

Sunday, May 29, 2005

The Deceitfulness of False Teachers

Part Two.

By Nick Bibile

Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Let us continue where we stopped before. Notice on verse 14 it gives the picture of children not mature Christians but children who are not strong but feeble and weak are tossed to and from by false doctrines so they will be deceived. In the physical sense if children are weak they get sick and can even die. The reason why they are weak is as they don't get good food and lack of exercise, good vitamins. In the spiritual sense it is the same thing. The word of God is our spiritual food and the living water if we are not taught and given good spiritual food the church will become weak in doctrine and can be gullible to follow all kinds of false doctrines. The church may look good in their buildings and programs and may have a lot of people with an outward form of worship but inwardly they are weak, sickly as they are not strong in good doctrine.

Last time we saw more from a doctrinal and a scriptural perspective and this time we are going to see more from a practical perspective. One thing we need to remember that we need to always compare the modern church to the New Testament and the reformation that brought the church back to the basics, as they expounded the sovereignty of God and his holiness, the sinfulness of man and the work of the mediator. They confirmed that the scripture has the ultimate authority above anything else.

The gospel, the doctrines of the Bible and its truth will remain always the same and will not change even in this modern times, this is a fundamental rule we need to understand. Our Lord confirmed it by saying the following.

Lu 21:33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

The word of God is from God and it's from heaven and it's holy without any defect or blemish therefore we cannot add any thing from this earth, meaning any human wisdom, any human ideas, any new things that man has discovered to the word of God.

Col 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Today we are living in days where people don't want to hear the truth, they don't want to hear of sin, the wrath of God, his justice and holiness but they want to hear what pleases them. Remember the story in the Old Testament when Jehoshaphat the king of Judah called Micaiah the prophet to prophecy to the king of Israel. This is what the prophet Micaiah said to the King.

1Ki 22:14 As the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak.

But the king Jehoshaphat wanted to hear what he liked to hear, and as we see the king's reply later as he said, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? (Verse 18)

People like pragmatism. What is pragmatism? We say the word be pragmatic, the word pragmatism is to solve the problem in the practical way not going to the root of the problem but an easy fix.

Today pragmatism has become a measuring rod to evaluate church growth. What I mean is, the church is measured upon the size of the congregation and not upon the faithfulness to the Lord. People look at the building of the church the size of the church, the equipments in the church, the outward fancy appearance of the church and this is not from the spirit of God but from the flesh. We see majority of the church saying the times have changed, how can we preach the gospel to those young people in the world unless we bring some entertainment to them along with the gospel.

Pragmatism is sweeping through the modern church through drama, worldly music, entertainment, the pastor using humor and jokes to make the people entertained. I was listening to a well known church pastor who was going through scripture by scripture sermon where the topic was fasting but he amused his audience with laughter as half of his sermon was illustrated on a peanut butter and jelly sandwich! But the congregation was roaring in laughter! Yes there are many preachers today who want to amuse the ears of the hearers than to profit their souls. Pragmatism says don't pay priority to the doctrines in the Bible but to the needs of the people. Here is an interview on Larry King show with Robert Schuler.

Larry King: "Reverend Schuler, how did you come to Pastor Rick Warren, whose book 'The Purpose-Driven Life,' the major best seller, was referred to?"

Robert Schuler: "How did I come to..."

Larry King: "Yes, how..."

Robert Schuller: "Well, about 38-years-ago, I founded an institute for successful church leadership. And I was trying to tell pastors that they should focus on the needs of people. Focus on the hurts of human beings. Be a mission, don't just be a church peddling your own doctrine. But really try to be a place where the love of God, and the love of Jesus Christ come through. And he went for a few years, and said, apparently, it impacted him.

We can see how the word of God is mingled with humanism, human efforts the result is religion.

In an interview with Time Magazine March 29, 2004, Rick Warren has this to say, "I'm translating the truth into 21st century language, and evidently a lot of people are listening." He's convinced that the nation is on the verge of a spiritual awakening, as people seek fulfillment they don't get in fast-track jobs and can't buy with gold cards. "The culture is asking, 'How do I fill this hole in my heart?'" He says. "I think religion has the answer."

Religion does not have the answer it is the Lord Jesus Christ who has the answer, here we see again Rick Warren's approach in man centered and not God centered.

In Rick Warren's article of the March 2005 Ladies home Journal. Here is a sampling of this very unbiblical and harmful advice that is given to unbelievers:

"Learn To Love Yourself! Self-esteem still wobbly after all these years? These five simple truths will show you that you don't need to be perfect to be priceless....Accept yourself...God accepts us unconditionally (Remember he's talking to unbelievers)...Love yourself...Be true to yourself...Forgive yourself...Believe in yourself...You can believe what others say about you, or you can believe in yourself as does God, who says you are truly acceptable, lovable, valuable and capable," Ladies Home Journal March 2005, page 36.

But what does the Bible say:

2Ti 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

2Ti 3:4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

This is called the seeker sensitive movement. It means to make the worship services more attractive to the people of the world so they can bring a lot of unbelievers to the church and they will be comfortable. God is not regarded as the holy God but the center of worship is amusement and entertainment mingled with the Bible. This movement is sweeping all across the world. When I was a missionary to the Philippines in the poor areas most pastors said if they have money they will buy a lot of musical instruments to attract the unbelievers to the church, yes it has now penetrated all over the world. The authors of this movement are Rick Warren, Robert Schuller, Bill Hybels and host of others. They use all the hi-tech entertainment gimmicks to promote church growth instead of preaching the true gospel which convicts and pierce the sinner's heart. But we see the church has come down to the level of the world.

Charles Spurgeon said in his time the following.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). That is clear enough. So it would have been if He had added, "And provide amusement for those who do not relish the gospel." No such words, however, are to be found. (Charles Spurgeon)

"Dear friends, we know that souls are not won by music, if they were it would be time for preachers to give way to opera singers."

(Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Volume 18, page 239)

Then again, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers .., for the work of the ministry" (Eph. 4:11-12). Where do entertainers come in? The Holy Spirit is silent concerning them. Were the prophets persecuted because they amused the people or because they refused? The concert has no martyr roll. (Charles Spurgeon)

I would have 5 people who are truly saved and committed to the Lord than having 20,000 worldly people in the church. Yes, there is no short cut to evangelism but witnessing the true gospel is the only way a sinner can be saved. There is no short cut to church growth but preaching the word of God should be the priority and the focus, the service should be God centered, fearing the awesome majesty of God in his holiness and loving God through Jesus Christ on what he had done for sinners like us.

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers...Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Acts 2:42, 47

The church is sanctified by the Lord and it should be separated to serve God not conforming to the world.

Ro 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Jas 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

1Jo 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

God does not need your help but we need all the help from God as the ministry is not done by human wisdom but by the power of God.

Zec 4:5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, **Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.**

Learn a lesson from Apostle Paul as he realized the power is not in him but in the word of God and human pride and boasting not included in the word of God.

2Co 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of

God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.

8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:

9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

10 For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

11 Let such a one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present.

12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

13 But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ:

15 Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labors; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly.

We see the modern churches have abandoned the biblical preaching on God's holiness, sin, justice and the wrath of God. Instead they focus on the needs of humanity, relationship problems, and depressions and how to live a prosperous life etc., the worldly pragmatic way of thinking promises bigger churches and more people but in reality it stinks in the nostrils of God. The popularity and the majority are not always right but God's way is always the minority the un-popular way to the flesh and the world.

Mt 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

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