

Discipleship series

Knowing the true Jesus

The crime of counterfeit money is rampant in the world where counterfeit money is printed and used as real money. The technology to produce counterfeit money is so advanced nowadays that it is very difficult to know that a note is not real. We often just take money from people – tellers, cashiers, etc. – without checking whether they are real or not. Sometimes we are unwittingly passed a counterfeit note and when we try to use it elsewhere where it is checked, it won't be accepted, or even worse, we could be arrested for attempting to use counterfeit money. Counterfeit money, although it looks so real and almost the same as real money, is worthless. In the same way a false Jesus is worthless no matter how authentic anyone tries to make him look.

2 Corinthians 11:1-5

I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles.

1) The satanic deception

- 2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.
- The serpent that Paul was referring to was the serpent that deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden
 - Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”
 - Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.
- Jesus was never taken by surprise when deceptions started creeping into the church and increased throughout the ages. In fact, He expected it to happen
 - Matthew 24:3-5 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.
 - Matthew 24:11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.
- The greatest satanic deception is to lead the world, and even believers, astray from the true Jesus.
 - He leads people to believe in a false Jesus as promoted in other sects and religions, but he also promotes a false Jesus within the church making Christians think they're following the true Jesus whereas they're in fact following an imposter
- By attacking the true Jesus through deception Satan is attacking the fundamental foundation of our faith
 - Destroy the foundations of a building and you'll destroy the whole building

2) A false Jesus

- False Jesuses have been around since just after the time of the true Jesus
 - Some were created and promoted by false prophets and false teachers
 - Others were self-proclaimed
- The Gnostics have various beliefs about Jesus
 - Christ is seen as a divine being which has taken human form in order to lead humanity back to recognition of its own divine nature.
 - An embodiment of the supreme being who became incarnate to bring gnōsis to the earth, claiming Jesus to be merely a human who attained enlightenment through gnosis and taught his disciples to do the same.
 - Others adamantly denied that the supreme being came in the flesh
- Jehovah witnesses
 - Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus was created by Jehovah as the archangel Michael before the physical world existed, and is a lesser god.
 - They believe that when Jesus was born on earth, he was a mere human and not God in human flesh.
 - They believe that Jesus was resurrected spiritually from the dead, but not physically.
- The Muslim Jesus
 - He was created; was not God but merely a prophet of God; He was not the Son of God; He was not crucified; He'll come back again to defeat the antichrist, turn the world to Islam, break the cross, kill the pigs, get married and have children then die.
- A false Jesus in the church
 - The unbalanced Jesus: Either all holiness and judgment without love and mercy, or all love and mercy without holiness and judgment
 - A showpiece God: a Jesus that does miracles and signs and wonders as a show to excite people rather than doing them to the glory of God and compassion for people
 - The health and wealth Jesus: The Jesus that died that you can be healthy and wealthy
 - The man centered Jesus: Everything is about us and our happiness; he's the "fix us" Jesus
 - The social justice Jesus: The Jesus who takes up our social injustices even when we don't acknowledge Him
 - The individualistic Jesus: It's only between me and them and I don't need the church
 - The modern culture Jesus: culture dominates our relationship with him

3) Knowing the true Jesus

- When we obey the call to follow Jesus in discipleship, we need to know that we're following the true Jesus
- The true Jesus is God who became a man, physically died on a cross, bodily rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven in bodily form
- The true Jesus shows compassion to sinner while calling them to repentance, and rebukes the hypocrites
- The true Jesus saves us from the wrath of God to make us children of God.
- The true Jesus is humble and calls His disciples to a life of humility. He opposes the proud
- The true Jesus is relational and calls us into a relationship with Himself and others
- The true Jesus focuses on eternity, not the temporal
- If we don't know the true Jesus and follow a false Jesus we will go astray and not reach the destiny that God has destined for us in the true Jesus
 - John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.