

Some time ago a minister called our office, very disturbed. He said he preaches holiness and the crucified life in his church, and he did seem to have a true shepherd's heart. Then he said that some of his church members had attended some kind of special seminar - and they had come home ready to leave his congregation.

They told him, "God has brought us into a new revelation that has changed our lives. We heard things we've never heard before. We thought we were saved before, but now we know we weren't. Everything we believed about the end times was wrong. We have seen new truth.

"Pastor, you and your church are in error. Your people aren't even saved! You think you preach holiness, but we've discovered what true holiness is. We've found something new!"

Today, that same group of people does not even attend church anymore, because they can't find anyone to take them "deeper." Instead, they feed off some teaching tapes.

Their pastor told me something I've been hearing from churches all over the nation. He said, "What is going on? There are so many new, strange doctrines, so many teachers with new "revelation." And they all seem to have a number of Scriptures to back them up. No one is discerning what is of God and what is of Satan, what is foolishness and what is righteousness. Our people are getting confused."

He was so right! New doctrines, new revelations and new gospels are springing up almost daily. And it's going to get much worse. The Bible clearly warns that in the last days strange doctrines will come

# Another Jesus, Another Spirit, Another Gospel

forth - introducing another Jesus, another Spirit, another gospel!

The apostle Paul called together the elders of the church at Ephesus, and his final words to these beloved saints were: *"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."* (ACTS 20:29-30).

The whole time Paul ministered to the churches he had established, he harbored a fear that would last to his dying day. It is a fear any good shepherd must have in him, and it was never out of Paul's mind ("*...by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*" (ACTS 20:31)). It was the fear of false teachers coming in to deceive.

Paul said to the Corinthians, *"I am jealous over you with godly jealousy..."* (2.COR 11:2). Yet he was not talking about someone stealing his sheep. He wasn't saying, "Hey, these sheep are mine! I'm their teacher - they're under my authority." No, rather, Paul was indignant thinking that some teachers would come between his disciples and their devotion to Jesus: *"...for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste (pure) virgin to Christ."*

Paul said he had one purpose, one goal, one desire - and it is the same desire all true shepherds must have: to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and present every spiritual child to Him pure, unspotted, holy and righteous, rooted and grounded in the Word. It is to see them stand before His throne with assurance, knowing you have given them the whole counsel of God... that they were not tossed about by every wind and wave of doctrine, not deceived by doctrines of demons... that they came through every test and trial with the Word of God hidden in their hearts!

Beloved, my greatest joy in glory - along with Paul and every true minister of God - will be to hear each of your names called by the Lord, see you stand before Him overflowing with devotion and humility, and hear Him say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

That truly is one desire of my heart. And that is why I preach with fire and zeal. If Paul were alive today and preaching from the pulpit of Times Square Church, he would say the same thing to us tearfully every time he spoke: "Beware! An invasion is coming! False teachers and false doctrines will bombard you from all sides. They will introduce you to another Christ. They will not be of the Holy Spirit, but of another spirit. And it

will not be the true gospel - it will be another."

Paul confessed to a fear he had about them: *"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."* (2.COR 11:3). Paul knew that the Corinthians were too susceptible to false teachers. He was saying, "You are too open, too willing to listen, too anxious to hear something new!"

So often, a good-hearted, solid Christian will hand me a tape and say, "You've got to hear this teacher. The message is incredible, powerful! Everybody's talking about it." So I listen. And it sounds pretty good - anointed, new and fresh. But then the Spirit begins to churn inside me.

Does this ever happen with you? As you listen, you feel an uneasiness - so you wait, and you keep listening. You say, "I don't hear anything wrong yet. But something does not sound right." And if you stay with it, suddenly, there it is - error. Gross, total error - frightful heresy! Unscriptural interpretations, fanciful dreams, man's own ideas, as if a mystery is being unlocked. But it does not line up with God's Word.

Paul was amazed by how easily some of the Galatians were swayed: *"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let them be accursed."* (GAL 1:6-8).

Paul was saying, "Don't be so gentlemanly and ladylike about it. If it's not the gospel you heard from me, it's not of God. It's accursed, rotten, deadly. It is serious business, and it will trouble you if you get caught up in it. So don't take it lightly. Don't bear with it, and don't be nice about it. Let the one who preaches it be accursed!"

It doesn't matter if an angel appears and tells you the message is of God. It doesn't matter if you and your friends "discern" that it's all

right. The Bible makes it plain: If it does not line up with Paul's gospel, it is of Satan, "accursed."

### **How Shall We Know Then What is the True Gospel, and What is Accursed?**

Let me say first that even the most demonic false teachers begin with warnings of false doctrine. They loudly and strongly warn against getting caught up in something unlike Christ. Nearly every false teacher I've heard sounds off the loudest about false doctrine, then proceeds to preach what is false. They spend much time persuading their hearers they are unlike false teachers - yet they're setting them up to hear their message.

Doctrine is not right simply because the teacher appears to be holy, good, pious and sincere. Throughout church history the most damaging heresies have been taught by men who were considered good and sincere. That makes false doctrine all the more dangerous. Many a Christian has said, "But he is such a good man, so sober, so sincere, so loving." Indeed, a Christ-centered teacher will be holy, sober and sincere - but the devil's "angels of light" will appear to be too. They will come as messengers of righteousness, truth and revelation.

Paul says Satan tries to deceive us, just as he deceived Eve in the garden. He uses the same craftiness, the same deception: *"I fear, lest... as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted..."* (2.COR 11:3).

Nothing has changed since then! The false gospel Satan introduced to Eve is the same gospel he promotes today - and all false gospels have the same traits in common. God did not leave this important matter to guesswork. He has made it very clear, and there are absolute clues to watch for, which expose the teaching as false:

#### **1. Any Teaching that Undermines the Fear of God is Accursed - Of the Devil!**

All false teachers have this one message in common: "Relax, God can't be that hard. He won't hurt you - He loves you. A loving God

wants you to enjoy life." The enemy's trick is to move you away from the awesome reverence and fear of a holy God who judges sin. All false doctrine has this one aim - to undermine the fear of God in you.

Only the powerful, absolute fear of God kept Adam and Eve from disobeying Him. It was not their love for God, nor their daily communion. It was this: *"And the LORD God commanded the man... thou shall not eat of it* (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil): *for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* (GEN 2:16-17).

But Satan came with a smooth message: *"Ye shall not surely die..."* (GEN 3:4). This was a total perversion of the truth - another gospel! Yet it was just what Eve wanted to hear. You see, something inside her resisted God's commandment. The Lord's restriction seemed too much of a yoke, and she chafed under it.

Satan knew it was in Eve, and he began to undermine the fear of God in her immediately: "Did God really say this? God is not like that. You have the wrong concept of Him. Do you think He will deny you knowledge and wisdom, when He Himself is Knowledge and Wisdom? What kind of a God do you think He is? You surely will not die!"

You may sit under strong preaching that seems like a heavy yoke. You may chafe under it and say, "I don't like it!" But don't be deceived: It is the very thing that brings you freedom, peace and joy. Yet still you cry out within, "I can't serve God this way. I want liberty!"

There is a teaching currently circulating in the charismatic movement about a new liberty. It says, "Come sing and shout and speak in tongues - and then go out and live like the devil!" That isn't freedom. It's satan saying, "You shall not die. God is not hard. He's too loving, too merciful." Satan found a gospel that suited the lust of Eve's flesh - and he'll find one to suit the itching ears of restless Christians!

I've heard from godly, heartbroken youth pastors who have been fired from their churches or are quitting.

They preach holiness and the fear of God to the teenagers, but the pastors and parents are complaining that they bring a bondage to the youth: "We don't want you preaching that stuff to our kids." These teenagers (some of whom are preacher's kids) are living in total rebellion. They are disrespectful, fooling their parents, lusting after the world. And the messages about holiness and the fear of God are shaking these kids up because they've never heard it before.

We have raised an entire generation that is totally devoid of the fear of God. They have never known anything about judgement. They've always had everything they've wanted. They say, "We want rock-and-roll," and their parents say, "Don't upset them. Bring rock-and-roll into the church and give it Christian lyrics." Or, "They're going to have sex anyway, so let's give them protection."

These youth have never known God's fear, because pastors and parents have made God out to be the great appeaser in the sky. Only a handful of Christian youth today walk in holiness. Why? Because pastors are too weak to preach the gospel in the pulpit - and because parents are living double lives, and their kids know it!

Some Christians have written to me, "Brother Dave, you preach so hard. Do you preach that way all the time in your church? Do the people take it?"

My answer is this: We are called to preach the Word with such power and authority that it will produce a constant fear of God in every hearer. Those who won't forsake their pet sins won't stay, because they will be offended. They will turn away their ears from the truth and will seek out teachers to cater to their lusts (see 2. Timothy 4:1-4).

God's Word says, "...by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil." (PROV 16:6). Here is what I believe a true gospel message must produce in us:

- 1) A hatred for sin that allows no excuses or alibis.
- 2) A conviction for all spiritual laziness and compromise.

- 3) An inner knowledge that God does not wink at our sins.
- 4) A conviction that we will reap what we sow.
- 5) A righteous, holy fear of God.
- 6) A confidence that He will deliver us from every sin we hate and resist.

Are you uncertain or unconvinced about the need to walk in the fear of God? To end that once and for all, see Isaiah 11:1-3. This passage prophesied about One on whom the Spirit of the Lord would rest - One who would be given "*quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.*" This passage is talking about Jesus! And if Jesus walked in the fear of the Father and delighted in it, so much more should we!

Beware of any message that breaks conviction for sin, that produces a spirit of non-vigilance, that eases you back softly and whispers, "All is well." All such tranquilizers are false gospels!

## 2. Beware of Any Gospel That Diverts You From Single-Minded Devotion to Jesus Christ.

Paul solemnly warns us that satan will transform himself into an angel of light - that he will raise up his own false teachers, all of them posing as ministers of righteousness.

Light represents truth, gospel, revelation. Satan will come using the lovely name of Jesus, and he will attempt to deceive even the elect: "*...transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*" (2.COR 11:13). Think of the terror of such a thing! To face the last days under the power of false apostles, embracing a doctrine of the devil, being under the control of a false spirit.

How could such a thing happen? How could anyone sit under the kind of perverted gospel Paul describes and not know it? There is only one way - by refusing to forsake lust and continuing to walk in blatant disobedience. Lust is the magnet that draws a person to false apostles. I can promise you, if you hang onto your lust, you'll come under false doctrine. It's inevitable - you'll find it, and it will

find you. And you'll be so blind, you won't know it.

In the 18th century, another gospel was introduced called antinomianism, meaning "anti-law". This gospel is with us today, and it is stronger than ever. It undermines the fear of God by suggesting that once you believe, you can sin and never be damned, because Jesus has covered it all.

Dr. Tobias Crisp was one of the teachers of this new doctrine, which swept through Germany. It's proponents used Jesus' name as a by-word: "There is much talk about grace and heart-searching, but give me Christ! I seek not for promises, but Christ! I seek not for sanctification, but Christ! Don't talk of meditation or duty - tell me of Christ!"

It sounds like pure devotion to Christ - a gospel that's centered on Jesus. But Jesus Himself tells us that not all who say, "Lord, Lord," will enter into His kingdom. Not everyone who throws around the name of Jesus will be preaching the true gospel.

The doctrine of antinomianism is still being preached today, and the charismatic movement is falling for it hook, line and sinker. Listen to the rest of this doctrine:

"A believer may be assured of pardon as soon as he commits one sin, even adultery or murder. God does no longer stand displeased though a believer do sin often. There is no sin a believer can commit that can cause him any hurt - therefore there is no reason to fear sin. Sin is dead and has no more terror. If we tell believers they must walk holy and do good works or God will be angry with them, we abuse the Scriptures. We are then lying in God's face. God has done everything in Christ - there is nothing to fear!"

It is as though the Christians who embrace this doctrine are sitting in some dark pit, waiting for Jesus to come along. They're saying, "Lord, You know where I am. If You love me, come pick me up out of here." No! The Bible commands us to resist the devil, and he will flee from you!

We've made Christians appear to be a bunch of helpless cripples -

no power or authority, bound by sinful habits, waiting around for a miraculous deliverance. There is no holy stirring against sin, no fear of God.

### 3. There Can Be No Devotion to Christ Without a Walk of Holiness.

This is how all doctrine must be judged: Does it conform you into the likeness of Jesus Christ? You can't call a gospel pure simply because the teacher preaches against sin, or because Christ is referred to often. The New Age movement speaks much of the Christ Spirit.

I have heard reprobate preachers scream the name of Jesus into a microphone, thundering against homosexuality, drugs and the sins of society. But the longer I listened, the more I realized: This man is not really broken. His messages are not convicting. He's talking about someone else's sin, not his own. Such preachers play to the crowd, whipping up enthusiasm. They have no real conviction, no consuming desire to conform the people to the image of Christ. Christians love to go to meetings where they hear a preacher talk about the absence of prayer in schools. Perhaps he'll mention something about covetousness, pride and adultery, the things that are in our own hearts. But then out comes the soothing, relaxing word. And once the confidence is gained, the fear of God is undermined.

There is one sure test for true holiness preaching. It is found in 2. Timothy 2:19: "*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth that name of Christ depart from iniquity.*"

I fell, as Paul must have, a heart-wrenching cry to warn God's people of what is coming. There

are great theological wars ahead. The whole charismatic movement will be divided into different camps, rallying behind their doctrines, teachers and books, accusing each other of error and false prophecy. And all will believe they are defending the faith!

They won't be fighting the devil, because they'll be too busy calling each other heretics. It will be a time of great confusion, and unlearned Christians won't know who to believe.

Beloved, I want to fight the real enemy. And that enemy is out on the streets - and in our own hearts! I'm not going to argue over prophecy. I want to stand with my brother or sister who walks in the fear of God and whose heart is given in pure devotion to Jesus Christ.

We must get our eyes off teachers and evangelists, and become students of God's Word. "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" (2.TIM 2:15). Don't look for an "approved" pastor or evangelist. You'll go to one man after another, and they'll all fail you, until finally you'll lose hope. Get your eyes off all preachers and onto Jesus Christ!

### 4. The True Gospel is Concerned With Your Heart - for Out of It Come the Issues of Life!

The Pharisees saw some of the Lord's disciples eating bread with unwashed hands, and "*they found fault*" (MK 7:2). "*For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the traditions of the elders.*" (verse 3).

These men asked Jesus why His disciples didn't walk in this kind of "holiness." Yet theirs was only a ceremonial tradition. It was all outward, having only to do with acts of the flesh. Jesus answered

them, "*Well hath (Isaiah) prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me*" (verse 6). Jesus said, in essence, "Your teaching is all in vain. It doesn't change your heart. It's all show, words, phony deeds!"

He's saying to us in this, "If a gospel gives me nothing but lip service and doesn't deal with the heart, don't waste time with it. True doctrine has to get to the issues of the heart." Jesus exposes the problem with all false gospels: They do not reach what defiles the man - they do not convict or change the heart. They offer a form of godliness, with no heart. "*But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man*" (MATT 15:18).

Paul said, "*...follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*" (2.TIM 2:22). Don't tell me about the miracles in your church - the praise, worship, or how well the pastor preaches. No - tell me about a people who call on God out of a pure heart! Tell me that, though they've not yet arrived, they are being provoked in that direction. They're allowing God to search and try their hearts, to expose their sinful attitudes.

That's the true gospel of Jesus. It's a gospel that convicts the heart, deals with the heart and changes the heart! Is this the gospel being preached to you? Does it convict you of those inner, hidden sins? evil thoughts? adultery? fornication? murder? stealing? covetousness? wickedness? pride? foolishness?

If not, then find and stay in a church with a people where your heart is exposed, shaken - and changed for the glory of Christ.

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