

A WORD ON WORSHIP

Review of Message from November 5, 2017

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Hear Sunday Sermons at www.SunriseTC.org

2 Corinthians 11:3-4

“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.”

There are other goals that are essential for Christians, but the one I would like to deal with is that of sincere and simple devotion to God, or as the nearness of God (as Asaph expressed it in Psalm 73:28). In our series on how we serve church, we are faced with what we perceive as a very important question: Is public “egalitarian” ministry necessary for intimate fellowship with God? Put differently, are women hindered from intimacy with God by being denied certain church leadership roles designated for men?

The Corinthian saints were all too eager to follow new leaders and their teaching - teaching which turned them away from Christ to pursue so-called “wisdom.” Paul likens the situation to the fall of humanity in the Book of Genesis. There Satan deceived Eve, offering her wisdom (the knowledge of good and evil) that was to be achieved by disobedience to God’s command. While Satan promised Eve they would be “like God,” he did not inform her that this act of disobedience would disrupt their relationship with God. The intimacy with God known initially in the Garden of Eden would be lost. We knew that as soon as Eve and her husband ate of the forbidden fruit they sought to hide themselves from God and soon they would be cast out of the garden, never to return in their lifetime.

Satan’s scheme is to keep people from what is best by tempting them with some lesser thing which appears to be good and desirable, but which is a forbidden fruit. When we think of the Garden of Eden we tend to think of the one tree - the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - and less of all the other trees, from which Adam and Eve could freely eat. But we should remember that there were two trees in the center of the garden: (1) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and (2) the tree of life. By focusing Adam and Eve’s attention on the forbidden tree and its fruit, Satan caused them to lose sight of the most important tree of all - the tree of life. Satan seeks to keep our eyes off what is best, what is most important - serving God and His purpose - and to distract us with something inferior, something forbidden.

Satan is still employing his same tactics, seeking to get us to desire what God forbids under the pretense that we are denied something God owes us. Satan goads us to be complainers and accusers focusing on ourselves. Then we neglect the truly good gift(s) God has provided. The “tree of life” is before us in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Many fear that close fellowship with Jesus will mean the end of our worldly pleasures. We fear that if we follow Him, God will deny us our personal desires. But God never takes from us what is truly good. Whatever perceived power or pleasure you give up to follow Jesus (and there will be things we all give up as men and women), you will gain that which is truly good: salvation through Christ and intimacy with God. Nearness to God belongs to those who serve Him with a willing heart and spirit, as stated in God’s First Commandment.



Sunrise Community Church
Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst
EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

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