

# Torrey Conference 2002 Jealous Leaders in the NT

By Eric Thoeness

All right, welcome to Biola University. Sixty seventh annual Torrey International Bible Conference. Thank you, Malala, for your audition here. Thank you so much.

Eric Thoeness got us started in this theme actually a couple of weeks ago, for those that are the few that are our guests, Dr. Eric Thoeness teaches here and we are so thankful that he's part of our body, part of the Biola team. We're looking and focusing from the word of God on men who are jealous leaders for the cause and glory of God. Let's welcome Eric as he opens the word of God once again.

Let's pray together. Almighty maker of heaven and earth. Sovereign Lord of the Universe, we come before you. You're frail creatures. Who have been made your children and your ambassadors? We seek to hear from you tonight through your word, by the power of your spirit. And I pray that our lives would be changed because we gathered here. Please keep us from the tragedy of being here as only. We ask that you and only you would be glorified. And we ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

I was in the midst of writing a book on Godly jealousy in the midst of the Clinton Lewinsky scandal. And I was fascinated as I studied how godly jealousy is an attribute that God possesses and that godly people possess. I was struck as I got a deeper and deeper understanding of this godly emotion, of desiring to see exclusive faithfulness in a covenant relationship. I was

astounded to see the public reaction to the unfaithfulness in the marriage of our president. I was especially astounded to see the public reaction to the public reaction of the president's wife.

Now, we don't know what the private reaction was.

I have a feeling it was probably different than the public reaction, but the public reaction to our president's infidelity with one of his young interns, if you will remember, was basically ambivalence. When the first lady found out supposedly the very day she found out, when her husband admitted that he had been unfaithful to her, if you remember, her public response was ambivalence.

Who really cares? And that day, she walked across the White House lawn with her husband, skipping in the dog, walking beside as if nothing had happened and nothing was wrong. And I remember clearly hearing the common public response to the first lady's ambivalence, it was this, how mature. How mature. That her husband can commit adultery and the very day she apparently finds out she can carry on as if nothing had even happened, how mature if she can have that response, shouldn't we all? And as I was gaining a deeper and deeper understanding of what true love really is. I didn't say how mature, I said she can't love him. If that's really her response, true love cannot be present. Because true love can never remain ambivalent, passive, uncaring in the face of unfaithfulness.

Let's define jealousy again before we go on, jealousy is the deep ardent desire to maintain exclusive favor in a relationship, a covenant relationship, a deep desire to maintain exclusive favor in a covenant relationship. We use jealousy and envy and zeal interchangeably in our English very often because languages are falling apart.

But there are different emotions. We're losing any distinctions, but they're very different. As I said, jealousy is a desire to maintain possession of something that's rightfully yours in a relationship. Envy is just a general desire to gain possession of something that isn't rightfully yours.

It could be a car. It could be a job. It could be anything. It's not this covenant marriage idea that's often fraught with sexual metaphor and marriage ideas and ideas of relational loyalty. That's what jealousy is. And zeal is the most vague and general emotion. Just a desire, a strong desire to see something come about. Interestingly, English translations are continually using zeal the most vague word rather than jealousy in a culture where exclusive relationship is no longer valued, it shouldn't surprise us that there's really no place for jealousy any longer. Context in the Bible has to determine when the right word is used before cannot, and jealous in Hebrew and Greek can be translated any of those ways. So context needs to determine it.

So when you have a beloved lover and a beloved and a rival, an unfaithful unfaithfulness expressed by the beloved for the rival, you have jealousy. Not just envy or zeal. It's very important that we maintain an understanding of a very positive and right and good jealousy in our lives that is warranted.

Human jealousy very, very often isn't that is expressed in godly ways, human jealousy very often isn't. But nevertheless, there is a place for a good jealousy that mirrors God's jealousy. And I hope you know that we serve a jealous God. I hope you realize that the god of the Bible is intensely jealous for the faithfulness of his people and ultimately for his own glory and honor in

human history, that is what is driving him in human history, and that is what should drive godly people as well.

We've looked at godly examples. There are dozens in the Bible of godly leaders who are jealous for God's glory, above all else, and act no matter what the cost because of that. May we follow in their footsteps, we looked at Phineas in numbers twenty five who was willing to take a stand in the midst of a nation who wasn't in the light, in light of sin and horrible gross sin displayed in front of the people. And he put an end to it.

And we're told that he atone for the sins of the people because he was jealous with God's jealousy. And he stands as a foreshadowing of Christ in his atoning work. We looked at David, this teenager was willing to run to the battle with Goliath and take on what he called this uncircumcised philistine, challenging the armies of the living God. And we saw in some sixty nine that he says jealousy for your house will consume me and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. His goals were the same as gods and the reproaches of God fell on him. And we saw last night, Elijah, this godly prophet of God, who was willing to take on the prophets of Baal, four hundred to one in the midst of a people and a king who were challenged to choose God or Baal, and they said nothing. And Elijah's willing to take them on in spite of worldly odds that made him look foolish, but we saw who was God and who was not. Yahweh is God.

Tonight, we look at two New Testament examples. Of men who are godly and who were jealous for God's honor in their lives, we look at Jesus and we look at Paul. There are other examples

besides these that we could look at, but we'll focus on those two, we could look at John the Baptist who jealously spoke against unrighteousness and said that he came to turn the sons of Israel away from idolatry and back to the Lord, their God.

Luke, one 16. We could look at the apostles who, when ordered not to preach the gospel, fearlessly demonstrated their jealous loyalty to God at risk of their own lives. Listen to acts for 19. But Peter and John answered and said to them, whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge. For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard. And listen to Peter and Acts five twenty eight. On whether or not they should obey man telling them to stop preaching the gospel or God, they say we must obey God rather than men.

And look at this powerful example of Steve and open your Bibles, please, to Acts Chapter seven and see this man, Stephen, in his example of godliness and jealousy for God's glory. Acts, Chapter seven, we find Steven before he is stoned. Preaching his heart out. To the Sanhedrin. And listen to this little segment of this powerful sermon, you want to understand what true preaching is, read this sermon sometimes. It's not entirely based on the felt needs of the hearer's he is preaching truth and he preaches theology from Genesis to Revelation.

He gives them the overarching unfolding scheme of God's work in human history, its powerful theology and its powerful preaching. Let's look at this little segment in verse thirty nine and following. Listen to what he says. Listen to his godly jealousy in the face of his accusers. Our fathers verse thirty of chapter seven of our fathers refused to obey him but thrust him aside.

Speaking of God and in their hearts, they turn to Egypt, sing to Aaron, make for a make for us gods who will go before us.

As for this Moses, who led us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him and they made a calf in those days and they offered sacrifice to the idol. And we're rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven as it is written in the Book of the Prophets. Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifice during 40 years in the wilderness or house of Israel? You took up the tent of Molek in the star of your God in the images you made to worship, and I will send you into exile beyond Babylon. Godly jealousy. Referring to the idolatry of the people. And their rebellion that he is comparing to their rebellion, the people he's speaking to and we pick it up in fifty one, he goes on.

You stiff necked people uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. So much for seeker sensitive preaching as your fathers did. So do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the righteous one whom you have now betrayed and murdered you, who received the law as delivered by the Angels and did not keep it godly jealousy. Can you feel the intensity of this preaching? Can you feel the jealousy at the heart of this preaching for God's honor in the lives of these people?

But I want you to notice something amazing about this man, Stephen, and his preaching, look what happens. 54 when they heard these things, they were enraged. No doubt. And they ground their teeth at him. But he's full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God.

And Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said, behold, I see the heavens opened and the son of man standing at the right hand of God.

But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him, then they cast him out of the city and stoned him and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Steven, he called out, Lord Jesus received my spirit. And then listen to this. In the midst of his anger and indignation and jealousy for the glory of God in their lives, his legitimate anger toward these people and jealousy toward these people, look at what he does.

And falling to his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. One of the most difficult things as we grow in conformity to Christ is to be able to be emotionally mature. To be able to be angry and jealous legitimately as we take up the cause of Christ, but in that to have capacity for compassion and forgiveness and patience, do you see this beautiful example of this here? And you know who's example he is following, don't you? Our saviors. Who has he is put on the cross by evil men praise for their forgiveness. If we are going to be godly people who are jealous for God's honor, we must have the capacity for compassion and forgiveness and patience as well. Not an easy task. We tend to go to extremes, but if we are to be like Christ, we must be emotionally mature with all of our godly attributes functioning fully like God, who never acts independently of any of his attributes.

Stephen was a godly man and a jealous man and a loving man. We could look at a lot of examples I found in my count in the New Testament, 66 clear examples of godly jealousy for God's glory and honor. We have James and Peter and John and Barnabas and Jude, those victorious over the Beast and the righteous multitude in Revelation, as well as an angel who refuses to receive worship and says worship God alone. We can look at all of these examples tonight.

We'll look at two primarily after Stephen. Look at two. The first will be Jesus. Please open your Bibles to John. Chapter two. Jesus is our example in all things. And it's human nature, he is our ultimate example, it can be a challenge to look at Jesus as our example and everything. However, there were certain things Jesus did and was that we are not called to one of them was to receive glory and seek it out for himself.

That is a unique function of him as the son of God, divine to die for the sins of the world. To receive worship are things that belong to Jesus alone, but he is most certainly our example and his humility of washing the disciples feet. Of laying down his life for his friends and of his godly jealousy to see God honored and glorified. Godly jealousy for the honor of God filled Jesus incarnate life at the beginning of his public ministry, he's let out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, which is another way, actually, that we're intended to follow Jesus example.

He was led by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of all things. And when he is challenged by Satan to take the easy route and not submit to the will of his father and take the

role and the in the progress of the Messiah right to the cross, what does he say when he's tempted by Satan to go the worldly route? He says, you shall worship God, the Lord and serve him only.

In Matthew 4, Jesus demanded the kingdom with the cross. He realized there would be no other way. He submitted to the will of the father and God's interests must rule in the life of the believer. Jesus demands unqualified devotion to God, which is why he says, you shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

The primary implication of the Shama Deuteronomy six four, "hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God. The Lord. He is won. Therefore, give him all you've got and Jesus quotes this and demands it of us. And now we see the temple cleansing Jesus, the God man, as our example in his godly jealousy going into the temple. Verse 13 of John, Chapter two, the passage of the of the Jews was at hand and Jesus went up to Jerusalem in the temple, he found those who are selling oxen and sheep and pigeons and the money changers sitting there.

And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables and he told those who sold the pigeons take these away. Do not make my father's house a house of trade, noticed this unique relationship, he points to my father, please realize how radical that is for a Jew at this time to ever say my father in a personal way, or there was a concept of God as the father, but never in this personal, unique way. And we see Jesus pointing to his unique relationship to the father here.

My father's house is not to be made a house of trade. His disciples remembered that it was written zeal, jealousy is a better translation. Zeal, jealousy for your house will consume me. So the Jews said to him, what signed you show us for doing these things, Jesus answered them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

The Jews then said it has taken 46 years to build this temple and you will rise it up in three days, but he was speaking about the temple of his body when therefore he was raised from the dead is disciples remembered that he had said this and they believed the scriptures and the word that Jesus had spoken a powerful demonstration of the jealousy of the God man. In our example in this. Now, what is the offense we have here? Often this is portrayed as a denunciation of commercialism of any kind, and I certainly believe that is an implication, but I think it's far more Theo centric than that, far more God centered than that.

The bottom line was they were turning the worship of God into a product to market and sell. Yes, the selling of these kinds of things in the temple was a corrupt practice. And no doubt Jesus has this in mind. But primarily I believe he's driven by God centered causes. It was primarily a protest like the prophets of old against the profanation of God's house and a sign that the messianic purification of the temple was at hand. It was pointing to himself in his role to bring pure worship to God. He says, stop making my father's house a place of business, and Jesus accuses the money changers of trivializing the sacred worship space by turning it into a marketplace, convenience and commerce had overtaken reverence and Jesus would not stand for it.

Can we see this at work in the church at all? The abuse that Jesus was reacting to was the desecration of pure worship to God, and I also believe something else may be going on here.

There was no doubt that this selling took place in the court of the Gentiles and the precinct where only the gentiles could go. They couldn't go any further. And then it was the court of the women and then the court where the Jews could go and then where the priest could go.

And then the holy of holies in the gentiles could only go in the outer precinct. That was their only access to the temple. And the access that the gentile's alone could get to was now blocked off and turn into a mall. And I think there's something going on here in relationship to the Gentiles, Jesus provides once again access for the gentiles to get as close to the temple as they can. And I don't think it's a coincidence that in John Chapter 12, the second cleansing we see in the Synoptics, Matthew, Mark and Luke and John, Chapter 12 after the triumphal entry, when the cleansing takes place in Matthew, Mark and Luke, I believe there are two cleansings, one in the beginning of Jesus ministry. And at the end, scholars are divided on this. Some think, John just put this cleansing at the beginning to make a theological point. I see no reason to think, along with some good commentators, that there were two cleansings and after the second cleansing that we see in the synoptic gospels.

Do you know what happens, the gentiles come in, John, Chapter 12, beginning a verse 20. And it says now there were some Greeks among those who are going up to worship at the feast and then they came to Philip who is from but Bethesda of Galilee and listen and began to ask him saying, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. We wish to see Jesus, I think. That this cleansing gave access to the gentiles, again, foreshadowing Paul's ministry that would bring the gospel to the Gentiles, giving

them to access into the presence of God. Jesus reacts against this. Trivializing of the worship space. In his role as the Avenger and Restore of the Kingdom of God kicks in and he actually results to physical aggression. He makes a whip and he drives people out and he flips tables over.

How does this Jesus fit into your Jesus powerful portfolio? Do you have this picture in your portfolio of Jesus pictures? Or do you only have the blessed are the peacemakers, Jesus, do you only have the lilies of the field? Jesus. Do you only have the nice domesticated version of Jesus that people who aren't even Christians like? Do you have all the pictures of Jesus the scriptures give us in your Jesus portfolio? Because this one's an important one.

We must consider him holistically. And, oh, he's the one who preaches blessed are the peacemakers, and he is the one who is gentle and compassionate and kind and patient, but he is also the one who is intensely jealous for the honor of his father and flips over tables and drives people out of the worship place to accomplish that end. Matthew, 21 13, he says this In the midst of the cleansing it is written, my house shall be called the House of Prayer, but you are making it a robber's den.

He's only walking in the path of the prophets who came before him, who said in Jeremiahs Seven-Eleven has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight. Behold, I even I have seen it, declares the Lord. And listen to Malachi three one through three. Behold, I am going to send my messenger and he will clear away before me and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come into his temple.

And the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of Hosts. And indeed. His messengers come suddenly into his temple. Malikai goes on, He will sit as a smelter and a purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refined them like gold and silver so that they may be present to the Lord. Offering their righteousness. Realize that this is not primarily a political, economic or even ethical statement.

Jesus is making a profoundly theological statement, liberation theology, a major movement in the last century, and theology looks to passages like this and goes no further than Jesus condemnation of economic oppression. And they miss the primary point of the passage, which is pointing as to who Jesus is and the jealousy for God's glory above all else. Jesus is bringing in the order of the time when God will be glorified in his holy temple without exception, and Jesus is willing to upset the status quo to accomplish this. He's pointing us not only to this immediate cleansing and making access to God available, but to the future cleansing that God will bring ultimately at the end of the age.

John has layers of meaning in his gospel, there's always an immediate meaning and then deeper ones we can find and the deeper meaning here is the deep theological significance of what Jesus is doing. And we find it in the remembrance of his disciples who quote David.

One of our key jealous leaders and one of the passages we've looked at, verse 17, his disciples remembered that it was written Jealousy for Your House Will Consume Me. Psalm 69: 9 where David says the reproaches of you have fallen on me for jealousy, for your house has consumed me. David says that in the past tense, it's happened to him.

In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. We have something called the Eiris tense. Which fits with this past tense idea, but John changes the verb and says the jealousy for your house will consume me. You'll notice it's future tense here. Jesus referring not only to this immediate scene, but what will happen at the crucifixion, I believe Jesus is pointing us to what will happen to him. He is saying this sort of jealousy that is causing me to cause this kind of stir is the same jealousy for God's glory that will lead me to the cross and to the end times as well. There's deep theological significance we shouldn't miss. He says, because of your sake, I have borne reproach, dishonor has covered my face.

David says, I have become estranged from my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons for jealousy, for your house has consumed me. And the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. This is the cry of the righteous suffer before God. And this messianic Psalm 69 is quoted often in the New Testament in reference to Jesus and its use here to show that consuming jealousy of Jesus as well as the fatal effects this jealousy will have for him.

It points to the cross and to the end days. David recognized that a main reason for his persecution was found in his jealousy for God and his house, based on his desire to uphold the honor of God. And David was consumed by a jealousy for divine glory. And so was Jesus. Listen to John, 17, for Jesus prays to the father in his prayer in the garden at the end of his ministry, I glorified you on Earth, having accomplished the work you gave me to do.

And now, father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. And he prays in that same prayer at the end of Chapter 17. Father, I desire that they also

whom you have given me, be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me because you love me before the foundation of the world, the glory of God and the glory of Christ himself is the driving motive in his ministry. Yes, he loves us. Yes, he has compassion on us. Yes, he laid down his life for us. But the ultimate goal is that in and through our redeemed lives, we may glorify God. Our salvation. Our sanctification is never an end in itself. We must reach the nations with the gospel that has saved us so that God will be glorified in all the fullness he desires in human history.

That's what we're about, that's what the Godman was about. And the answer he gives. The Jews who challenge him on this points us to this theological reality, he says, and in 19, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. He's pointing through this example of cleansing the temple to his ministry that will redeem his people. He was the fulfillment of the intent of the temple, pure and perfect communion with God through his ultimate atonement and intercession.

Now, let me make some qualifications, as I have on the other jealous leaders with Jesus. The first is his role as the Messiah. He had a greater teaching purpose here than simply cleansing the temple, as I've said before, we need to recognize the role God has for us as we carry out our godly jealousy. Jesus had a specific role with a deeper teaching purpose here. We need to recognize that as we look to glean from his example, what else can we look to? Jesus showed love, compassion and patience as well as jealousy, anger. We can think of numerous examples where Jesus is able to show compassion and patience. And love as well, in the midst of his jealous anger, they're never working independently of one another and we need to be that way as well.

The third qualification, jealousy for God's honor, must begin with God's people. You will notice that Jesus brings about reform among the people of God. He doesn't go trying to fix Rome as his primary goal. He starts with the people of God. And we, as the people of God have got to clean house before we even think at all about fixing any one outside of our house.

We must be the people of God, that's our primary role, and our lives then will have an impact in this world. Reform begins within the church. So what does the application we look to in Jesus life be God centered, number one? This is not merely ethical, sociological or economic activity, Jesus is taking part, and it's profoundly theological. He demanded pure worship and absolute devotion to God and he perfectly demonstrated this in his own life. We must be God centered. I will say this till I keel over. We must be increasingly God centered rather than self and human centered, because it is only then we will truly find ourselves. This is a profound reality in the kingdom. You want to be first, be last. You want to be the greatest, be the least. Unless a seed falls to the ground and dies, it won't bear fruit.

God must have center stage, not as some unspoken assumption, but explicitly center stage got us on a massive public relations campaign to make his perfections and glory known. And we need to get into this campaign with him. This is why we live. To know God and make him known has the commercialism, pragmatism, relativism and narcissism of our age so invaded the church that it's all about me in spite of the fact we sing, it's all about you.

This is the Question of the Day. No one be God centered, no, to feel godly emotions deeply, to be a godly Christian does not mean we don't have emotions. It means we feel them deeply. It

means we see sin and evil and we hate it. We despise it and we're jealous for God's glory. In light of it, we feel love and patience and kindness and joy and goodness. All these emotions who aren't just purely emotions, but they certainly have an emotional component. Christians have done a lousy job with emotions throughout the centuries, they get us in trouble, so we just assume not have them and we think mature Christians or people don't feel emotions. Look at the people in the Bible who are godly and they felt things deeply.

Ever notice some people cry, the first thing to do is what? Apologize. For what? Tears are a sign of life, they're showing us that you feel things don't apologize. It's a sign of life. I have a big box of tissues in my office, I hand them out a lot. I'll join in with you sometimes do. Don't apologize. Feel emotions deeply were intended to let them control you. Make sure they're godly, but when they are, let them rip. Feel emotions deeply, negatively, perceived emotions as well, not just the ones the world thinks are good, but be angry at sin, be jealous when anything competes with God for his glory.

One big God centered to feel godly emotions deeply, three have a complete picture of Jesus, the angry jealousy of Jesus in the temple stands in stark contrast to the benign, effeminate idea of Jesus that dominates so much of our contemporary conceptions of who he is. I see some of these portrayals of him. And I feel like he should be on Regis and Kathie Lee not flipping over tables in the temple, you know, it's I don't watch TV. I'm not up on who took Kathie Lee's place.

Have a complete picture of Jesus. That's Jesus, let's look at Paul, you ready? Want to take a halftime? Paul was a jealous man and a godly man. He never had apathy or lack of conviction

that I can tell it just wasn't a problem for him. I found sixty six New Testament examples of godly human jealousy as I looked at every verse of the Bible and twenty six of the sixty six were Paul's.

Romans 12 10 says this be devoted to one another in brotherly love, give preference to one another in honor, not lagging behind in Canada, sales and jealousy and zeal, fervent and spirit serving the Lord, he tells the Corinthians, pursue love earnestly, desire absolutely the same word for zeal or jealousy to earnestly desire the spiritual gifts. He was jealous for God's glory when the people at Lyster wanted to worship he and Barnabus for for doing a miracle. What does he say, man?

Why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God who made the earth and heaven and sea and all that is in them.

Don't worship us, worship God alone. He was jealous for his glory and honor alone. And like the jealous prophets of Old in the Old Testament, Paul denounced idolatry of every kind and act nineteen. He says they were worshiping gods made with hands that were no gods at all. Enrollment's one, he says that for all, though they knew God, they did not honor him as God, and he goes on in verse twenty three and says they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four footed animals and crawling creatures.

Sounds like godly jealousy to me. And he says to the Corinthians. Concerning the eating of sacrifices to idols, that there is no such thing as an idol in the world and there is no God but one one God and one Lord Jesus Christ. And he says again to the Corinthians in Chapter six, what agreement has the Temple of God with idols? And he says to the Thessalonians he's proud of them because they turn from idols to serve the living and true God.

He recognized God's people are no longer their own, but they're now God's exclusive possession. And he says to the Corinthians, you are not your own four, you've been bought with a price. You could sum up Paul's entire ministry to believers this way, what he says in First Corinthians seven, he wanted to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

That sounds like a godly leader. The clearest example we have of Paul's Godly Jealousy's and Second Corinthians, Chapter 11. Please turn their. Second Corinthians, chapter 11, verse one, I wish you would bear with me a little foolishness. He's defending himself against these apostles who came in and we're starting to teach false teachings. And so he's defending his apostolic authority and he feels foolish doing this, but he has to to show them they're going down the wrong path. And he says in verse two, I feel a godly jealousy for you. Or I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, for 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?

That's where idolatry begins, people. 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 proclaim, 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. He's chastising them for following a different Jesus, pursued in a different spirit than the one he came in. I don't believe this is the Holy Spirit here, but I think it's hard to figure out exactly what this false teaching was.

But I think probably at its core, the super apostles who are coming in and denouncing Paul were saying that there shouldn't be suffering in the Christian life. There shouldn't be a difficult road. And Paul was saying, no, that's an entirely different spirit than I came with, I came in frailty and in suffering. He says it's a different spirit and you're preaching a different Christ, he's so distorted from the true Christ, he's not even the true Christ anymore. And you've lost the true gospel. You've strayed in your thinking from truth. And he realizes that when God's people start to have wrong ideas of God and the gospel and their savior, they are going down the path of spiritual adultery.

Which is why God calls his unfaithful people over and over again, whores when they stray from him. The sexual metaphor at the heart of the Covenant God compares to a marriage is very important and you are understanding, I hope, better. Why a jealous response for God is present in this? Because any husband who is not jealous of his wife when she sleeps around doesn't love her. It isn't just.

The Corinthian's were flirting with a different gospel in a different spirit than the true in their devotion and loyalty, the truth to the true Christ was in peril, and their failure to spurn the false teachers amounted to idolatry. And Paul desires doctrinal purity and consequent spiritual chastity. He wants single hearted devotion from them. He says, I betrothed you to one wife. This

betrothal idea, something foreign to us. But very often when a man and woman would become engaged, it was as binding as the marriage, and there would often be a time period between the engagement and the actual marriage. Where there, they would wait and there was temptation and there were possibilities that the bride would lose her virginity before she was married and it fell on the shoulders of the father to protect her.

And Paul, who often refers to himself as the father of those he led to Christ, takes on this fatherly responsibility to protect him for the day when our groom will come and we will join him at the wedding banquet. He wants to preserve them in spiritual chastity and what does that mean, you believe the truth about your God?

And about your savior and about the gospel. The only way a betrothal could be broken is through death or divorce. It's legally binding, and it was the sober responsibility Paul had to protect his people, he sees himself as the agent through whom God would keep his people pure. Paul used his father imagery, imagery, and it's tender again, notice he's not just bringing a hard word of jealous rebuke, he's doing it as this tender loving father.

If we want to bring hard words, we must be tender and loving people, and Paul had this relationship with his people. He was a hard man, but he loved them and they knew it. He says to the Thessalonians, I was like a father taking care of you, like a mother taking care of her children, he says to the Galatians, I'm like a woman in labor waiting for you to come to maturity. He says to the glacier, you would rip your own eyes out for me. That's how much you love me

and you know how I love you, you know, I poured my life out for you. He loved these people. And in the context of this love, he was able to speak very hard words to them.

Speak the truth in love. Speak the truth in love. Jealous love. Tender love of a father. His love for them would not allow for passive indifference to their interest in the different gospel that was being offered. The Christians in Corinth can no longer claim independence or autonomy, they now belong to Christ, and Paul doesn't want them to forget that. Now, think with me, if you will, how amazing it is. That the Corinthian's are said by Paul to have virginal status before God. They are pure and virginal before him that he wants to protect them from straying away. Listen to how he describes them before their conversion. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and swindlers, and now they stand as pure brides before God. The Gospels power is astounding in its ability to justify and sanctify the believer in. Isn't it a beautiful thing that he can say to the Corinthians? Now, I want to preserve your purity in spite of the fact that before you were encountered by God, you were anything but. Their purity was restored to them by God, and now he wants to preserve it and protect it. And this is a beautiful thing in Paul's jealousy burns for their protection.

And the jealousy of God of the Old Testament is no less operative in the Christian church of the New Testament, but now that divine jealousy burns for the perfect union of Christ with his bride and true love will always respond to confident infidelity with intense jealousy. Paul cared deeply for the welfare of his people, but his driving motivation was the honor of God through their uninterrupted faithfulness to their husband. Qualifications on Godly jealousy, he was an apostle,

we are not ask God to show you the sphere of influence in the way, in the extent, in the manner in which he wants you to express godly jealousy.

Paul had a broad sweeping ministry and the authority of an apostle recognize your limitations and where God has you right now, ask him to show you the sphere of influence in the way and to the extent he wants you to show your godly jealousy. And again, like most of the examples we've seen besides David, he focuses on believers. His primary concern is not fixing Rome. It's fixing the people of God. So what are his primary applications? Once again, I'll say it again, be God centered.

Have you heard it enough? I don't think we can be God centered in our beliefs and behaviors, our fundamental connection between God's honor and our obedience to him must be understood. If you obey God, it means you respect him and you honor him with your life, if you disobey the prescriptions of a doctor. It not only says something about that medicine you don't want to take. It says something about what you think about the doctor. It says you think you know better.

And I'm speaking from experience. Most of my life, I've ignored doctors and taken my own casts off and my own stitches out very often to my own. Hurt. It shows you something about what you think of the doctor when you disobey God, you're not just dissing his law, you're dissing him because it shows us his character, what he expects.

If you're a friend of the world, you're an enemy of God, we need to live for his glory. The first thing we learn from Paul's life is once again be God centered. The second, be jealous and loving.

Paul's jealousy must be considered with his tender pastoral heart. No self-righteous detachment, but he speaks these hard words as a loving father. What else? Number three, be devoted to the truth and stand up for it. There is a profound connection between knowledge and love and belief in behavior, if you want to love God, you must know God.

To think you can love him without knowing him shows you don't understand how love works. And there's a profound connection between belief and behavior. How we behave always flows ultimately out of what we really believe. And we live in an age where truth is not believed. We don't even believe in our culture. There is such a thing as truth. So to stand up for it makes you a weirdo. An antiquated, backward weirdo who thinks you really have truth for everybody. But we must do it, listen to these words of William Borden in 1910 that he wrote in his journal. I recommend his biography, Borden of Yale. He was a missionary to China who died at the age of twenty seven. And there were seven memorial services for him around the world.

At twenty seven, he gave his money away and he went to China and he died there. And listen to this journal entry when he was a student at Yale in 1910. He says much more serious is the general agnostic atmosphere pervading everything agnostic means people just don't know. And deadening all convictions, those us to sin and truth included in line with this is a broad spirit of tolerance that is insisted upon, especially in matters of religion. And any and all are branded as narrow who dare think otherwise. 19, 10. And then he says this, that word, narrow, is one of Satan's deadliest weapons, it seems to me for most people would apparently rather be shot than called narrow. Thus, it is even as Christ predicted, the broad way to destruction is strong, but few

are climbing the narrow way that leads to life. Truth is the problem in our culture. People think if you could just get rid of truth, we'd all get along just fine.

Listen to Kofi Annan, the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize last year. He says the idea that there is one people in possession of truth, one answer to all the world's ills or one solution to humanity's need has done untold harm throughout history. He thinks the problem is truth answers, definitive answers. If we could just get rid of absolute truth, we wouldn't have problems that it never occurred to him that maybe the problem is wrong answers. It's not truth, it's lies. That's the problem. In listening to G.K. Chesterton, what we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition and has settled upon the organ of conviction where it was never meant to be a man who was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubtedly about the truth.

And this has been exactly reversed. We are on the road to producing a race to mentally modest to believe in the multiplication tables. This is where we are. And in the midst of this ambivalence toward truth in our culture, we must remain jealous for God's honor and therefore jealous for his truth. We need the confidence and holy boldness we so vividly see in the Book of Acts. May we not be a picture of the church that so frustrated Jim Elliot when he writes these words in his journal?

He says, generally, I feel quite useless. They're helped by my being here, speaking of the people in his suburb that he lived in in Portland. They are helped by my being here, but total ignorance of the truth is the general status of churchgoers here hereabouts, I know that my time is limited

and unless someone else moves here to help them, there's little chance of they're going on. All that God would shake up some of those married couples around Portland with their prim unconcern for souls and saints, dabbling with the building lots, houses, jobs, babies, silverware, while souls starve for what they know.

God shall not hold us guiltless either he shall suffer loss, what is needed here is a family to move in, take work, open the home and teach truth. It's just simple, see, it's not dramatic. He says, what do we need a family to come in, get a job, open their home to people and teach them truth? It's not these huge dramatic displays of godliness and godly jealousy, it's really simple point people to Jesus in your homes. And then he says this, The urge comes on me at times to write in scathing terms articles for these piddling little magazines of comfort and kind words for God's little flock. Baloney. When are we going to rise like men and face the world squarely? This driveling nonsense which condones inactivity because of the apostasy of the day needs a little fire to show up the downright ungodly nice it hides. We cuddle around the Lord's table as though we were the last coal of God's altar and warm our hands, thinking we will appease the wrath of the indignant Christ when he charges us with the unmet, unchallenged untaught generation of heathen now doing their Christmas shopping.

He says, It makes me boy, when I think of the power we profess and the utter impotence of our actions, believers who know one tenth as much as we do are doing 100 times more for God with his blessing and our criticism. Or if I could write it, preach it, say it painted anything at all, if only God's power would become known among us. That's a jealous man and a godly man who gave his life for the sake of the gospel. May we not be like those people he was describing, may

we instead be a picture of the young church and acts were described this way and acts for now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they perceived that they were uneducated, common men, and they were astounded and they recognized they had been with Jesus. May that be said of us? They recognized they had been with Jesus. Simple faithfulness.

Lord, make this true of us, please. Help us to live lives with holy boldness and godly jealousy and compassion and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and self-control.

Would you help us to be people who live lives where people will say they must have been with Jesus? And we ask this in his mighty jealous name. Amen.