

"Closing Remarks"

Part 7

Romans 15:14-16:27

Introduction: Last week in our study of Romans we started to look at a warning which Paul gave to the believers at Rome. It was a warning concerning false teachers.

Notice Romans 16:17

This warning echoes the warning which Paul gave to the believers at Ephesus.

Acts 20:29-31

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.

³¹ Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Now, it would be easy for us to rush over the verses here in Romans 16 concerning the warning but in so doing we would miss Truth that is vital to us in this day in which we live in.

1 Timothy 4:1-3

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

³ Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

Paul warned Timothy of false teachers in the "LATTER TIMES" and let me remind you that we are living in the latter times. Therefore, this warning in Romans 16 certainly pertains to our lives today.

➤ **Watch for Deceivers and Dividers**

Notice Romans 16:17 again.

There are two commands in this verse that we MUST consider closely.

1. Mark those who teach contrary doctrine which will cause divisions and offences.

The word "mark" is in the present tense which means this is something that needs to be done all the time. To "mark" them means to "watch closely". It actually has the idea of scrutinizing false teachers or watching them closely.

Now let us understand this is not permission to watch others very closely waiting for them to make a mistake or to say something that is not correct. That is what people involved in legalism do. They watch other believers with a judgmental eye. Jesus warned about doing this on the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:1-5

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

² For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

³ And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

⁴ Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

⁵ Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Paul is not commanding his readers to watch with a critical eye. He is telling them and us to keep an eye out for people who teach that which is contrary to the Bible.

2. Avoid those who teach the contrary doctrine.

Out of the two commands this would be the one to place the most emphasis upon. We are to AVOID those who teach false doctrine. Many have not heeded this command and they have dug into the false teachings and they have exposed themselves to the false doctrine and the end result has been tragic. Many have been tossed to and fro and have been carried about by the false doctrines. Many of these believers have thought they were strong enough to stand against the false teachings only instead to be carried away with them.

1 Corinthians 10:12

¹² Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

We must be very cautious to mark those who teach false doctrine and then avoid them and their teachings.

Notice the words of Newell;

"Satan has deceived some good preachers into "personally investigating evil people and conditions, " in order to "preach against them"; but God says, "The things that are done of them in secret, it is a shame even to speak of." Preach the Word, for therein will be found abundant discoveries of evil and denunciations thereof; but, being the Word of God, it is holy, and may safely be used in exposing evil. It is like the sunshine that lights up the foulest alley without being itself defiled! Don't go down the alley "personally, " lifting the lids of their garbage-cans; or you will smell of it!"

Many ministers have taken the walk down the dark alley lifting the lids of the garbage cans and in so doing they have been swept up by theological error. They did not lose their salvation, but they crippled their ministry. They have had their usefulness for the Lord severely damaged and some to the point of destruction, they are no longer useful.

We must avoid those who teach false doctrine. We must turn away from them. Let me share the words of Newell again on this thought;

"The inability to turn resolutely and holily away from false teachers and evil workers, is a mark of spiritual ill-health, decadence, and possibly of the state of spiritual death itself! Mad dogs are shot; infectious diseases are quarantined; but evil teachers who would divide to their destruction and draw away the saints with teaching contrary to the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles are everywhere tolerated! How ghastly and ruinous is this false toleration! Let us take heed lest we "partake in the evil deeds" of such evil workers."

The Apostle John addressed the subject of false teachings in 2 John.

2 John 1:9-11

⁹ Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

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.

Let us notice what Solomon wrote in Proverbs concerning our responsibility.

Proverbs 4:23

²³ Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Notice the words of an unnamed writer;

"Men will only guard what is valuable. There are not many guards posted at the local city dump, but there are armed guards and security measures at the bank or the expensive jewelry store, because of the great value in these places. This basic human principle says something about God's view of the heart. He knows that the heart is of great value to Him and to the one who possesses it. And thus the command to watch our heart as one would the wealthiest bank in the world. The integrity and vitality of our spiritual lives depend on it!"

One of the ways to KEEP our hearts with all diligence is to avoid false teachings. Now it is very important to understand that Satan has many false teachers who serve his purpose and some of them are actually believers who have been swept away with the false doctrines.

2 Peter 2:1-2

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

² And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

One of the places where these false teachers have been planted by Satan is in the Bible Colleges and this should be of no surprise because if he can get the young people to buy into the false teaching then he knows they will go out into the churches where they will poison many others.

Illustration by M. R. De Haan;

"How To Catch A Rat - My grandson's chicken coop was invaded by rats. Attracted by the feed, they had moved in. He asked for my help and we set out a couple of traps. After a week, though, we had not caught a single one. Then a farmer friend offered some advice. "No rat," he said, "will touch an exposed trap. You must disguise it with food. Fill a pan with meal and place the trap in it. Cover it well with meal so it is completely hidden." It worked! The next morning, we had a big rat.

All this reminded me that the devil knows this trick too. He carefully disguises his trap with truth. Nowhere is it better seen than in the numerous false cults and religions in the world today. All set their traps of error in a pan of meal. Many quote the Bible and preach a certain amount of gospel truth. They talk about prayer and Jesus and the Bible. But under the layer of truth is the trap of error.

This is the age of deception. The Bible therefore warns us to "test the spirits" and beware of deceivers. The only antidote against the clever deceptions that come in the name of Christ is to know your Bible. Be rooted and grounded in the truth. "Test all things; hold fast what is good". Beware of Satan's traps."

Notice Romans 16:18

Here is so very interesting insight. These false teachers are not living to serve the Lord, but they are living to satisfy their own desires. This verse tells us that they do not serve the Lord, but they serve their own belly. This means they live to serve their own desires and appetites. The idea here is that they are slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ, but they are slaves of their own desires. What a sad and fearful state to be in! To be among those filled with love for the Lord, and also among those filled with love for one another as members of the body of Jesus Christ, but to be controlled by selfish desires.

Notice the words of John Bunyan;

"A man will go far for his own belly's sake."

Oh, how true this statement is! I have witnessed people who were confronted with the Truth of God's Word, but they were slaves to their own desires and for that reason they suppressed the warnings of God's Word and continued to pursue their cravings.

Notice Romans 16:18 again.

I want us to notice what tools the false teacher uses to deceive his followers.

GOOD WORDS - This is referring to "smooth words". The false teachers use words that are appealing to the listeners. They are smooth and flowing. These teachers are very easy to listen to for those who are unlearned.

FAIR SPEECHES - This refers to language that is designed to captivate the listener. It is polished language.

Looking at both of these terms we can understand that those who proclaim false doctrine are often educated people with many degrees. It is interesting to me that when we look at the first disciples which Jesus chose, they were fisherman and farmers. Luke was an exception for he was a doctor.

1 Corinthians 1:26-28

²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

I want to go back to these false teachers chasing their own desires. We need to understand what their desires are and what they are not.

Their desires are all about personal gain. It may be a position they desire; it may be recognition and fame which they desire. Some false teachers are all about material wealth. They do not desire to honor or glorify God by preaching the Truth. They do not have a shepherd's heart for the people.

Notice Romans 16:18 again.

Their victims are the "SIMPLE". Let us notice the definition of "simple".

"fearing no evil from others, distrusting no one"

It is the trusting who become the targets of the false teachers.

1 John 4:1-3

*Beloved, believe not every spirit, **but try the spirits** whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

² *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*

³ *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

Conclusion:

Let us be very careful concerning teachers whom we are not familiar with and let us be very careful about trusting someone because they name the name of Jesus or because they are on some religious program. Satan will plant false teachers any where he can to lead the church into confusion.