***Warning about False Teachers, No. 2
Romans 16:17-20a
RO198-02***

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**Christian Greeting**

We continue this morning in Romans 16:17-21. Our subject is Warning About False Teachers - Segment Number 2. In this 16th chapter of Romans, we have seen that the apostle Paul has greeted a variety of Christian friends and servants of the Lord who are living in the capital city of the empire, Rome. Paul has commended and commanded these believers to be genuine in their greeting of one another as Christians. He pauses to say Christians should be genuine with one another: no fake friendships, no fake sweetness and light. How we love that in Bible church circles. We love to put on airs and pretenses; Paul says, 'Don't do that. That is unbecoming those who are in Christ, the Genuine One, the Son of God.' So, Paul says, "Greet one another with full and true Christian love. In the ancient world, that greeting was in the form of a kiss on the cheek. This was among Christians to be an expression of Godly love, unity and of forgiveness; it was not to be a Judas kiss. And it was to be a holy kiss, which meant that 3 people were involved, the giver, the receiver and God. In American culture, our greeting is a handshake. That handshake can be a Judas handshake with a handshake with one hand and a knife in the other ready to put in the back. Paul says that is unbecoming Christians. Of course, there is nothing wrong with Christians today, extending a holy kiss on the cheek to a fellow believer if they wish to greet them in that way.

**Warning Against False Teachers**

Paul gives one more warning to the Roman Christians about teachers of false doctrine. He says that these people will inevitably show up because of Paul's teaching of Free Grace salvation and of the grace lifestyle that Paul has proclaimed because God has revealed to him. The Old Testament system of the Mosaic Law is dead and gone, and the New Testament Judaizers hated that. So, they came along after Paul and try to bring people back under the system. There was another group, we call them Antinomians, which means against any rules, the against any rule crowd say 'I love grace.' And they went out and used grace as an excuse of license to sin and to do evil. Paul says, 'Do not deal with either one of this type of person. You are to avoid them and you are not to listen to them because it is characteristic of false teachers to be promoting this sort of thing.

In Galatians 2:4-5 Paul says "But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked into spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you." The apostle Paul said he personally has understood: he knows from personal experience what it is to have people coming, teaching false doctrines, undermining what he has said, and trying to restrict the liberty that is ours in Christ. In Jude 4, Jude puts it this way, "For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turned the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." So, Paul in Galatians says, 'I know about these Judaizers who come in and say, Hey, you can't be a Christian without doing all the Old Testament law system. And I know about these antinomians who sneak in and say grace means we can do anything we want and God will still forgive us.'

**False Teachers Cause Division**

I had an article given to me this morning that I think is pertinent to illustrate this very point. It's from The Dallas Morning News yesterday, May 12th, 1990, in the religion section entitled "Turner Recalled Faith Of Youth," subtitled "Media Mogul Describes His Religious Resentments" Dallas. From Atlanta, Georgia, quote: "Ted Turner, the broadcasting mogul who has proposed 10 voluntary initiatives to replace the Ten Commandments, told a humanist gathering here that he was saved 7 or 8 times as a youth. Addressing the annual convention of the American Humanist Association on April 27, he said he was taken to Sunday school and church as a child, attended a Christian prep school in Tennessee, where he was required to take religion courses and attend chapel services and even considered becoming a missionary.

"But Mr. Turner, who was given the group's 'Humanist of the Year' citation, said he started to lose his faith when his sister died of a long illness despite his prayers. 'If God is love and all powerful, why does he allow these things to happen?' He asked. The broadcasting executive received loud applause from the 200 people present when he declared that the more he strayed from the faith, 'the better I felt.'

"While criticizing fundamentalist Christians for emphasizing that people were born into sin, Mr. Turner asserted that Jesus probably would be sick to his stomach over the way His ideas have been twisted. Mr. Turner said he believes that we're all basically good. A few years ago, some fundamentalist Christians, including the Reverend Jerry Falwell and Donald Wildman, praised Mr. Turner for his attacks on commercial television networks for excessive sex and violence. But last year, Mr. Turner's WTBS television network refused to renew Mr. Falwell's contract to buy programing time. Mr. Wildman said, 'Mr. Turner is going to go whichever way the water is flowing.' Similarly, Eric Guthrie, a doctoral candidate in American studies at Emory University who is writing a dissertation on Mr. Turner, said, 'When his goal was to capture a national market, it was natural to cast himself as a national moral leader. Now he's out to capture a global market. He needed people like Falwell before. He doesn't need them now.'" unquote.

This is exactly on target. Here's a man who, when he opens his mouth, millions of people are influenced. Here's a man when he gives a direction, things are set in motion that form opinions and concepts in the minds of people. There will be many who will read this article and say, 'yeah, that's the way I was reared. This religion stuff is bunk, it's not real.' And the people who want to be sophisticated and who want to be viewed as knowledgeable people are going to follow the example of this important man, 'Humanist of the Year.' The apostle Paul is talking about just this kind of false teacher. A man who obviously, whatever his experience in the past was, has never realized that Jesus Christ told the truth when He said that "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me." Someday Ted Turner is going to discover to his eternal sorrow what a great mistake he has made. The tragedy will be that he had an opportunity to know better, that he wasn't reared as a little pagan, that he had doors of biblical information open to him. But he's another example that all of us should remember, even among your own children. You can give them the best of information, you can open the doors to a knowledge of the Word of God, but eventually there comes a time when they make a personal decision. And there may be within them that rebellion against the Word of God that will take them out in the kind of life that you never thought you'd see them follow.

Paul says false teachers characteristically say things that cause divisions among Christians. Turner's article will cause division among some Christians who are not well taught in the Word of God and who believe that this man, because he is famous, rich, successful, knowledgeable, educated, must certainly know what he's talking about.

The apostle John when he wrote his little epistle, 2 John, particularly made a point about false teachers and about associating with them on a fellowship basis. He said if you associate with those people, if you sit down and have a meal with them, if you greet them, what you have done is made yourself part of their evil. 2 John 10-11, John says, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching [The context talks about the teaching of the true doctrine concerning Jesus Christ.], do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds." How many Christians do you think are that clean-cut and honest in dealing with the people of the world who degrade, insult Jesus Christ, who are false teachers, false doctrinal promoters. Then you give them the smile, you give them the hand of welcome, and you treat them as if they were just OK folks, one of the brethren in Christ? Yes, they may be in church, they may even be church members. But Paul and the other apostles were very clear: those who are false teachers are those that we identify as such, we avoid, and we do not pretend that they are just OK.

In the same little book of 2 John 7-8, John warns the Christians to be on guard against religious deceivers who will cause them to waste their lives and to lose their rewards, their potential rewards in heaven. Notice 2 John 7-8, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward." Here, John says, 'If you're not careful, these people are going to cause you to stray from sound doctrine. You're going to be out there chasing rabbits and you're going to waste your life as a Christian so that instead of coming before Christ at the Judgment Seat of Christ and receiving rewards, you will receive a pitiful condemnation for having wasted your life.

The apostle John also cautions Christians to test the teachers that come to them who claim to be God's ministers. 1 John 4:1, John says, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." It is amazing how hard it is for some Christians to believe that the preacher can be a false prophet, that the religious leaders can be the very people you don't want to listen to. The Old Sin Nature makes a travesty of Bible doctrine.

Recently, Liz Taylor had a terrible case of pneumonia. Doctors thought she was going to die and she thought she was going to die. I went by the newsstand the other day and I saw one of the tabloids, and it had her picture and a quotation from Liz Taylor, a quotation that she made when she thought she was going to die. She said, "God wants me in heaven with all the men I love." Some of those men were husbands, maybe some were not. But all the men she loves, God wants her in heaven. You should know that Liz converted some time ago, many years ago, to Judaism. Therefore, as a Jewess, she believes that Jesus Christ was perhaps a sincere man but a fraud: He was not divine, He was not the Son of God, He is not the only way into heaven to the Father, He is not the way and only way to salvation. Liz Taylor has no confidence or trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. And indeed God, when He takes her life, may put her with the man she loves. But it is not going to be where she hopes it would be.

Sammy Davis Jr., a cool cat with a cigarette in his hand all the time as he sang, is dying of throat cancer. He's down to something like 65 or 70 pounds. People are standing by in the entertainment industry waiting for the inevitable end. You should know that Sammy Davis Jr., some years ago, converted to Judaism. Sammy Davis Jr. does not trust in Jesus Christ therefore as Savior, like all who follow Judaism: Christ is a deceiver and a fraud, is not what He claims to be, and He simply is to be discounted and ignored. For both Liz Taylor and Sammy Davis Jr., God's grace has given them another chance. It's a pity that someone doesn't send each of them one of our Berean Church evangelism brochures. Who knows but what at this late date, rationality might yet come into their souls, and they may yet face what God says in Scripture and not what they have concluded by listening to people and of their own arrogant assumptions.

**Fellow Workers in Christian Warfare Share Eternal Rewards**

The apostle Paul was a true spokesman of God through whom flowed the love and the grace of God. Paul was never a professional preacher, creating a public image of himself as a great spiritual giant with special access to God. In fact, one place in the Bible, Paul says 'when I stood up to preach, people thought I was a comparatively ugly person to look at.' In fact, we have reason to believe that he had an eye infection that made his eyes blurry and watery, not too good to look at. So, Paul commented that his presence in the pulpit was not what you'd call a popular pulpit personality image. You know, there's popular pulpit personality types, and every time you see their picture, they're always standing there with the Bible under their hands, grinning like a baboon, always a mouthful of teeth smile. I know some religious leaders, every time I see their picture, there's going to be the mouth full of teeth smile. The baboons are coming. The apostle Paul said, 'Don't look upon me and count me to be that kind of a popular pulpit style. I'm not. I'll put it on the line to you. I will teach you what God has taught me. I'll give it to you straight. And I'll tell you something else: after I've taught you, it's up to you as to what you want to do with it. You can fritter away your life. You can be like the fool, the rich man who dies and discovers he's left it all behind. You can be like the sorry character who will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and find that you had all kinds of wonderful goodies in life, but now you have nothing when it comes to eternity. Yes, you're saved, but the rewards that could have been yours, you have squandered by wasting your life.'

Paul was not a professional preacher. He didn't portray himself as some kind of special giant. He didn't go around calling himself "Reverend" and he didn't even go around calling himself "The Doctor Reverend," though he could have done both of those. Paul was indifferent to all ecclesiastical pomp and ceremony and promotions. He had one interest in life: to proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ from the doctrine of salvation to the doctrine of rewards in Heaven. Paul, the educated, the gifted, the cultured, the smart minister of God, also treated all believers as his indispensable companions in God's work. If there's anything we have learned from the 16th chapter of Romans as he's listed all these names, it is that this man, who had a lot on the ball, did not consider himself superior to all the many workers that made possible the ministry that he was engaged in. He was a team man. He did his part of the job. He knew that the rest of the believers had to do their part or what they accomplished was not possible. He was nothing without the association of the other believers, most of whom have gone out into eternity, unnamed, and unknown, and unrecognized.

Paul himself recognized that Christians serving with him in his ministry would also share in Paul's rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And that was an important thing. Paul recognized, that Christians who serve with him, what he accomplished they were part of, and they would receive rewards along with him. This is the principle which was illustrated as far back as the book of 1 Samuel 30:23 and 25. David has led a successful military campaign. After the campaign is over, they have secured a lot of booty. The question comes up how to divide the spoils of war. Some of the men have been assigned to rear duty service, rear duty responsibilities, protecting the equipment, protecting the baggage. While others were up on the line fighting. When the battle was over, some of the people who had fought on the line said 'these people who were assigned rear area duty should not share in the spoils of the war. Their lives were not at hazard when we were up there winning this battle. We who won it at the hazard of our lives are the ones who should share the spoils of war.' David said 'That's a wrong principle. That is not the way God works. It is not the way he works under that physical condition of warfare and it is not the way he works in spiritual things. 1 Samuel, 30:23, "Then David said, 'You must not do so, my brothers, with what the LORD has given us, who has kept us and delivered into our hand the band that came against us.'" David says, 'You're wrong in refusing to share the spoils with a rearguard.' Verse 24, "'And who will listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down to the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage; they shall share alike.' And so it has been from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day." David settled that matter on the field that day and he settled it for the future. He said let this be a principle of warfare that's understood: those who serve in the rear area are essential to our success up on the battle line. When it comes time to sharing the spoils of war, they will share equally. That's a principle upon which God works, and you should not forget it. The apostle Paul knew it well, and that's why he esteemed the workers that were associated with him. He did great things. He did magnificent things in the New Testament world, in the cause of Christ and the building of the body of Christ. But all those simple little folks, those men and women who were associated with him and who helped him are also going to share in the rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. That will be enormous, as you can well imagine, for the apostle Paul. Can you believe it? They're all going to have a share in it. Paul was a friend of his fellow workers. He held them dear in Christ, and they knew that they could count on him as a really great leader.

**The Grace of God Accomplishes, Not Us**

Furthermore, Paul was ever the man who understood that the grace of God was what made him what he was. That's why he didn't go on putting on the pretenses that you see in preachers today. It's nothing like having a television tube looking you in the face to make you feel that you have become something really important. I mean, it is exhilarating to stand in a television studio and see that lens pointed toward you and wait for that red light to flash to know that you're on, and then you start speaking. That's exhilarating because you know that who knows how many people are out there looking and listening to what you say. Pretty soon you really think you are something. The apostle Paul says 'If I've accomplished anything, it is by the grace of God. And I am what I am by His grace; no credit to me.' 1 Corinthians 15:9 and 10 he put it this way, "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." Paul said. 'Indeed, once I got to saved, once I realized how wrong I was about Jesus Christ and that He was the true Savior, then God's grace was so magnificent to have taken me, after all I had done to Christians, to the body of Christ, from that day forward, I was His slave. And I worked in a way and in the devotion and an intensity that none of my peers, none of the people associated with me that were my age did.' Throughout his life, Paul responded to the grace of God with an intensity of devotion and service.

**The Nature of False Teachers**

In Romans 16:18, the apostle Paul speaks about the nature of these false teachers, of which he is warning the believers. Romans 16:18 says "For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites." "Such men," that is this kind of man, these who teach false doctrine. They are slaves. They are not people who operate on free choice. A slave does his master's will. In this world today, everybody is a slave: you are slave of Satan, or you're a slave of Jesus Christ. The sad thing is that, a Christian can pull himself out of his proper role of being subject to his master Christ and put himself over there as an associate and slave of Satan.

These people who teach false doctrine are not slaves of Jesus Christ, but they are slaves Paul says "of their appetites." The Greek word looks like this: it's a Greek word "koilia" k o i l i a, and in the Greek language that means "belly." They are slaves of their bellies. This in the New Testament was a way of conveying the concept of sensuality, the desire for sensual experiences: for money, for power, for fame, for illicit sex, for prestige, for food, for things. These people, Paul says, are after sensual objectives, after the securing of sensual experiences. So, the teacher of false doctrine is enslaved to his Sin Nature and he is condemned in the Word of God as sinful. In Philippians 3:18-19, the apostle Paul says, "For many walk," and I must remind you, in this verse, he is talking about Christians, Christians who are slaves of their sensual natures. [Philippians 3:18-19] "For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now I'll tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things." Paul says it just makes me weep to think of Christians who are walking along just like some poor slob of an unbeliever who has never been enlightened, who has never been transformed by regeneration. His God is his appetite, which is again, that word for sensuality. What does he take pride in: the things that he should be ashamed of. What is his mind on? Earthly things.

So, what's your mind on for tomorrow morning? What will I have tomorrow as a day for the investment to the glory of God? What will I invest my life in that will move forward my opportunity to store treasures in Heaven by my divine service? Or are you thinking of the next fun and game activity? Are you thinking of the next possession? Are you thinking of the next sensual experience that you have before you? A born again believer is to be the slave of Jesus Christ, which in fact you then find is the place of maximum personal freedom, because there you have freedom from the lust patterns of the Sin Nature.

The slave does not exercise his own will; he exercises the will of his master. And the many slaves who were Christians in Rome understood this principle. Obedience to the lusts of one's Sin Nature means disobedience to Jesus Christ our true master. The Christian, by his very regenerated nature, is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. When you add to that the knowledge of doctrine, you have guidance for a lifestyle that pleases God. Why would a child of God want to follow and support religious leaders who are enslaved to their Sin Natures? They're all over television. They're constantly bombarding people for things so that they may indulge their sensuality in various ways, under the guise that they are servants of God and that they are serving God with that money that you're sending to them. We have found a couple of times now how false that is. But that was no surprise to people who were trained in doctrine. It's only a surprise to people like the Charismatics who operate from emotion and not from the guidance of Scripture.

Why should a child of God want to follow and support these con artists? 2 Corinthians 11 has this to say about that from the apostle Paul: 2 Corinthians 11:18 through 21, Paul says, "For many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also [Paul says, 'People brag; let me do a little bragging.]. For you being so wise, bear with the foolish gladly. [You must understand that here at Corinth was a church that was following sensual lifestyle. They exalted the leaders, the religious leaders who went for the good life and who ignored the Word of God. They operated on emotions. They were babbling in the tongues just like the Charismatics do today. And the apostle Paul was attacked by this congregation. They said terrible things about Paul. They made some bad cracks about his appearance and about how bold he was when he wrote letters to them. It made him mad a little bit. He said, I'm going to show you how bold I can be when I arrive on the scene in Corinth. And here, he says, 'you people like to brag. Well, let me brag. It's stupid of me to do this, but let me just start acting and talking the way you do. He says verse 19,] For you, being so wise, [Sarcasm. Bear with me] bear with the foolish gladly. [He says, 'you're so smart.' But these con men come along and you eat it up! That's where that phrase first came, that "Laugh-in" used, that program, "sock it to me," that was invented in Corinth. The con-men would come and they'd say 'hey, sock it to me fella'!' They loved it. Paul says, 'Oh you're so cute, you're so smart, and you put up with these idiots.' Verse 20.] For you bear with anyone if he enslaves you, if he devours you, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, if he hits you in the face. [You see, there's the phrase hits you in the face, 'sock it to me.' You have to be really a weird character to be that guy that says 'I love the religious leader who rides on my back, who steps from church to church as he goes to bigger and bigger congregations and up to higher salaries who takes advantage of me, who knows how to become prosperous, and he moves up so pretty soon you see this dude driving around in a Cadillac, not just an ordinary car like ordinary folks do, real big timer. Paul says, verse 21] To my shame I must say that we have been weak by comparison. [You know what he's saying? He's saying 'these guys, they've enslaved you. They've devoured you; they've taken advantage of you. They've exhausted themselves. They've hit you in the face. He says, 'I must apologize because I have failed you. I didn't sock it to you like I should have so that you would esteem me like you esteem them. To my shame, I must say that we have been weak by comparison.] But in whatever respect, anyone else is bold [He says,] (I speak in foolishness), I am just as bold myself." Then he goes on and he lists his credentials. Paul says 'I don't like to talk like this, but he felt he needed to remind these people of just what his background was as an apostle.

These teachers of false doctrine are central in their hypocrisy, and the spiritually discerning Christian should recoil from them with deep moral aversion. That's Paul's point. Don't go around and get caught up in this Christian community sweetness and light attitude that you're going to be nice to all the folks who are out there. If you are, you're not walking with the Lord Jesus who called the con-men vipers, whitened sepulchers, puts them on the line for the creatures that they were. You're not walking with the apostle Paul who said that these people should be isolated. The Christian ministry is to the religious con man, simply a means for gaining wealth, power and luxuries. It is not for securing glory to God.

**How False Teachers Operate**

In the latter part of Romans 16:18, he gives us their technique: how do these men go about gaining wealth, power over Christians... by their smooth speech. It [smooth] looks like this in the Greek Bible, "chrestologia," c h r e s t o l o g i a. "Chrestologia" means "sweet talk." It's a perfect word. They go around Sweet-Talking, so seductive. These teachers can sound so beneficial, so plausible, so pious while flashing that mouth full of teeth smile at you. They make people feel good about themselves in order to secure favors and funds. They sound so loving in the midst of their subtle false doctrine which is destroying the spiritual lives of people. They come to you with sweet talk Paul says; watch for the sweet talking preacher, and, he gives another word. They come to you with something else, with flattering speech. This is "eulogia." So, you got speech in both these words, "logia." And "eulogia," is "flattery." They praise you. They compliment you in order to ingratiate themselves to you. They sound so interested and so concerned for you, while they're slipping in their false doctrine. Our Sin Natures are ready to eat up the praise that we get from people so that we can be influenced by them.

Some years ago, I visited the Mormon temple in Salt Lake City and asked one of the guides a question about Mormon doctrines, and he introduced himself and they're always so pleasant and sweet. He wanted to know who I was. When he found out that I was a pastor and that I was a Doctor of Theology from Dallas Seminary, he said, 'Let me talk to one of our men here.' He brought up one of the professors from Brigham Young University that was there on tour that day. They passed me up to the higher echelons. [joking] Now you peons, they wouldn't do that with you, but they moved me right up there. And you should have heard; this guy didn't know me from Adam. You should have heard how complimentary he was when he introduced me to the professor here from Brigham Young University and the complimentary things he said. I just loved it and I kept quiet. I didn't want to interrupt him. So, you just keep on talking here. I found all over there was this cordiality. No matter what you asked, I mean, it could be a devastating question, which is what I was asking. They were so cordial and sweet and just sloughing off the fact that they were guilty of false doctrine and they were trying to outmaneuver you by sweet talk and flattery. They did the same thing when we were able to visit the temple here in Dallas before they closed it to outsiders. Every one of those people were sweet talk and flattery in order that they might ingratiate themselves to you. And you might say, 'boy, those people are so nice, they must really represent God.'

This is what Paul is saying. He said you people have a reputation in Rome. Everybody holds you in the highest esteem for your devotion to doctrine and your knowledge of the Word of God. I want to tell you, the false teachers are going to zero in on you. They're going to come in, they're smiling. They're going to compliment you. They're going to flatter you. And if you eat it up, they’re going to take you down the tube in false doctrine, and I don't want to see that happen to you. I don't want to see your image tarnished. There are a lot of Christians out here in the New Testament world, churches that are told about you. They would be crushed to find that you have been conned by some religious artists that came in. They hold you in the highest esteem.

These people come in, Paul says, with this kind of smooth, flattering speech for one purpose: so they can deceive. And the word deceive here means to seduce. Yes, he's an official preacher. Yes, he's speaking to you the Word of God. But you don't know something that's behind those eyes that are looking at you. He is telling you things with the idea of leading you down a primrose path of deception that will gain from you certain benefits. You just watch Bob Tilton on TV. I don't care where you are in the country. I was up in Chicago and turned the TV on, and there he was. He is everywhere. He has one message: "make a vow to God, a financial vow, and He will bring it back to you, multiplied over and over again. You need a car, see yourself riding in that car, get it in your mind, visualize it, and that car will become a reality."

When I was a teenager, we used to call that mind over matter. With these guys, it's matter over the minds of these people. The matter is the money that they're trying to get. I cannot believe that this man can stay on television day after day, year after year, bringing in huge sums of money while every kind of human being from jet setters to little old ladies are writing out checks in order to get a great blessing from God. And they love to use those Old Testament Scriptures about making a vow to God as if anything of that nature was ever given to Christians. One of our people, who used to work for him on his phone bank, had to answer the phone one day, and you could tell by the voice that this was an older lady. She said, '6 weeks ago I sent in 100 dollars and nothing has happened since.' She didn't get her return from the seed that she had sown with Tilton. I said to him "Well what did you say to her?" He said, "I said what Tilton tells us to say. I told her, why don't you make a vow of another ten dollars to reinforce the 100 dollars vow you made. Write another check for 10 dollars." "Oh, all right." [joking] We got to get a new department of financing in this church, folks. I mean, there are wackos out there like you wouldn't believe. We're not taking advantage them, of that opportunity.

How can sincere people be deluded like this? Because they look at this guy as he intersperses his tongue speaking with his English speaking, scrounges his eyes, looks so smooth and convinces them as he claims 'God called me to a special mission.' He was in Hawaii, incidentally, when this happened. God said, I'm going to send you to the world to teach people how to be prosperous. You will be my voice. And he [Tilton] tells you frequently, "I am God's voice to bring you the things in life that you've always wanted. I can bring it to you now. If you don't want to listen to me, alright; but if you're ready to go with God and to be prosperous and to stop being a poor little nincompoop nothing, then send you're offering in." This is what this word deceive means, a person who is conning. And if you do not have a doctrinal frame of reference, as most of these people listening do not, you do not know how to judge what the silver-tongued orator is telling you.

And what he wants to deceive, Paul says, is the "hearts." That's the word "kardia" in the Greek Bible. Many Christians make the mistake of thinking this is emotion. No, no, no, no. In the Bible, "kardia" is the "mind." For with the heart man believes unto righteousness to get salvation. The word "kardia" is mental. In the Bible, when they want to talk about emotion, they talk about the visceral areas of the stomach. That's where they felt things. That's why they talk about the bowels of mercy, the pit of your stomach. That's where you felt emotion. When it says, "heart," it means "mind." So, these people are shooting for your minds. They're taking the false doctrine, they want to shoot down your thinking.

To whom does he do that? This is Paul says, 'I want to tell you, I'm telling you this: they do this to the "unsuspecting",' [The unsuspecting,] the "akakos," a k a k o s. The word "kakos" means the sneaky, the person with guile, deceit. The word "a" is a negative, it's the person who is not sneaky, the person who does not have guile. So, he's saying he's shooting to deceive the person who is not sneaky, the person who's almost naive. He's referring to the sincere Christian who lacks training and doctrine so that he has spiritual discernment to spot the conman. Christians cannot be unsuspecting in the world of religious frauds. You cannot afford to be unsuspecting. Christians who are untaught in doctrine will not be prepared to meet the flashy, personable conman. You'll be ready to eat up anything he says.

The modus operandi of the teachers of false doctrine then Paul says is this: they are plausible, they are eloquent, they are pleasant to listen to. Their speeches are filled with insincere flattery and they are smooth. The objective of these teachers is to get from naive people what the material benefits that they need to indulge their own sensual desires. Pure hearted, sincere, but doctrinally untaught Christians are easily victimized by these self-serving, false preachers. The Christian tends to impute his own integrity to those who claim to speak for God. You don't think that people would treat you that way because you wouldn't treat people in this kind of a deceitful way. And they fall victim to religious demagogue who claim to be sent on a special mission from God to them.

People blur the difference, you see, between the authority of the Bible and the authority of the demagogue. When you hear somebody who relates to you what the Bible says, that carries authority. When he misinterprets what the Bible says, that is his authority and that is not the Word of God speaking. The silver-tongued preachers are using biblical language about Heaven to teach the doctrines of Hell. Such deceivers are well paid by Christians who are untaught in doctrine and who in effect, say, 'sock it to me.'

**Defense Against False Teachers**

So, your only defense as a believer against these carnal false teachers is a deep knowledge of doctrine. We conclude this morning by summarizing this with the statement the apostle Paul made in 2 Timothy 3. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul says concerning caution about these very false teachers, of which he closes the Book of Romans: 2 Timothy 3 Paul says, "But realize this, that in the last days, difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money." And by the way, did you see that "lovers of self?" We hear a lot about self-love today. That is a very dangerous concept. I want you to notice what comes from self-love. Paul says, 'men will be taught to be zeroed in on loving themselves rather than zeroed in on loving the Lord. If you love God, you will have esteem for yourself. But if your focus is to love yourself, here's what happens. You become [continuing in 2 Timothy 3:2] "lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres [These, by the way, were two true believers in Moses time. Just as Jannes and Jambres] opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith. [So, even a believer preacher can become a con man. You must remember that. Verse 9] But they will not make further progress for their folly will be obvious to all, as also that of those two came to be. But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me! And indeed all who desire to live Godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Paul says, 'Watch out for the con men, watch out for their deceptive teachings. Watch out for their manipulations of your mind and your body. And remember that your anchor point, and that's what he ends up on, is the Word of God.

Doctrine is your life. You detach yourself from doctrine and your life is at hazard with every conman that comes down the road.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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