

# THE Devil IN OUR Midst

WITH SHEL BOESE

**guide:** Aim for meeting three times a month, at least. Ask who is missing and follow up!

- CHECK-INS: Introductions, check-in, group celebrations: birthdays, life-events
- CARE: Needs in the group
- COMPASSION: What is the group planning? Are you inviting neighbours to join in?
- GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS Church-wide and group-only
- DIG IN: "Ice-breaker" question (group facilitator), discuss questions as a group
- PRAYER: Final questions, prayer huddles for personal requests. Consider breaking into small groups (huddles) of 2-4, by gender, if large enough.

**for reflection & discussion:**

Going Deeper (NT Wright, Paul for Everyone Studyguide, others)

Paul uses the analogy of marriage in his role with the church and God. In the Jewish world of his time most marriages were arranged by parents (still common for those of us from South Asia). Paul uses the image of a bride with cold feet after everything and everyone agreed.

1. What is one of your favourite stories of things gone wrong at a wedding? Think about books, movies, or weddings you've attended or heard about.
2. Read the passage out loud, maybe twice, with different English translations.
3. How do you see the wedding image and the temptation image of Genesis working to show his concern for them?
4. 1-6 Paul is accusing the teachers (who came to Corinth after him) of something besides challenging his credentials and qualifications. What do you see being said or hinted at?
5. Reread the NT Wright quote in the notes that starts out...*"The generous-hearted liberal who hates to say...The narrow-minded conservative who hates to say..."*
6. What does single-minded devotion to Christ (v3) look like in practice?
7. Looking at Vv. 7-15, why is it so important to Paul to avoid being a financial burden to the Corinthian church? (Elsewhere he teaches pastors/Christian leaders deserve to be paid and paid well. Eg. 1 Cor. 9:11-18; 1 Tim 5:17-18)?
8. How was this strategy turned against him by the teachers/sophists/etc.?
9. Paul was accused of all kinds of things he knew he was not guilty of. In traditional Biblical teaching and Jewish thinking, the "satan" was the accuser/public prosecutor in the heavenly court. He was to bring charges against all wrongdoers. The Satan seems to have been whispering ideas into people's ears/thoughts. He was both the tempter and the prosecutor.
10. Why does Paul find these accusations so troubling?
11. Other thoughts from this passage (we continue next Sunday).

**connect**

- need prayer?      · meet with pastor Shel or Josh
- ask questions    · sign-up for our weekly e-newsletter
- get information   · join a Home Church
- make comments



This past week there was a blow up in the USA over a demonic-themed Grammy performance (Sam Smith and Kim Petras' performance of "Unholy" left some calling it a satanic ritual <https://www.upworthy.com/unholy-grammys-performance-devil-worship>).

Should this worry the church? Or perhaps is there a much closer Satanic influence in our midst? In 1 Corinthians, Paul speaks of idol worship. But in 2 Corinthians he says that, in the church, there are those who masquerade as "Angels of Light". CS Lewis wrote, "He (the devil) always sends errors into the world in pairs—pairs of opposites... He relies on your extra dislike of one to draw you gradually into the opposite one. But do not let us be fooled. We have to keep our eyes on the goal and go straight through between both errors. We have no other concern than that with either of them." Sunday, we look at the Devil in our midst.

**PRE DEPARTURE: Opening Tales**

**TAKE OFF: the Text**

**Backgrounder**

Outline Baker Exegetical Commentary:

1. Bear with Me, Not Them 2 *Corinthians* 11:1-4
  - a. A Plea: Bear with Me! 2 *Corinthians* 11:1
  - b. Paul's Godly Jealousy 2 *Corinthians* 11:2-3
  - c. (The Foolishness of) Bearing with False Teachers 2 *Corinthians* 11:4
2. Paul and the "Superapostles" 2 *Corinthians* 11:5-15
  - a. Accusation 1: Paul Is an Inferior Public Speaker 2 *Corinthians* 11:5-6
  - b. Accusation 2: Paul Preaches Free of Charge 2 *Corinthians* 11:7-9b
  - c. Paul's Commitment to His Pattern of Ministry 2 *Corinthians* 11:9c-12
  - d. The Deceitful Character of the False Apostles 2 *Corinthians* 11:13-15

- 2 Corinthians 11:1-12:10 all go together. Fool's discourse may start 2 Corinthians 11:1, 11:10, or 11.21b.
  - Paul's powerful rhetoric and skill is on display.
- He lists HIS trials, troubles and weaknesses to show what proper ministry is.
  
- In the larger section he uses irony a lot.
  - Εἰρωνεία *eironeia*: saying one thing and meaning the opposite. E.g....
  - Εἶρων *eiron*: was mainly talking down about your skills, etc. pretended to be less than she or he was or is.
- Paul's tone here is not sarcastic, but full of real emotion, pathos, over the surface level inconsistencies.
- So in 2 Corinthians 11:1 he warns them what follows is a little foolishness, but does not start the full on "fool" mode of writing or talking until 2 Corinthians 11:21b.
- They are too in love with images of leadership from their culture - rather than the image of Christ (BW3, CCC, 444).

#### Pause for the Cause: Jesus Collective Jesus Collective statements

Visit: <https://jesuscollective.com/> to learn more about one of our core partner networks.

#### Five Core Commitments we share with our Jesus Collective network:

1. God always looks like Jesus, and all scripture is properly read through him. (Jesus-centered)
2. To be saved includes belonging to a community under Jesus called to live the life of the future now. (Kingdom-focused)
3. Evil is overcome through the power of suffering love. (Peace-making)
4. The Holy Spirit empowers us to partner in God's work of reconciling all things. (Spirit-driven)
5. The Church is defined by our shared center, not by the lines we draw. (Centered-set)

#### CRUISING: Through the Text

##### 1. Bear with Me, Not Them 2 Corinthians 11:1-4;

###### a. A Plea: Bear with Me! 2 Corinthians 11:1

###### b. Paul's Godly Jealousy 2 Corinthians 11:2-3

###### c. (The Foolishness of) Bearing with False Teachers 2 Corinthians 11:4

*Whenever we find that our religious life is making us feel that we are good - above all, that we are better than someone else - I think we may be sure that we are being acted on, not by God, but by the devil.-C.S. Lewis*

##### 2. Paul and the "Superapostles" 2 Corinthians 11:5-15

###### a. Accusation 1: Paul Is an Inferior Public Speaker 2 Corinthians 11:5-6

###### b. Accusation 2: Paul Preaches Free of Charge 2 Corinthians 11:7-9b

**Pause: Fools discourse** - he demonstrates their absurdity by being absurd.

Wiki summary: *reductio ad absurdum* (Latin for "reduction to absurdity"), also known as *argumentum ad absurdum* (Latin for "argument to absurdity") or apagogical arguments, is the form of argument that attempts to establish a claim by showing that the opposite scenario would lead to absurdity or contradiction. This argument form traces back to Ancient Greek philosophy and has been used throughout history in both formal mathematical and philosophical reasoning, as well as in debate.

#### c. Paul's Commitment to His Pattern of Ministry 2 Corinthians 11:9c-12

- They are messed up on the money issue and not mature enough to give to support ministry in the Kingdom of God kind of way. Christian giving is an act of deliverance for the giver—from the control and power of money. It is a ministry accelerant for the church's mission.

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#### d. The Deceitful Character of the False Apostles 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

*Whenever we find that our religious life is making us feel that we are good - above all, that we are better than someone else - I think we may be sure that we are being acted on, not by God, but by the devil. -CS Lewis*

*If devils exist, their first aim is to give you an anesthetic -- to put you off your guard. Only if that fails, do you become aware of them. -CS Lewis*

- Paul is awakening them from the drugged message they got from the False Apostles.

*The generous-hearted liberal who hates to say anyone at all is wrong can easily fail to spot real evil. The narrow-minded conservative who hates to say anyone else is right can easily label good as evil, We should not mistake Paul for one of the latter. He was involved in a battle for the gospel: would the message of Jesus be turned into a local variation on the prevailing philosophical and religious culture, or would it remain the agent of God's new creation? -NT Wright*

**DESCENT: TO DO, TO BE, TO AFFIRM**

**LANDING: FINAL WORD AND PRAYER**