

Series: Things That Become Sound Doctrine

DECEIVE THE HEARTS OF THE SIMPLE

2 JOHN 1:10; ROMANS 16:17-20

Text: 2 John 1:10; Romans 16:18

2 John 1:10

¹⁰ *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:*

Romans 16:18

¹⁸ *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

Introduction:

The word heresy sounds outdated nowadays. Some believe that is reeks of arrogance, because to accuse someone of heresy implies that I am right and he is seriously wrong.

It also assumes that there is such a thing as definable truth and error in the spiritual realm.

Some today believe that truth is determined by what they this is right or wrong, but may we understand that

truth is truth regardless of what we may accept as truth.

Right is right and wrong is wrong.

But before we put *heresy* in the museum as a relic from the past, we need to think carefully. There is one huge factor that renders *heresy* a valid concept, namely, the fact that *God is* and that He has revealed Himself to us through His written Word.

Since God exists, not as a projection of men's minds, but as the eternal Creator of the universe, then He is the ultimate and final standard of truth.

Since He has spoken to us in His Word, then as the Lord said, His Word is truth.

John 17:17

¹⁷ *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

Not long after the Lord founded the church and empowered it on the day of Pentecost people have desired to either destroy the church or see it shaped to their own will.

This should come as no surprise for the Lord Himself told us that this would happen.

Note Matthew 7:15:

Matthew 7:15

¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Even in the early days of the fledgling church, the Apostle Paul said this:

Acts 20:29-30

²⁹ For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

There are still those today within and without the church who work against the plan of God and seek to mold the church to their likeness.

I would like to share some thoughts today and how to deal with those who deceive the hearts of the simple.

Note:

Sermon Content:

1. THE DEEDS OF THESE INDIVIDUALS

Paul tells us that there are some sure signs associated with these individuals.

Remember again what the Lord said,

Matthew 7:20

²⁰ *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

Notice:

A. These People Are Divisive (vs. 17)

Romans 16:17

¹⁷ *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause **divisions and offences** contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

Paul uses two words here to describe these individuals.

The first word is divisions.

This word means to splinter or cause dissensions.

The second word is offences.

This word means to lay a trap or snare in the path of another to cause them to stumble.

We get our word “scandal” from this word.

How do they do this? By deviating from the Word of God!

They come in and begin to teach doctrines contrary to what the Bible says.

They twist the word of God to teach doctrines that are not biblical and thereby lead people astray.

They teach doctrines that resemble what one finds in the Bible.

But, there are subtle differences! Differences that make all the difference!

This is the tactic of the cults in our world.

They teach doctrines that, on the surface, appear to be biblical and right, but which are, in truth, evil.

Illustration:

There are some chemicals that look and smell just like water. But, if they are drunk like water, they will cause death. You had better know the difference.

So it is in the church.

Some things sound good on the surface, but you have better be so familiar with the truth so that you can tell the difference.

False doctrine will divide the church and send souls to Hell!

These doctrines attract some and before long, there is a division in the church.

Satan love to introduce something into the life of a church that will divide the flock, then he can cause massive damage in the midst of God's people.

Not only are the divisive but:

B. They Are Dishonest (vs. 18)

Romans 16:18

¹⁸ For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

They don't care about the church, only about themselves – their power and their personal gain.

Most of these people have never been saved.

These people love to gather a following.

They want to be in a position of leadership and they crave the preeminence.

Paul mentions these type of people in Philippians.

Note Philippians 3:18-19

Philippians 3:18-19

¹⁸ (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

He tells us that these individuals are “Enemies of the cross of Christ.”

He also says that they are living for themselves and for this world. These people are to be avoided!

Not only are these people Divisive and Dishonest but also:

C. They Are Deceptive (vs. 18b)

Romans 16:18

¹⁸ *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches **deceive the hearts of the simple.***

These people have a way with words and they use their ability to twist the truth they deceive the "simple."

The word "simple" does not refer to stupid people.

The word means "Fearing no evil from others, distrusting no one."

It refers to believers who have not matured enough to know that everything that sounds good isn't always good.

Many young believers are so eager to learn about the Lord and the Word of God that they are easy marks for the cults and other false teachers.

They haven't grown deep enough in the things of God to be able to recognize a counterfeit when it appears before them.

Understand:

There is no substitute for a steady diet of the things of God to mature an individual and protect you against the deceptive tactics of the false teachers.

We have considered “The Deeds of these Individuals, note secondly:

2. THE DIRECTIONS FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS (vs. 17)

Romans 16:17

¹⁷ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Notice:

A. They Are to Be Examined

We are told to “mark” them

This is the same word we get our word “scope”

It means to look at, observe, and contemplate, to fix one’s eyes and attention upon someone or something.

The idea here is that we are to watch the enemy lest he slip in on us and cause problems in the church. We are to keep our eyes open against those who would infiltrate the church!

May we keep our eyes open for those who would seek to hinder the work of God by teaching false doctrine or by hindering God's work through trouble!

Not only are they to be Examined but also:

B. They Are to Be Excluded (vs. 17)

Romans 16:17

*¹⁷ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **avoid them.***

The second command is very clear.

We are to avoid them.

We are to have no fellowship with those who would cause trouble or spread false doctrine.

This brings a couple of things to mind.

- First, deals with Communication

2 Timothy 2:16

¹⁶ But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

- Second, deals with Communion

2 John 1:10-11

¹⁰ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹ For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Just as we would never open the door of our home and allow a rattlesnake in, so we should never allow a false teacher to enter the home or the church!

We have considered “The Deeds of these Individuals, and “The Directions For These Individuals note thirdly:

3. THE DEFENSE AGAINST THESE INDIVIDUALS (VS. 19)

Romans 16:19

¹⁹ For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

We are given three characteristics in this verse which should be true in your life and mine.

These things will help us better able stand and false teaching.

Notice:

A. Be Committed to God's Word

Romans 16:19

¹⁹ For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

Note the word "obedience."

This is referring to their obedience to the commandment of the Word of God.

The surest defense against intrusions by false teachers who would divide the church is a congregation that has grown strong in the Word of God!

Our lives should be marked by a commitment to the Word of God!

We should:

- Listen To It
- Learn It
- Live It

Notice we should be “Committed to God’s Word” but also we should:

B. Be Christ-like Toward Good Works

Romans 16:19

*¹⁹ For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you **wise unto that which is good**, and simple concerning evil.*

The word wise means skilled.

We are to be skilled in good living.

There is only one way to become skilled at anything.

That is to practice.

The more you do something, the better at it you get.

When we learn to walk like the Lord walked, we will not be an easy mark for the false teachers!

Notice we should be “Committed to God’s Word” and Christ-like Toward Good Works but also we should:

C. Be Child-like Toward Guilty Ways

Romans 16:19

*¹⁹ For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and **simple concerning evil.***

This carries the idea of being naive or of being innocent. It means "free from guile, untainted by evil." It speaks of a person who has not tasted of the fruits of the world.

Close:

Understand:

- We must be on guard to the dangers without.

These false teachers originally arose from within the churches, but they had left, showing their true colors.

1 John 2:19

¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

- We must be realistic about the realist about the deceptive nature of heresy.

2 John 1:7

⁷ For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

- We must be careful not to encourage false teachers

2 John 1:10-11

¹⁰ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹ For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

We must maintain fellowship with true believers

2 John 1:12-13

¹² Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. ¹³ The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

The passage in Romans closes with a prayer for grace.

Note Romans 16:20:

Romans 16:20

²⁰ And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

May we also pray for wisdom and discernment.