves to his status by putting him down (v. 12).

v. 12
Those false apostles who would seek to be elevated on par with Paul would seize any opportunity get to discredit him. Paul would not afford them the chance to do so.

This is why he was so conscientious about his financial testimony.

Paul chose to <u>adjust</u> his <u>methodologies</u> so that he would reach more people, without compromising his message or Biblical convictions (1 Cor. 9:19-23)

Paul, rather than forcing the Gentiles to embrace His Jewish culture and customs, made personal sacrifices and adjustments to spread the Gospel inside of the culture he ministered to without doctrinal or moral compromise.

V. 20
--Paul adapted his lifestyle to the <u>Jew</u> to win them
V. 21
--Paul adapted his lifestyle to the <u>Gentile</u> to win them
V. 22
--Paul adapted his lifestyle to the <u>weak</u> to win them

"I am made all things to all men" **-** This does <u>not</u> involve Biblical compromise on doctrine, dogma, or clearly-defined moral issues.

It does involve adjustments in technique, methodology, and custom for the Gospel's sake.

IV. *A Good Pastor will be* Cautious about False Teachers and Cultists (vv.13-15)

v. 13

"False apostles" – pseudo apostles. Fake pretenders. Men who appeared to be apostles. Everything about them was a lie.

"Deceitful" – tricky. The word *dolios* was used of bat for fish and has the idea of: "To catch by deception."

"Transforming themselves" - disguising oneself as is the common practice of Satan (the serpent; the god of this age).

v. 14

Don't be amazed that men can disguise themselves as "wolves in sheep's clothing" (Mt. 7:15); the tare looks strikingly similar to the wheat.

"Satan. . . an angel of light" – his name originally was :"Lucifer" (Is. 14:12ff), which means to shine as a luminary or bright glorious star.

"When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn. 8:44). When Satan is at work we never smell sulfur or glance down at a cloven hoof; rather he is sweetness and a congenial, smiling light – until he has control. Remember Screwtape's diabolical counsel to Wormwood? "Indeed, the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts." (Hughes, p. 199).

v. 15

If Satan has such power of deception, it is no hard feat for his workers to do the same.

They can "talk the talk" and appear as "ministers of righteousness" but they will not "walk the walk." And their conclusion will match their deeds.

A good pastor will give clear warning regarding false teachers and false teaching.

Paul warned the Ephesian elders:

Acts 20:28-31

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Beware: Cults are seductive!

1. They <u>look</u> good - Mt. 7:15; II Cor. 11:13-14)

II Tim. 3:1, 5 - "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. . . Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

II Pet. 2:1, 17-19 - ""But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. . . These are wells without water, [The thirsty world goes to them to drink, but they do not satisfy.] clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."

2. They <u>sound</u> good - Rom. 16:17-18

3. They minister in the "name of Jesus" - Mt. 7:22-23

(The cultist will be zealous, confident, claim to be sole repositories of truth, and apparently "religious")

"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully" (Jer. 48:10).

What Satan says is false; therefore, God's people must be able to detect error. Satan's co-workers are:

<u>F</u> ake
<u>A</u> ppealing
<u>L</u> iars
<u>S</u> eductive
<u>E</u> nticing

God gave you a pastor (Eph. 4:11-12) to equip you so that you will not sway in the winds of Satan's false teachings (Eph.4:14)

What is a religious cult?

Definition: *A religious cult is a unified, organized group of people who differ significantly from Biblical Christianity; rally around and dogmatically support a man or the unquestioned teachings of a man or men; claim sole possession of the truth; either deny cardinal doctrines of Scripture and/or twist Scripture to make minor issues major dogma and dividing issues; emphasizes external conformity to manmade rules; erodes Christian liberty & individuality; and promotes an arrogant, exclusivistic, isolationist, spirit.*

What is a Cult in simple terms?

In a nutshell, the definition of a cult can be summarized by a concise *"mathematical"* formula:

"A cult is any religious group which:

(+) **ADDS** to the Scriptures
(-) **SUBTRACTS** from Christ
(x) **MULTIPLIES** salvation requirements
(÷) **DIVIDES** the church"
(Author unknown)

HOW TO IDENTIFY A CULT

***Know the marks of a cult!**

1. Cults Preach Another JESUS (II Cor. 11:3-4)
(They deny Christ's person and work)
A. They deny His Person (I Jn. 4:1-6; II Jn. 7-11)
B. They deny His Work (Gal. 2:4, 21, 6:14 cp. Heb. 10:14)

2. Cults Believe Another AUTHORITY
(They undermine the Bible)
A. New revelations (Deut. 13:1-5, 18:20-22)
B. The traditions of men (Mt. 15:9, 13-14)
C. Faulty Interpretation (II Pet. 3:16; II Tim. 2:14-18)

3. Cults Teach Another GOSPEL (Gal. 1:6-10)
(They peddle a works salvation)
*Legalism - Col. 2:8, 16-23; I Tim. 4:1-3

4. Cults Follow Another LEADER (Mt. 20:25-27)
(They are devoted to a man)

5. Cults Utilize Another MOTIVE
(They manipulate by fear and intimidation)