

# How to Escape Deception

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of discerning between a father and a teacher, and warns us of the dangers of deception, which comes when we lose our fervent love for Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 1:04:08

**Scripture:** Hebrews 3:12

**Topics:** "Deception"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher highlights the danger of false preachers who present another Jesus, another spirit, and another gospel. He emphasizes the importance of discerning whether the Jesus being preached aligns with the Jesus of Scripture. The preacher urges listeners to examine the example and attitude of these preachers, questioning whether their actions reflect the character of the real Jesus. He warns against being deceived by false teachings and emphasizes the need to embrace the true gospel, which leads to gaining the glory of Jesus Christ. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of loving the truth and living a life of honesty to guard against deception.

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## Transcript

I want to turn today to 2nd Corinthians and chapter 11. Paul was a father to the Christians in Corinth and a father has a greater concern for his children than a teacher has for his students because a father brought his children forth and brought them up and one of the things he pointed out to the Corinthians in his first letter was you can have ten thousand teachers but you don't have many fathers and when a father corrects his children it's in a different spirit than a teacher correcting students. Paul was very strong in the way he corrected people but it's because he was concerned that they shouldn't miss out on something in eternity.

Teachers are more concerned with their salary. They got to do a job in school in order to get their salary. It's very important brothers and sisters for you to distinguish between a father and a teacher because you know the world is full of preachers now and we have a lot of them coming right into our sitting rooms through television and the thing that surprises me even of people in this church is that they have suddenly developed respect for unknown teachers whose faces they see on the screen more than for fathers who cared for them for many years.

It amazes me. That is one of the great deceptions of Satan. When we don't know anything about a man's life, how he lives, whether he's divorced or not, how he's brought up his children, what sort of church he's

planted, I'm absolutely amazed that so many people swallow preaching because that's all that seems to matter to them.

Words, not life. Now I've asked the Lord, I said, Lord why is that? And I got an answer. It's because there are people even in this church who do not love the truth.

That's why they are fooled by teachers and develop more respect for them than for fathers. That's the reason why the Corinthian, this is not something new to the 21st century in Bangalore. It happened in the first century in Corinth.

The church in Corinth had no respect, most of them, for the Apostle Paul who planted them, cared for them, brought them up for so many years. And they got taken up with these fancy preachers who came along who were only after their money. One way you can distinguish between a teacher and a father, I think all of us sitting here have had fathers and teachers, or at least mothers, even if your father died when you were young.

And what is the difference that you've seen? When your parents brought you up, they were not interested in what you could do for them. They were only interested in what they could do for you. Whereas a teacher works for a salary, he's interested in what he can get out of it.

That one simple test will deliver you from a lot of deception. Is this man interested in what he can get from his listeners, or is he interested in you? There was a rich man who once came to Jesus, and Jesus said, Give away your money, and come to me without your money. Have you ever in your life heard a preacher say that? I've personally said that to people, to come to this church and never drop any money in the offering box.

I said, Because we are interested in your soul. I say this because I find that despite repeated mention, people continue to be deceived. So Paul says here, verse 2, I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy.

He speaks about a passion burning inside him. He says, I promised your hand in marriage to Christ, and I presented you as a pure virgin to her husband, but now I'm afraid that you're being deceived. I think of Abraham's servant who went to Mesopotamia, a picture of the Holy Spirit who has come to the earth.

Do you know what he went to Mesopotamia for? You read in Genesis chapter 24, he went with only one purpose, and he had no time even to see the sights in Mesopotamia, the new land and all that. He wasn't a tourist. He came there with one purpose, to get a bride for Isaac.

The Holy Spirit has come to earth with one purpose, to get a bride for Jesus Christ. And it says in that long journey, I don't know how many days or weeks it took traveling from Mesopotamia all the way back to Canaan. What do you think Rebecca would have been talking to Abraham's servant about? I think I know.

She would have been telling him, tell me more about Isaac. I want to know about him. I've never seen him.

I want to know what he's like. I want to know him before I meet him. And can you imagine how, I don't think Rebecca would have asked him, well, do you think he'll give me a lot of money? Do you think he'll give me a chariot for myself? No.

And I can imagine how jealously Abraham's servant would have protected her from men who tried to tempt her along the way. She was a pretty woman. And how he would have been, how he would have

defended her from deceivers, robbers.

And that's how the Holy Spirit seeks to protect us from deceivers so that we are preserved as a pure virgin for Christ. And when a man like Paul, an apostle, was filled with the Holy Spirit, he had the same passion that the Holy Spirit had to protect this virgin bride of Christ. That's what he says here.

I promised your hand in marriage to Christ. There are very few servants of God like this who, when they bring a person to Christ, like Abraham's servant, will seek to preserve that person right until the day they present that person to Christ in marriage. Abraham's servant didn't sort of get Rebecca and say, okay, this is the direction to gain and go.

No, he took her all the way and gave her to Isaac. And a true servant of God is like that. He's not just concerned to preach a message to you.

He's concerned for you that he will present you one day as a pure virgin to Christ. My dear brothers and sisters, don't be deceived by teachers who don't even know you and who have no interest in presenting you as a pure virgin to Christ. And here he speaks.

He says, I'm afraid like the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness. The thing we have to beware of in Satan and his deception is his craftiness. Your minds will be led astray from simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

All going astray comes when our devotion to Jesus is gone. I don't take the credit for myself. I believe God himself has protected me from deception these 46 years of being a believer.

I've listened to many doctrines. I've been in many groups and heard many, many things. But one of the things God planted in my heart when I was a young Christian, 20, 21 years old, was a devotion to Jesus Christ that I have sought to preserve in all these 45, 46 years.

And whenever the main thing in your life is not fervent love for Christ, fervent devotion to Christ, a longing to meet your bridegroom. The first book I studied in the Bible was the Song of Solomon. The Lord did that.

Now I see why God did it. I didn't know anything about the Bible. I never studied the Bible.

But I didn't know how to study the Bible. And it wasn't my choice. I was all alone in a ship and I had the Bible.

And the only other book I had was a book on Song of Solomon I picked up somewhere. So God compelled me to study that book and showed me what devotion to Christ was. And that brought into my heart an understanding of Christ's immense love for me and that the whole of the Christian life was to be a walk with a heavenly bridegroom until the day I'd get married to her.

And that is what Paul says here, will protect you from deception. But when you get taken away from love for Christ and get taken up with love for money, material things, human beings, creatures, houses, land, possessions, your job, or any other thing, you are a prey for Satan to deceive you. He's out to deceive you and you won't even know it.

You see, if you knew that you were deceived, you're not deceived. Deception is such that you don't even know you're deceived. How does somebody deceive you with a counterfeit hundred rupee note? If you look at it and say, hey, this is counterfeit, you're not deceived.

Deception is when you have taken the money, gone away, and you're completely convinced you're a hundred rupees richer and you're not. You've been fooled. And deception comes when you listen to a message and you're convinced it is the truth.

And it's not the truth. And why is it not the truth? Because it has not led you to devotion to Christ. He's got you taken up with something else, with ministry perhaps, with miracles perhaps, with healing perhaps.

Something other than fervent devotion to Christ. It doesn't matter what it is. I guarantee you're a candidate for deception.

But it's very easy to be protected. If your main aim in life is devotion to Christ, ministry can be a deception. I've had to watch that.

You know, I'm engaged in ministry now. For many years I've been in full-time Christian work, nearly 40 years. But I say, Lord, never will my ministry be my God.

I don't care if it all goes away. Devotion to Christ. I want to warn you, dear brothers and sisters.

And he says if somebody comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully. For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles. Because even if I'm unskilled in speech, yet I'm not so in knowledge.

I want to read that in another translation. You put up with these big-shot apostles. They are rich.

They have enough money to come on television every day. Why can't you put up with simple me? I'm as good as they are. It's true that I don't have their voice and their eloquence, and haven't mastered that smooth eloquence that impresses you so much.

But when I do open my mouth, at least I know what I'm talking about. We haven't kept anything back from you. We let you know everything.

Oh yes, I wonder if I made a bad mistake in proclaiming God's message to you without asking you for any money in return, like all these other preachers. Maybe that was my mistake, serving you free of charge so that you would not be inconvenienced. That's the thing.

That's why the Corinthians didn't respect Paul. They say, he doesn't charge anything for his sermons, so his sermons must be cheap. But these fellows charge a lot, so they must be good.

Right? It's the same thing today, after 20 centuries. Exactly the same. Things haven't changed.

You know, when Jesus, when the people asked Jesus, the disciples asked Jesus in Matthew 24, I want you to see this. We've looked at it many times, but it's worth seeing it again. Matthew 24, the disciples asked Jesus, what's going to be the sign of your coming? And you know, all over the world, Christians preach about the second coming of Christ and the signs of his coming, and there are so many magazines and so many messages on Christ is coming soon, and here are some of the signs, what's happening in Israel, what's happening in Iraq, and the wars and earthquakes and tsunamis and all those things.

Okay, it's all true. But, please notice, what is the first thing Jesus said? And what's the thing that he kept repeating? He didn't keep repeating earthquakes and wars all the time. No, and that was not the first thing

he said.

He didn't speak about Israel, first of all. No. Matthew 24, what will be the last part of verse three? Tell us, what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? And listen, please listen, my brothers and sisters, and don't ever forget this.

These money-loving preachers won't tell you this. Jesus answered and said to them, see to it that no one deceives you. That's the first thing.

Many will come in my name, saying I am the Christ, and will mislead many. Now, you know, there are two ways you can understand that sentence. I have never heard, I never met anyway, a man who stands up and says, I am Jesus Christ.

There may be some crazy nuts, some part of the world. Do you think any of you will be deceived if somebody gets up here and says, I am Jesus Christ? I'd like to know if the youngest child here will be deceived by that. There's no need of... but read that sentence in another way.

And like this, many will come to you and say that I am Christ, that Jesus is the Christ, and then they will deceive you. You understood it? Supposing I am saying, supposing Jesus is standing here, and many will come to you saying that I am Christ, and then they'll deceive you. See, those days, you've got to understand what Christ means.

Christ means the Messiah. Jesus lived in a country where 90% of them said he's not the Messiah. Jesus said, many will come to you and say, Jesus is the Messiah, I am the Messiah, then they'll deceive you.

The other fellows won't be able to deceive you. So Jesus is saying the people who will deceive you are the people who will say that he is the Christ. People who got the Bible, people who follow Jesus, apparently, but they'll deceive you.

See to it whose responsibility is that. Your responsibility, see to it that you're not deceived, and I want to help protect you from deception. And then, further down, he says, verse 11, he repeats it.

You know how when something's burning in your heart, and you keep giving advice to your children, and you're protecting your children from something, he says, be careful about this, my son, my girl, be careful about this. And then you keep saying other things, and then you come back to what you said earlier, hey, I want you to be careful about this. That's what he says here.

Verse 11, many false prophets will arise and will deceive many. And why will they deceive many? What did we read in 2 Corinthians 11? Deception comes to those who have lost their fervent love for Jesus Christ. You know where Paul got it from? He got it from Paul, from Jesus.

Many false prophets will arise and mislead many because, I'll tell you why they'll deceive them, because the love of many people is going to grow cold in that time. And when fervent love for Jesus grows cold and love for other things take over, deception is widespread. But, listen to this, the one who endures till the end in fervent devotion to me, he'll be saved.

So I know how to be saved. I've got to preserve myself in a fervent love for Jesus till the end. It doesn't matter if you don't travel the world, it doesn't matter if you're not a great preacher, it doesn't matter if you don't do miracles, it doesn't matter if you don't heal the sick or raise the dead.

If you preserve yourself in a fervent devotion to Christ, you'll be saved. On the other hand, you can do all those other things and be lost. Jesus himself said how people would do miracles in my name, do prophesy in my name, cast out demons in my name, and he would say, reject it.

So that's what he spoke about. But he hasn't stopped. He again comes back to it.

He says in verse 23, in those days, if anyone says, no, here is Christ, there he is, don't believe them, because false messiahs, false prophets will arise. And now he says something more, which he didn't say earlier. These deceivers will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

You know, I never expected that I would live to see that day when even those who were elect would get swallowed up and deceived, because they see signs and wonders and miracles. But I have seen that day. We live in that day right now.

Even the elect, why are they deceived? Because deep down in their heart, from the beginning of their Christian life, they were more interested in miracles than in love for Jesus Christ. They were always interested in the spectacular. They were always insecure in the love of their Father.

They were orphans. And you've got to be careful if you're like that. That's all I can say.

I'll tell you one thing, my brothers and sisters, I cannot protect any of you from deception, but I can warn you. And if you get deceived after the warning, it's your fault. Paul could not protect the Corinthians from deception, but he could warn them.

And if we read this and we don't care for it, listen to what Jesus says. Behold, I have told you in advance. I've given you a fair warning.

When anyone tries to say, here's the Messiah, there he is, don't fall for it. Lying preachers are going to pop up everywhere. Their dazzling performances will pull the wool over the eyes of even those who ought to know better.

That's it. They're going to fool people who are supposed to have known the truth. So if they say, come on, run to the country, come and see him.

He's over there. Take a trip to this other town, the other city. He has come there.

The great Messiah, the great preacher. Quick, go down there and see him. Don't waste your time.

Don't be fooled by all that. But people are being fooled. The Bible says, people, Amos chapter 8, the Lord says, judgment day is coming.

Amos chapter 8, verse 11. I'll send a famine throughout the whole country. It won't be a The word of God is the Bible.

When the phrase word of the Lord is used, it always refers to the prophetic word that is spoken by a prophet. The word of God, there'll be plenty of it. The Bible Society will make sure that the Bible is the best selling book in every year.

But the word of the Lord, the prophetic word from a prophet will be rare. There'll be a famine. There will not be a famine of Bibles at any time.

But there'll be a famine of the prophetic word. A word from God. And then people will drift from one end of the country to the other.

They will travel here and there, thinking, oh, maybe I'll hear it there. And they'll listen to anyone. But they will not find the word of the Lord.

And I want to tell you, I've traveled a lot. I've heard a lot. I've heard more preachers than all of you here.

And listened to preachers from more denominations than all of you. And I'll tell you something. The word of the Lord is rare.

I've heard almost all the preachers on television. And I'll tell you the word of the Lord is rare. You can take it or you can leave it.

This is the situation we're living in. Now let's turn to the New Testament and see what the Apostles said. Paul says in 1 Timothy and chapter 4, the Holy Spirit makes it very clear as time goes on, in the latter times, some will fall away from the faith, giving attention to deceitful spirits and professional liars, doctrines of deceit.

By means of the hypocrisy of liars, these liars have lied so well that they have lost their capacity for truth. Do you know the number of preachers who are telling lies today about things that never happened, as though they happened? About people being raised from the dead, who were never raised from the dead? I remember in the late 1960s, there were a lot of reports about revivals in Indonesia, and reports of people being raised from the dead. I went to Indonesia a few years after that, 1972 or 1973, and I discovered something, that those people there didn't seem to be so excited as people in other parts of the world who read these books, who never went there, who never... You know, in many countries, particularly in more backward countries, many people are not able to distinguish between someone who's unconscious and someone who's dead.

That's why you hear of so many reports of raising the dead from these places where there is no proper medical verification. Why is it you never hear it in a hospital, in a good hospital? You never hear it there. I mean, if you want to be deceived with all of this, you can be.

I believe God can raise the dead, sure. God can do many things. All I'm saying is, all these reports that we hear, many of them are just to fool you.

Somebody's unconscious, somebody's in a coma. I've heard of people who are in a coma for months, never said a word, just lie there like dead people, and then they recover. All I say is, don't be fooled.

Keep your heart fervent in devotion to Christ and you'll never go wrong. You have everything you need in the Bible. Everything related to life and godliness has been given to us.

But professional liars have lied so well. They say one million people were converted in the meeting. How do you know? I don't even know whether all 200 of you sitting here are converted.

Even after knowing some of you for so long. How does a preacher discover in one evening, just because one million people raised their hands, that they're all converted? I don't think he's deliberately telling a lie, he's just deceived. Do you think the Apostle Paul would have been deceived like that, just because somebody raised his hand? So many raised their hands, they were converted to Christ.

I've been long enough in the ministry to know that a man raising a hand or signing a decision card or even saying the words, Lord Jesus come into my heart, doesn't ensure the guy is saved. By their fruits you shall know them. Professional liars.

But we can ask ourselves, why does God allow deceitful spirits to come into the midst of His people? I mean, if I knew somebody was a deceiver, would I allow him to come into my home when my children are small and talk to them? I wouldn't. No, none of you fathers would allow a deceiver to come and spend time talking to your children. Why is it an almighty God who's a million times better father than you and me, does that? I mean, not just in the world, but among His children.

Why are there 39,000 denominations? Why are there so many cults, all holding the same Bible, all claiming to speak the truth? Why has God allowed it? I'll show you a verse which explains the answer. 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 19. There must be divisions or denominations or groups among you in the world, because that is how those who are approved of God become evident.

Or as the message of the Bible says, the testing process brings truth into the open and confirms those who have really got the truth. Do you know how God... supposing there are a million believers here who claim to love the Lord, who have accepted Jesus, signed decision cards and raised their hand, etc., or who have done more than that. And God wants to find out how many of these fellows are really devoted to Jesus Christ.

How many of these people are really interested in being the bride of my Son? How many of them want to walk as Jesus walked? How many of them want to live as He lived? How many of them want to be overcomers as He overcame and sit down with Him on His throne one day? You know how God finds out? He opens a door and allows a flood of deceiving spirits to come into the midst of these millions of people. And very soon the lines are drawn. Small group of people, they are devoted to Jesus.

They are not fooled by all these deceptions. The vast majority of believers. He can deceive even the elect.

Get taken up with signs and wonders and preachers whom they have never met once in their life. I am amazed how you can follow a preacher you have never met in your life. Have you got any understanding of the New Testament? You know what New Testament preaching is? Follow me as I follow Christ.

Do you know anything about how that fellow is following Christ? How in the world are you following Him? Oh brother, his preaching is so great. He expounds so many clever things from the Bible. Aha! You are number one candidate for deception.

Do you know the difference in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant was that in the Old Covenant they just proclaimed messages? And in the New Covenant you follow an example. You don't just listen to messages. Messages are good.

But I will tell you this. The fundamental principle of the New Covenant is you follow an example. Paul said that.

Follow me as I follow Christ. Nobody could ever say that in the Old Testament. The first person who said it was Jesus.

Even John the Baptist didn't say that. Nobody in the Old Testament said follow me. First person who said it was Jesus.

He was establishing a New Covenant. He didn't just say listen to me. Old Testament prophets said listen to the word of the Lord.

Listen to the word of the Lord. They never said follow me. Even great men like Elijah or John the Baptist, the greatest of them all.

But Jesus came with a new message. Follow me. Take up your cross and follow me.

You say only Jesus could say that. No. Paul.

1 Corinthians 11.1. Follow me as I follow Christ. You say well only the Apostle Paul. No.

Not only the Apostle Paul. See what he says in Philippians 3 and verse 17. He says brothers join in following my example and also others who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

So it's not only Paul. You can follow a man who is following the example Paul set because he followed Christ. And that's why he says I'm very careful that nobody will categorize me along with these money loving creatures.

You know he says that in 2 Corinthians 11 after he speaks about all this deception. It's the one place where he talks about money a lot and I believe that it's by a man's attitude to money that you discover whether he's a false prophet or not. One of the ways anyway.

And he says here I'm not going to give anybody grounds. This is in verse 12. I want to read the message Bible.

I would rather die before taking your money. Why? There's a reason for this. I'm not going to give anybody grounds for lumping me with those money grabbing creatures.

No. You're not going to put me in the same category as those money grabbing creatures who boast that they are something special. They're a sorry bunch of people.

Pseudo apostles, lying preachers, crooked workers posing as Christ's agents but sham to the core. And no wonder because Satan does it all the time. I'm just reading here.

Dressing up as a beautiful angel of light. How many of you would know when you saw a beautiful angel of light, would question if you saw a beautiful angel of light. Hey is that the devil? Or would you be just waiting to give a testimony the next Wednesday meeting.

Hey brothers you know what I saw last week. You won't believe it. An angel of light.

You're a candidate for deception. Whether it's an angel of light or a preacher who appears to be his servants masquerade as servants of God. You can't put me in the same category as them because money will expose them.

Their attitude to money will expose them, Paul says. I'm different from them and you'll never be able to put me in the same category as them. I'd die before taking your money.

Do you think people have listened to Paul? Even the elect are being deceived. I mean Jesus said if possible the elect would be deceived. That's what he said in Matthew 24.

But I suppose some of these people who think they are the elect are probably not the elect. The real bride of Christ, devoted to Christ will never be deceived. But if you lose out in that devotion to Christ you can be deceived.

Now turn back to 2 Corinthians and the top part of that chapter. Notice what he says here. These people who come, there are three things he says in verse 4. They preach another Jesus, another spirit, and another gospel.

They are moved by another spirit and they preach another gospel. They proclaim another Jesus. Now I want you to listen to this carefully.

There are just three little things here. Is the Jesus being presented by those preachers the real Jesus of Scripture or not? Remember what I said, follow me as I follow Christ. That means look at that man's example.

Is he presenting the real Christ? When you listen to him preaching, ask yourself, can I picture Jesus preaching like that? When you see him pushing people down, ask yourself, can I picture Jesus pushing himself down like that? No. But you sit with open mouth and wonder, oh man of God. Because you have not seen the real Jesus.

It is another Jesus. The name is the same. Do you know in the Old Testament, when they made a golden calf, you read in Exodus 32, you know they gave the golden calf a name? Jehovah.

That's worshipped Jehovah. Jehovah, yeah that's the God who built us and brought us out of Egypt. Just because the name is the same.

Don't be deceived. Jesus, oh. Do you know there are many Jesus being preached? Not only now, in the first century.

Just because somebody takes the name Jesus, people say, oh brother but at least the name of Jesus is being proclaimed. That's what they could have said in the wilderness. Oh at least the name of Jehovah is being proclaimed.

So what if it's a golden calf? The name of Jehovah is being honored. That's the type of deception that's going on in the world today. I mean, if I went to visit my children's home and I saw a picture of a big cockroach there, and underneath written Zak Poonen, I'd say, well at least they're honoring Zak Poonen.

What do you mean they're honoring Zak Poonen? Can you imagine? But this is the type of deception going on among the elect. Please brother, the name of Jesus is being proclaimed in Bangalore. With Jesus.

Cockroach, deceived, you're a candidate for deception and I'll tell you why. I'll tell you the truth in love. You don't love Jesus Christ with all your heart.

You love your job. You love money. You love possessions.

You love pleasure. You love sex. You love these things.

No wonder you're deceived. You're a candidate for deception. Another Jesus.

The real Jesus was one who was tempted like us. Do you know why for 30 years almost every denomination in this country has opposed us? Because we preach Jesus was tempted like us and overcame and you can overcome. That's the thing that turned Christians in this country against me.

You think I stopped preaching it? It changed my life. I'll never stop preaching it. Some people have lost that vision.

Some people who were gripped by it in this church I know years ago are not gripped by that today. Therefore they're candidates for deception. The real Jesus became a man like us.

He was almighty God. He lived on earth as God but he did not use his powers as God. He lived as a man.

Tempted like us every day. Praying fervently with tears so that he might not sin. This is the Jesus I follow and he helps me to overcome sin.

I follow a Jesus who never lost his temper once concerning himself but lost his temper when the name of God was dishonored in the house of God. This is the Jesus I want to follow. The real one.

Who never lusted with desires. Who never thought internet pornography was a light thing. His whole attitude to sex was completely different.

This is the real Jesus. Are you following him? Even if you're not overcoming sin are you battling it? Do you hate it? There's another Jesus being proclaimed today. The real Jesus was a servant.

He never once asked people for money. You know that? When a man gets up on a platform and says the Lord has asked me to take a collection today from all of you. I say which Lord is that? Not my Lord Jesus.

I say don't insult my friend. Don't insult my friend by saying that he changed his opinion after going to heaven. He never asked anybody for money on earth and he's not changed his mind now.

Don't be deceived. That is another Jesus who tells people that collect money from them. It's so obvious but like Charles Finney said people have got to listen to it ten times before they understand the truth.

Before they even hear it. Before it sinks in. Because the ground is so hard.

The ground is so hard and very often the seed is falling on ground which is hard or shallow. That means they hear it and forget it within a week. You've got to hear it again because the ground is shallow.

So the real Jesus was a servant of people. He wasn't carried around on a throne adored by people. No.

He was a servant who mingled with people. He was not a political leader. No.

He was not a person who was trying to speak to the mass media and become popular. No. I'm not deceived by all these things.

So many Christian leaders of every denomination trying to become famous and accepted by the world media. Who cares for the world media? God's work is not done through the world media. It's done through the Holy Spirit.

And I'll tell you this, though he wants all men to repent and all men to be saved, he's calling out a people for his name. The word church. I don't know whether you know the meaning of the word church.

We use it church, church, church, church, church, church. We don't even understand what it means. It's like supposing you kept on using an English word and you didn't even know what its meaning was.

That's how we're using the word church. You know there's an English word called serendipity. Supposing you keep on using it.

Ah, that's a good word. Brother Zach used it today. Serendipity, serendipity, serendipity.

You don't even know head or tail what it means. That's how a lot of people are. It's an English word, by the way.

You can look it up in the dictionary. It's church, church, church, church, church, church, church. What does church mean? For some people it's a building, for some people it's a denomination.

The word church is from a Greek word ekklesia. From which you get the English word ecclesiastical. Ekklesia means called out from.

A group of people called out from. That's what I am. That's what a church is.

From the multitudes of people, all of whom God wants them to repent and all of them He wants to be saved. All of them should come to the knowledge of the truth. From that number He's called out a few.

The real Jesus was a servant. It says here also about another spirit. That's another thing you've got to see here.

Another spirit. And you see a lot of that today. Don't think that every supernatural manifestation is of the Holy Spirit.

This is one of the greatest deceptions going on in the world today. Jesus said, people will deceive others with signs and wonders. The real Holy Spirit is one who will make us holy.

Supposing you heard in English for example. Oh, let's take, forget English. When you read in the Bible about an unclean spirit, what is the picture you get in your mind? Uncleaness.

Or we read about deceitful spirits. Okay. We looked at the word deceiving spirits.

What do deceitful spirits do? Deceive. What should the Holy Spirit do? I ask the children. Some of you are struggling with the answer to that.

Make you holy. What do unclean spirits do? Make you unclean. What do deceiving spirits do? Make you, deceive you.

Supposing you go to a meeting and you say, there was a noisy spirit in that meeting. What do people understand? There was noise. Supposing you say, the Holy Spirit was in that meeting.

What do you understand? There was holiness. But do you think that's what many Christians understand today by the Holy Spirit? Oh brother, Holy Spirit was there. Brother, it was fantastic.

You say, what do you mean? You mean people became holy? No, no, no. They were all shaking and there was a lot of noise. And people haven't, and I say such people need to go and study the English language.

That's their problem. They need to go to the dictionary and turn to holy. Holy does not mean noisy.

Holy does not mean excitement. Holy does not mean getting shakes in your body. It's a dictionary.

That'll help you. You don't need discernment. You know what deceitful spirits do.

You know what unclean spirits do. But you don't know what the Holy Spirit does. How is that? What a work the devil has done.

What a fantastic work the devil has done. You have an immediate answer when I ask you what deceitful spirits do, what unclean spirits do. But when it comes to the Holy Spirit, you got all these crazy ideas.

Who put those crazy ideas in your head? I say the devil has done a fantastic work of even deceiving the elect. Another spirit that doesn't bring holiness. And he speaks here about another gospel.

That's the other thing. Another gospel. What is this other gospel? See, the Bible speaks in 2 Thessalonians 2 and then you'll understand this.

Sometimes we, 2 Thessalonians 2 is a great chapter on deception. And I want you to look at this. 2 Thessalonians 2 and you'll be protected from deception.

Dear brothers, in connection with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, I want you to not be shaken from your composure or be disturbed by a spirit. Can you be disturbed by a spirit? Or a message? Or a letter? You know there were people who were signing Paul's name and sending out letters. Hey, Paul said this.

Paul never said it. Saying the Lord has come. Again, what does he say in relation to the coming of the Lord? Let no one deceive you.

The apostles, Jesus all spoke about deception, deception, deception. So I would say any message that preaches on the second coming of Christ should speak about deception first. Otherwise they are not in tune with Jesus and the apostles.

You can talk about other things, but they are second. It says here, let no one deceive you because that day will not come before there's a great apostasy. Apostasy means a great falling away, which he says in 1 Timothy 4.1 also.

Many will fall away from the faith. He's not talking about non-Christians. People who have come to know the Lord are going to fall away from there.

See, I'll tell you honestly, I don't believe that once you've said the magic words, I've accepted Christ, you're safe forever. It's not true. The Bible speaks about many things, about enduring till the end, and hold fast, and the beginning of your confidence firm till the end, and be careful that with an unbelieving heart you don't fall away from the living God.

There are many, many warnings. I don't have time to go into that subject. But you can fall away.

A person who claims to be a believer can fall away because God knew it from the beginning. So, he knew from the beginning, this guy is going to fall away 20 years from now. So, it's okay.

He knew that. He's acting like he's a believer and all that. But Jesus spoke in Revelation 3 about your name being erased from the book of life.

How does he tell people their name can be rubbed out from the book of life? Revelation 3 verse 8, I think it is. So, there is going to be a great falling away before Jesus' coming. The next day you'll read tens of thousands getting typhoid in Bangalore.

Will you sit there and say, ah, don't touch me. You'd be crazy. We'd all go and get anti-typhoid shots or whatever there is available to protect ourselves from that.

But I'll tell you something, please listen carefully. Most believers that I've met are more afraid of typhoid than deception. They'll take every precaution to avoid typhoid.

But deception is worse than AIDS. Because you can't go to hell with AIDS. You can go to hell with deception.

So, when you hear that many will fall away, supposing I hear that, supposing the Lord came here and said, listen, supposing Jesus or the Apostle Paul stood here one day and said, brothers and sisters, 90% of this church is going to fall away. What would you say? Ah, thank God, I'm in that 10%. You will be the number one candidate to fall away.

Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he falls. When I read a word like this, I say, God save me. I don't want to be in that crowd that falls away.

I want to live in devotion to Christ. Very simple. And how are they going to be deceived? He says, don't you remember verse 5, that when I was with you I told you these things? And he's repeating it.

You know that Paul kept on repeating messages on deception? He said, I already told you this, but I'm going to tell you again because you need it. Because you guys don't believe that you'll be deceived. I have to tell you again.

And the true Apostle will keep telling you these things again and again. Inspired by the Holy Spirit. And he says, you know what's going to happen? This person, this deception is going to come, verse 9, with all the activity of Satan.

With power, signs, false wonders. Everywhere you see this, in the last days there is going to be false wonders. Deception in the name of Jesus, like the Jehovah calf in Exodus 32.

In the name of Jesus, false wonders. How do you find out? Do you have a devotion to Christ? What is that guy's attitude to money? It's very simple. But do you think people will be fooled by that? That people will believe that? No, they'll continue to be fooled.

Because they think, oh I'm smart. No, you're not. You're not smarter than the devil.

It says here, with all the deception of wickedness. Now, I was talking about another gospel. How to be saved from this other gospel? The gospel that we have to come to is described in verse 14.

2 Thessalonians 2 verse 14. He's contrasting this deception with the real gospel. The real gospel is the gospel, verse 14 of 2 Thessalonians 2, of gaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I want you to remember that all your life, if you want to be saved from deception. It's come smack in the middle of 2 Thessalonians 2, the great chapter on deception, that the true gospel is the gospel which enables you to gain the glory of Jesus Christ. Do you know what the glory of Jesus Christ was? It was not

some light.

John says, John 1 verse 14, We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten Father, full of grace and truth. Okay? What has grace and truth been replaced with today? Health and wealth. We beheld His glory, full of health and wealth.

And do you know the number of people who are being deceived by that false gospel? Millions. Millions. And not only that, there are people who stand up against it, who stop speaking against it.

I listened to a very powerful message on this by a man of God whom I respect very highly. Very clear message. He said in that message how God urged him to speak that and he hadn't spoken it for a long time, but now he had liberty and all that.

Some powerful things he said in that tape. We've got that tape here. And he spoke against this health wealth gospel and then a little later, that one message was removed from his website.

Every other message is there. Why is that? What happened? Change your mind on that? Or these other people have become so popular that you better not speak against them? I couldn't care less how popular they are. God's word remains the same.

And if I say God led me to do something and urged me to say something, I'll never take it off my website. What I'm saying is, even great men of God can get cold feet. What will people say if I speak against these people? Aha! Are you a servant of God then? I don't judge a man who's accomplished so much for God, but I say I can follow him to the measure in which he follows Christ.

He's followed Christ. Man, I'm speaking about in many, many areas and I'm not anywhere near in those areas. But in this one area, I disagree.

That's all I say. I'm just mentioning it as the gospel of gaining the glory of Jesus Christ. Now how can we be saved from deception? Here it says, verse 10, if you receive the love of the truth so as to be saved, you will be protected, otherwise God himself will send on you a deluding influence so that you will believe what is false.

Let me tell you three things. One, you've got to love the truth. Hate lying in your life completely.

If you've got any bit of lying in your life, any area you tell lies, you're a candidate for deception. Love the truth, verse 10. Love it.

Don't cheat. Don't deceive. Be upright.

Be honest. You guys who are in business, be honest when you speak to your customers. Speak the truth.

Don't deceive. Otherwise you'll be deceived. You may get some money from them, but you'll be deceived by the devil.

And truth also means reality. In the New Testament, truth means more than just opposite of lying, but it means reality. That means there must be no unreality in my life.

No talking about things which are not true in my life. Like you've heard me say many times, don't ever speak things which you have not done. If you have not done it, wait.

If you have to wait another 50 years, wait 50 years and then speak it. Jesus waited 30 years before he spoke. Why can't we wait? Why are we in a hurry? Don't be deceived by this.

I'm going to confess my hope. I'll do that one day. The other thing it says here is, we must love the truth so as to be saved.

I must have a desire to be saved from sin. That's how I'm protected from deception. I love the truth about myself also.

When God shows me something, I say, Lord, that's true about me. That was selfish on my part. Confess it.

I hurt my wife there. Go and apologize to her. Seek to be saved from sin immediately.

You'll never be deceived. Apologize immediately. Go and forgive somebody.

Seek to be saved completely from all sin. One more thing I want to say is Hebrews chapter 3 and verse 12 and 13. It speaks here about 13, about the deceitfulness of sin from which we can be saved if we listen to encouragement from other brothers in the body of Christ.

There's a protection in the body of Christ. And if you think you're so clever that you don't need that protection, you're a candidate for deception. There are a lot of lonely wandering believers today like butterflies.

They'll be sitting on one flower today, another flower this day, another flower another day. They're not committed to a body of local believers. Easily deceived.

The devil just knocks them off one by one. Our protection is in a fellowship, in a family where we humble ourselves and listen to one another, encourage one another. And when I don't have the brothers in the church to encourage me, I've got in the Bible Peter, James, and John to encourage me every day.

Dear brothers and sisters, we're living in terrible times. Let's be watchful, let's be careful, so that we can be ready for the coming of Christ. And not only ready for the coming of Christ, but do something useful for the Lord before He comes.

Let's pray. Our heads bowed in prayer. Let's first of all humble ourselves.

Say, Lord, I want to love the truth. I want to be saved from sin. I want to value the fellowship of a local body of believers.

I want to preserve myself in a fervent devotion to Christ. I want to learn to recognize and distinguish between fathers and teachers. Save me from the familiarity that breeds contempt, Lord, which leads to deception, seeking to follow people whom I've never met and don't know.

If you're honest, God will hear your prayer. Heavenly Father, help us all, we pray, for so much depends on this. We've got only one life to live, and if we get deceived all through that life, or even part of that life, what regret we'll have in eternity when you give us your word.

Preserve us, we pray, in these days, in the days when you have allowed this flood of deceitful spirits to come into the midst of your people to sift out those who are approved from those who are not. Give us grace to remain in fear and trembling so that we can be among those who are approved by you in the final

day. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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