

SOME FOES TO AVOID

ROMANS 16:17-20

Text: Romans 16:17

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

Introduction:

As Paul comes to the end of the book of Romans, he concludes it with a list of names that is rather long. In fact, there are 35 names mentioned in these verses. He also addresses two different households and at least three churches. Many people might read this list and conclude that there is nothing of value contained here. But, the truth is far different.

Last week we looked at the “Friends To Greet. This week Paul draws attention to “Some Foes To Avoid”

Often those that we consider should be avoided are not the same individuals that God’s Word instructs us to avoid.

We are instructed here to avoid those who cause strife in the church, and walk contrary to sound doctrine.

We instructed to mark them.

The Lord warned us concerning these individuals as well.

Matthew 7:15

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

Matthew 16:6

⁶ Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Luke 12:1

¹ In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Notice this evening those that the Bible tells us to mark and avoid.

1. THE DEEDS OF THE TROUBLE MAKERS

A. They 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 –

Division = to splinter or cause dissension

Offenses = to lay a trap or snare in the path of another to cause them to stumble. We get our word scandal from this word.

- Watch out for people who possess a divisive spirit! Watch out for those who would teach things contrary to the truth of the Bible.

B. They Are Driven (vs. 18)

Romans 16:18

¹⁸For 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.

- The master they serve is not our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Though they call themselves Christians, they do not serve Christ; do not aim at his glory, promote his interest, or do his will, whatever they may pretend to be doing.
- There are many who call Christ Master and Lord, but are far from serving him!
- They serve their own belly - their carnal, sensual, secular interests.

- It's self that they're pleasing; pride, ambition, covetousness, luxury, lasciviousness.
- Their God is their belly
- These people may pretend to have pure motives and the good of the church at heart, but there are two problems:
 1. They don't care about the church only about themselves, their power, and their personal gain. These people love to have a following. They want to be in a position of leadership and they crave prosperity.
 2. Most are not even saved.

Paul mentions this kind of person again in Philippians.

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.)

C. They Are Deceptive (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.

- These people have a way with words and they use their ability to twist the truth and deceive the simple.
- The word simple doesn't mean stupid but rather fearing no evil from others, distrusting no one.

2. THE DIRECTIONS REGARDING THE TROUBLEMAKERS

A. They Are to be Examined (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 the words “mark them.”
- This word means: to take aim at. It is the same word that we get our word scope from. It literally means to put the “Cross Hairs” upon.

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.

Paul's second command is very clear. He says that we are to avoid them.

3. THE DEFENSE AGAINST THE TROUBLE MAKERS

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.

Paul gives us three things that will help us be better able to stand against this trouble and these trouble makers when they come.

A. Be Committed to God's Word

We should:

- Listen to it
- Learn it
- Live it

B. Be Christ-like – “Wise unto that which is good”

C. Be Child-like – “Simple concerning evil”

This carries the idea of being naive or being innocent.

It means free from guile or untainted by evil.

4. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TROUBLE MAKER

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.

All trouble makers receive their energy from one source: “Satan.”

Paul closes his thoughts by letting us know that there is coming a day when the father of all troublemakers will be destroyed.

A. Satan Will Be Vanquished – “Bruised”

The word bruise means to shatter or to smash.

Revelation 20:1-10

¹ And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and

Satan, and bound him a thousand years, ³ And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. ⁷ And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, ⁸ And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

B. Saints Will Be Victorious – “Under Your Feet”

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.

Close:

Paul concludes this warning and instructions with a prayer for grace.

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.

We need grace to make it day by day. If we are going to take our stand for Jesus Christ against these things and people then we need His grace.

Thank God, His Grace is sufficient for anything that we me ever face.

2 Corinthians 12:9

⁹ And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.