

Take Heed

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Now let's open our Bibles to the book of Mark chapter 13 and I am going to continue preaching through this chapter concerning the issues of the last days, the last days leading up to the Second Coming of Christ what the Lord teaches his disciples about the last days in this chapter. And, as I told you before a couple of weeks ago, if you want to read the parallels to this chapter of Mark 13, read Matthew chapter 24 and Luke chapter 21. Read those on your own. We will be referring to some of that as we go through.

But now as I go through this I want you to understand that each message stands on its own merit as far as the preaching of the gospel. If you did miss the last messages in the opening of these verses you won't be confused hopefully, not by me, anyway, I hope. But these messages do stand on their own as far as the preaching of the gospel.

But today I want to deal with something that is not an easy subject to deal with. In some ways it is a most unpleasant subject. It is certainly a subject that unbelievers do not want to hear as the natural man, 1 Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

But even true believers have a tendency not to want to delve into these issues. I have entitled this message two words, "Take Heed." It says that in Mark 13 here. Look at verse five.

"And Jesus answering them," talking about his disciples. They asked this question and he began to say, "Take heed." He says, "Take heed lest any man or any one deceive you." And that take heed simply means to watch out. Be on your guard. Listen very carefully and very intently.

There is a verse in the gospels that says, "Take heed what you hear." And I think in the book of Luke it is translated this way. "Take heed how you hear." And you can argue with different Greek scholars over which it should be, what or how, but it really doesn't matter because, I tell you. Both are important. Not only should you take heed, be careful. Watch out for what you hear, that it is the truth from God's Word, but also take heed how you hear.

The parable of the sower and the seed teaches that. How should you hear the Word of God? How should I hear it? Not as the Word of men, not as the word of men, not as the opinions of men, but as God's Word. This is God speaking to me. Now I am talking, not me. It is the Lord, from his Word. And that is what we have to be careful about.

But here in Mark chapter 13 and talking about the last days, the Lord has instructed his disciples and us that there are two major events that take place that mark the beginning of the last days. Now you remember the last days. Whenever the Scripture refers to the last days it is talking about that time period, that segment of time from Christ's first coming into the world and his finishing his work at the cross, his resurrection and ascension, from that time all the way to his Second Coming. It is called the last days, the last age.

And I believe we are in the final stage of even that... I told people... I tell somebody that we are in the last of the last days. Now I don't know when he is coming again. I don't know if you got an opportunity to read the paper this morning, but I mentioned to you a couple of weeks ago that I got a little thing in the mail where a fellow was saying that it is going to be May 21st, 2011. And I think they had a little article in the paper this morning about it. They are putting up billboards about that.

Well, anyway, we don't know when he is coming again. We know that he is coming again. And as time bears down, these are things that mark the last days.

Well, Christ here begins talking about two major events that mark the beginning of the last days. You remember over in Mark 13 and verse eight at the end of that verse he said, "These are the beginning of sorrows, the beginnings of sorrows."

In my last two messages on that title, the beginnings of sorrows. And that sorrow there is not is not sorrow to despair, but it is sorrow... it is like the sorrow of the travail of a woman in childbirth. In other words, it is a sorrow that we go through like a woman in child birth only to find out at the end that there is a satisfaction, there is a pleasure there like a woman in child birth when she has that baby and that baby is healthy. And it is the same kind of thing that was used to describe the death of our Savior in Isaiah 53.

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, the sorrow of his soul and be satisfied," which means the salvation of his people. Christ didn't die to try to save anybody. He died to save his people from their sins. And he did so because he accomplished redemption on the cross.

And so this is the beginning of sorrows. Well, these two great events—I spent most of my time in the last few weeks talking about this first one which is the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

Look at it again. He said in verse one of Mark 13, "And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here" this beautiful building.

“And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

And so that temple, that physical temple was going to be destroyed. He told them that. That mark, that was a physical message from God that the old covenant was over and that God’s dealings with Israel as a nation was over, not that he is finished dealing with Israel, but as a nation under that covenant it is over. The new covenant has been ushered in and that took place in AD 70 so that is past in our day, but it was future for them.

And now he says in verse five, here is the second thing. This is what I want to deal with today. And what it has to do is the deception of the world by false Christianity. And that is not a pleasant subject for anybody.

Now listen to what I said now. It is the second thing that marks the beginning. This started in their day and I will show you that. And it is continuing and it is the deception of the world by false Christianity.

Now I did not say the deception of the world by false religion. There is a deception of the world by false religion. There are false religions. But this is even more... this is even more subtle. This is even more deceptive. This is ... I tell you, this really hits home. And it is the deception of the world by false Christianity. Not only is there false religion in general, but there is false Christianity.

Now listen to what he says in verse five of Mark 13. He says, “And Jesus answering...”

They asked, “When shall these things be fulfilled?”

And he said, “Well, take heed,” verse five, “And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed, watch out, beware, lest any man deceive you: For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ,” or, as I told you last time that word... the title Christ there is in italics. And it is referring... it is not necessarily, it is not limiting itself to people who come along and say, “I am Christ.” Now we know that happens.

In the past 2000 years there have been several who have come along and said, “I am the Messiah.” We have seen it in our day and I mentioned like Jim Jones and David Koresh, people like that who claim to be the Messiah, but now they really don’t deceive that many.

So what he is actually saying here is many will come saying, “I am preaching Christ.”

There are many who will say that I... they won’t say, “I am Christ,” but they say I am preaching him or I am come in his name. And I will show you that in just a moment. It says, “And shall deceive many.” Now that is a many...

You know, we always like a crowd, don't we? We always like people to be with us. We... in fact, we... we wrongfully judge the rightness of something by the crowd sometimes. That is a terrible way to be deceived, but we like to have a lot of people.

But now this is a many I don't want to be in. How about you? I don't want to be with this man here, because it says, "Many shall be deceived."

This is like the many who are on the broad road leads to destruction. Many there be that find it. And the reason there are so many that find it is because that is natural to man. That is self righteous. It feeds his pride. And even false Christianity will feed the pride and the self righteousness of man.

So he says they will deceive many. You take heed. He says, in verse seven, "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet."

You are going to hear, just like they always have, now, this is nothing new. Wars, rumors or wars. When has it ever been different since the beginning of man in the fall? Earthquakes, all those things, verse eight, "National shall rise against nation." That has been going on for... ever since man fell.

"Kingdom against kingdom. There shall be earthquakes in diverse or various places. There will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows."

When you hear about these things, don't let those things alarm you. That is what he is saying because the end is not yet. You know, people look around and they read the newspaper and they say, "Man, there is an earthquake. You know, that means the world is coming to an end."

And Christ says, "No, no, no, no. Don't let that alarm you."

Remember what he said there, verse seven. "But the end shall not be yet."

All right, there is a war over here or over there. All the world is coming to... that is the way people do naturally.

He says, "No, the end is not yet. That has always been that way." You see?

And somebody said, "Well, it seems like there is more of them today than there were back in the 1700s."

Well, did you live back in the 1700s? I don't think you did. How do you know? Study history. The history of man is written with blood, isn't it? Wars and wars and fights conflicts. I mean, that is the way it is, famines. This world is under the condemnation of sin. That is why the whole creation groaneth for the revelation of the sons of God, Romans chapter eight.

This world is going to be created a new. It is going to be burned up and created a new the Scripture says. So don't think when you hear about all these things in the news, oh, that marks the beginning of the end.

No, no. Here is the two events. All right. The temple has been destroyed. And I know people talk about rebuilding all that. I will get to that in another message. All right?

But listen, don't be looking for that. All right? The temple of the Lord today is the Church. It is made up... that is what the book says. That is what this book says. If you are a Christian, if you are a believer, you are a stone in the temple of the Lord, a living stone Peter said, built up on the foundation of Christ, upon my... upon this rock I will build my church. Upon what rock? Christ and him crucified and risen again.

And that is the temple.

All right so that is past. So he says, "Now take heed lest any man deceive you, for many shall come in my name saying I am Christ or I am preaching Christ and shall deceive many."

Now look over at verse nine. Again, he says here, "Take heed."

Now I am going to get to these verses next week more in detail, but listen to them right now. Now here is why this is such an unpleasant subject what I am talking about today, about this false Christianity.

It says, "But take heed to yourselves for they shall deliver you up to councils," those are religious judgment seats, "and in the synagogues."

Now what is a synagogue? That is a gathering, a religious gathering and that was the Jewish religious gathering. He says, "And in the synagogues you shall be beaten. They are going to beat you up in their church services." That is what he means. "And you shall be brought before rulers and kings, even the civil government will be against you for my sake," for Christ's sake, now.

Now when you are, you know, when you are... when you suffer the consequences of your own bad behavior don't act like you are standing nobly of the cause of Christ. You are not. But when it comes to preaching the true gospel, preaching the Word of God and these things happen he says, "For a testimony against thee."

In verse 10 he says, "And the gospel must be published among all nations."

Now the world is going to stand against you when you preach Christ. That is what he says. And you know how people are. You know how we are.

You know, the first thing people say... you know, when you talk about false Christianity and somebody says, "Well, now wait a minute. We are not to be judges," that is the first thing you hear.

"Oh, we can't judge."

You had better go back to the book now and read what God's Word says. Matthew 7:1 says, "Judge not that you be not judged."

He is not forbidding all judgment there he is forbidding self righteous judgment. Self righteous judgment is what he is forbidding. But here he is talking about being discerning. In other words, I want to know that I am not deceived. How about you?

Now I know man by nature is deceived. That is how man got into the mess that we are in through Adam our Father. We fell in Adam. And listen to me. We fell all the way, didn't we? We didn't just fall part of the way. We didn't just... we didn't lose half of our goodness. We lost it all in the garden.

And do you know how it come about? Through a deception. And what did Satan do when he sought out to deceive Eve? He began to take the Word of God and twist it. He twisted the Word of God. And so there is the deception. Here is a person who says, "I am preaching the Bible."

I am preaching the gospel. I am preaching Christ. I want to know. Is he real? I want you to know if I am right I want... listen. The Bible says in 1 John chapter four and verse one, "Test the spirits," the spirits meaning a person who comes claiming to preach by the power of the Spirit of God. You test him.

Now, how do you test him? Well, you don't like his personality. That is a wrong test. Or I don't like his looks. That is a wrong test. If that was the test you would never listen to John the Baptist, would you? You say, "I don't like his cologne or whatever." I don't know. Wrong test.

What is the standard to test by? The Word of God.

"To the law and to the testimony if they preach not according to this word there is no light in them," Isaiah chapter eight and verse 20.

And so when we talk about the deception of the world by false Christianity, we have to use the standard of God's Word. It is not always easy. There are some who are closer than other. There are some, like I said, like people like Jim Jones and David Koresh, they come along and they say, "I am the Messiah, follow me."

They fool a few people. But they don't fool you, do they? You wouldn't be out there drinking purple kool aid, would you? That is right, because you know better.

And so... but there are others who don't go that far. And it is like on a continuum here.

Christ spoke of those who at some time would be so close... look at verse 22 of Mark 13. Now listen to this one and look. We will look at verse 21 of Mark 13.

He says, "And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not. For false Christs and false prophets..."

What is a false prophet? He is one who preaches a false Christ.

"...they shall rise and shall show signs and wonders."

In other words, they are going to impress a lot of people.

"...to seduce."

It is a spiritual seduction.

"... if it were possible even the elect."

But look at verse 23. Here are those two words again.

"But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. I have told you this before hand so that you can prepare and be ready." That is what he is saying.

So there are going to be some who are just so far out in left people that they won't deceive many. They will deceive some. But there is going to be others who are so close they will deceive many. The question is: How do we know the difference? How can we know the difference?

Well, there are several issues of truth that we can talk about. We can talk about the doctrine of God. Who is God? A lot of people are confused on that issue. Some people have their ideas. Most people reason from the ground up rather than the revelation of God. When you talk about a sovereign God many people today don't even know what you are talking about when they talk about God's sovereignty. God is in control. He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. He is the God of electing grace, the God of predestinating grace. That is a dirty word in most churches today, because they think it filters down to fatalism, *que sera sera*, you know, that kind of thing. And that is what they are doing. Instead of going by the revelation of God they are going by the reasoning of man. Well, if this is so, then this is how I will act.

No, no, no. You go by the Word of God no matter what. The Bible teaches that God is a holy God. He cannot even look upon sin. He cannot receive sin. He will... God is a just God. He must punish sin. And there is no way God can just turn his back on sin.

Salvation is not God looking over sin, looking past sin or looking through sin. Salvation is God putting away sin by the blood of his Son.

There is a big difference. Most people think God is some old white haired gentleman who just feels sorry for us because we are in this predicament. That is not so. God is a just God.

“The soul that sinneth must surely die.”

“The wages of sin is death.”

God must punish sin with eternal damnation. And do you want to know why? Because he is God.

We could talk about the doctrine of the trinity. You know that many people accuse us of believing in three gods because of the trinity. And I admit we cannot explain or illustrate the trinity properly because we don't have human language to do that. That is God. But we don't believe in three gods. We believe in one God who subsists in three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co equal in every attribute of deity. That is what the Bible teaches. And those who deny that, deny the true and living God. I don't care what they call themselves. That is so.

We could talk about the doctrine of man. What is man in the Scripture? He is a sinner who cannot save himself. He is impotent. He is a sinner who cannot deserve salvation because he has sinned against God. He is a sinner. I am a sinner. You are a sinner who cannot earn salvation in any way.

The Bible says, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.” Salvation is not God helping me to help myself. Salvation is God reaching down through his Son to lift a beggar off the dung heap of self and sin and bring him up to the highest heights of heaven to make him washed in the blood of Christ and clothed in his righteousness. Salvation is totally by grace. In fact, we are going to see that one of the main issues in the deception of false Christianity is the issue of works versus grace. Is salvation totally, sovereignly 100 percent of grace or is it at some stage to some degree at some time in some way conditioned on the works of man? You see, false Christianity will at some point in time or some degree introduce the works of man and leave it up to the sinner. And that is false Christianity. Man is totally, totally depraved.

Now that doesn't mean everybody is as bad as we could be, but it simply means this. There is no way that I can stand before a holy God and be accepted and eternally blessed based upon anything that I do or that anything that comes from me. I am totally at his mercy in Christ.

My righteousness is not of me. It is of Christ. It is his obedience unto death for my sin.

But then we come to the main issue and you can boil it down to about basically two

points of truth concerning the deception of false Christianity and that which by God's Word forms the foundation of true Christianity and that is these two points. Number one, who is Jesus Christ? And, number two, what did he actually accomplish on Calvary? That is where it all boils down to, those two issues.

Look over at 1 Corinthians chapter one. That is what Paul is saying here in 1 Corinthians chapter one. He is talking about the preaching of the cross. And this is what we need to hear. And he says in verse 23... he talks about the wisdom of man as opposed to the wisdom of God and compared to the wisdom of God the wisdom of man is nothing but foolishness. And he talks about the Jews and they are religious and they are trying to make themselves righteous by their works and they require a sign. And then the Greeks or the Gentiles, they seek after worldly wisdom.

But here is what we preach. Now look at verse 23.

“We preach Christ crucified.”

Now that means the gospel. That is the gospel of who Christ is, who he is and what he accomplished on the cross. He died for the sins of his sheep. And that includes his burial and his resurrection. See, his crucifixion was a victory. It was an accomplishment as he said in Luke chapter nine it was an exodus, literally. You know what an exodus is, don't you? That is when God led the children of Israel out of Egypt through Moses. Well, the exodus of the cross is when God brought his spiritual Israel out of the bondage of sin in Christ. And that is what it was. And he says unto the Jews that is a stumbling block.

Now why is it a... why do they... that is an entrapment to them. Why is it a stumbling block to the Jews? Well, what were the Jews doing? They were trying to make themselves righteous and holy and accepted of God by their work. Well, the preaching of Christ crucified will not allow that. The preaching of Christ crucified says that my only salvation, my only acceptance, my only salvation from sin is Christ crucified. Not my works, no my efforts, not my obedience, not even my faith. My faith does not wash me clean from all my sins. The blood of Christ does. My faith is in his blood.

Do you see the difference?

You say, “Well, that is splitting hairs.”

Take heed. Take heed.

Let me tell you something. What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. You sing that hymn? I do. And do you know why? Because I believe it. You do, too.

What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

I hear people all the time wondering and worrying about have I believed enough? And I want to tell them, no, you haven't. No you haven't. And I want to say... have you

believed enough for what? Have I believed enough to save myself? No. And there is no amount of faith you can muster up to save yourself. You see, it is not in how much I believe. It is in whom I believe. That is what Paul said in 2 Timothy chapter one and verse 12.

“I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able,” not I am able, but I am not able. “He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

And anything less is a deception, is a denial. I am telling you. Somebody says, “But you have got to be baptized.”

Oh, no. You can't add anything to the work of Christ on the cross.

“You have got to do this. You have got to do that.”

Anything you add to the work of Christ as to attaining or maintaining salvation is a deception. It is a deception.

Look at 1 Corinthians two. Look at verse one.

He says, “And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

I want to point out something to you here. Paul says, “I don't want to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

Well, what is he saying? You know, you read through the epistles of Paul. He dealt with a lot of different subjects. He dealt with the ministry. He dealt with the church offices. He dealt with obedience and good works which are necessary, not in order to make me righteous or to save me, but as the fruit and evidence of having been saved by the grace of God. He dealt with a lot of things. He dealt with how you dress in church, all of that.

So what does he mean here, “I don't want to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified”?

What he means by that is this. Everything that I preach to you, everything that I say to you that is truth, has to be preached and taught and understood in light of and upon the foundation of this one truth, Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I will never get away from that.

You will never... listen. You will never go home, I hope, and take your house off of its foundation. It will always be there, won't it? It will always be there.

Well, who is Jesus Christ? Well, simply put you have heard me say it and you have heard

brother Mahan say it for so many years. Many of you have heard it in other places. He is God in human flesh. That is who he is.

When the angel came to Joseph and revealed to Joseph that Mary was with child in the book of Matthew one and verse 21 it is recorded. The angel said to Joseph, "She shall bring forth a son. Your wife Mary shall bring forth a son and you shall call his name Jesus."

And do you notice the significance of that? First of all Joseph could not name the child. God had to name that child. And do you want to know why Joseph could not name the child? Because he is not Joseph's son. He is the Son of God. And you all have... when you couples have children, do you name them or do you let somebody else name them? Maybe it is somebody might try to. But you are the one who is ultimately going to give them that name because they are yours. Well, he is the Son of God.

Now to say someone is the Son of God in the way that the Bible teaches that Christ is the Son of God is to say that he is equal with God. Just like you fathers. You have sons. Now they respect your authority and they are under your authority, but because they are your son doesn't mean they are any less human than you are. They are just 100 percent human just like you. Well, Christ, the Son of God is 100 percent God. He is not a lesser God. He is God.

Did you hear that? He is God.

"His name shall be called Jesus."

That means Jehovah our Savior. You don't give that name to anyone but one who is God.

"He shall save his people from their sins."

That is what he accomplished on the cross of Calvary by his redemptive work. He didn't try to save you if you would let him. He saved his people from their sins. He redeemed them and he will have them.

He said in John six and verse 37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." He said, "This is the will of him that sent me that of all whom he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

"He shall save his people from their sin."

Now it goes on in Matthew chapter one to quote from the book of Isaiah chapter seven. And in Matthew 1:23 it says, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is God with us."

He is God with us.

John chapter one and verse 14. “The Word, the eternal Word which was with God and which was God in the beginning, the eternal Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

He is God.

He told the Pharisees. He said, “Before Abraham was...” What? I am. That is without beginning and without... he is the alpha and the omega. He is God in human flesh.

And then look over at 1 John chapter four now. Now listen to what God’s Word says.

So now here is what I am saying now. This deception of false Christianity. Here comes a person along and they say, “Well, we believe in Jesus just like you do.” They say, “We are Christian.”

Well, ask them, “Do you believe he is God?”

Well, let’s say for the sake of argument they say, “No. We don’t believe he is God. We believe he is just a super human or the best human that ever lived,” or whatever.

That is a deception. That is false Christianity.

Do you hear what I am saying? That is not splitting hairs.

Look at verse one of 1 John four.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try or test the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ,” That is Jehovah our Savior, the Messiah. That is what that is. He is God. “... is come in the flesh.”

In other words, every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, that he is God in human flesh... and then he says that is how we know the Spirit of God. When a person confesses that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh, that is one point. And that has to do with this his finished work, took on the cross, because he is the Messiah, all right?

But he says in verse three, “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, that he is not God in human flesh, is not of God.” They are not of God.

“And this is that spirit of antichrist.”

You want to know who the antichrist is? Huh? Well, don’t look in Washington, look right here in 1 John 4:3. There is the antichrist. He is one who confesses not that Jesus Christ is come... he is not God in human flesh, that he didn’t do what he said he did. He didn’t

accomplish what he said. He said, "Whereof you have heard that it should come and even now already is it in the world."

Now look over at 2 John. Turn over to 2 John verse nine. Well, look at verse seven, 2 John verse seven. He says, "For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, that he is God in human flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves," that is take heed, "that we lose not the things which we have brought, but that we receive a full reward."

In other words, what he is saying there is, "Take heed so that you won't prove out to be a false professor, but that you will prove out to be a true believer."

And so he says in verse nine, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of his person and his finished work, hath not God. And he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. And if there come in any unto you..."

Now here is what people want to get away from, but we can't in the Scriptures. He says, "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, this doctrine of his person and his finished work, receive him not into your house, neither bid him god speed."

Now what he is talking about there is don't have religious fellowship with him. It doesn't mean you can't let any unbeliever in your house or anything like that or you can't work with them. That is something like... but you cannot have religious fellowship with him.

He says in verse 11, "For he that biddeth him god speed..."

In other words, if you promote him in that false religion, you are a partaker, a fellowshipper of his evil deeds.

Now let me give you an example. If a drug pusher, a known drug pusher came and knocked on your door and said, "I am taking up donations so I can continue on my work," what would you do? You would say, "Get away from my house. I am not promoting that. That is evil."

Now if a false prophet or a false preacher or a false professor or a deceiver comes to your door and knocks saying, "I am taking up donations. I want you to support my work," what are you going to do? That is even worse.

Do you see what he is saying here?

Now go over to 2 Corinthians chapter 11 that brother Aaron read. Now let me show you this. Now, again, who is Jesus Christ and what did he accomplish at the cross?

Now last week I read from Daniel chapter nine and verse 24 about what he accomplished on the cross. It is a prophecy of the work of Christ. And here is what Daniel said.

Well, he finished the transgression. He made an end of sin and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up the vision and the prophecy and to anoint the most holy. But what is the gospel?

The gospel is this person, Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, God who came to earth and his finished work, his work on the cross is vitally connected to who he is, all right? And he accomplished redemption on the cross. He finished the transgression. He brought in all the righteousness that God requires of his people. It is found in Jesus Christ. Salvation is by grace, not of works. It...

Paul said in Romans 11, "If it is of works, it is not of grace. If it is of grace, it is not of works."

But look here in verse three of 2 Corinthians 11. He says, "But I fear lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Now that simplicity is singleness. My salvation is singularly wrapped up in the person and finished work of Christ. Not anything else. And that is a simple message. And it is a single message. But when people divert their attention away from Christ and him crucified and risen again for salvation, for righteousness, for eternal life, for glory. Well, what is happening? Their minds are being corrupted. And what does Paul say about that?

Verse four. He says, "For if he that cometh preaches another Jesus..."

Now just to say Jesus doesn't mean anything in and of itself. It could be another one.

"...whom we have not preached. Or if you receive another spirit..."

He is talking about what people call the Holy Spirit there. You know, I have heard people say, "Well, I come here and I just don't feel the Spirit."

Well, the Spirit is not something you feel. The Spirit is something you hear. He is the Spirit of truth. Where is Christ preached and lifted up and exalted? Where is God preached in his reality, his character? Where is the sinner brought down in the dust where he belongs? That is where the Spirit of God is.

And so he says, "Which you have not received or another gospel which you have not accepted. You might well bear..."

He is not saying, "Bear with that false preacher." He is saying, "Bear with me as I am going through this."

He says over in verse 13, look here. He says, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.”

Now that transformation there in that construction means a temporary transformation. And do you know what he is saying? He is saying, “For a little while they can say some good things. They can transform. They can appear to be true preachers. But what they cannot do is stay consistently day in and day out on the message of God’s grace in Christ. They can’t do it, because their heart is not there. They transform into angels of light.”

Verse 15. “Therefore...” Or verse 14. “And no marvel or Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing... it shouldn’t surprise you,” is what he is saying, “that if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.”

They can preach Christ’s righteousness for a while, but they can’t stay there,

“Whose end shall be according to their works.”

Well, let me close with this. Turn to Galatians chapter one. Now you see why this is such an unpleasant subject for most people, because you don’t want to think about it, do you? You don’t want to think about how many people out there who may be deceived. And it is not pleasant and it is not that we are just out here trying to point out everybody else is wrong and we are right. That is not it. That is not it at all. All we are trying to do is take heed. That is what he is saying in the last days. So that we be not deceived. We are trying to lay down that straight stick of the truth to expose the crooked sticks of this world.

Look at verse six of Galatians one. He said, “I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.”

They have been diverted. And he says, “Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, that is an apostle, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

My friends, there is only one gospel. And it is the gospel that the sovereign grace and mercy of God in the Lord Jesus Christ. Know what? Who he is and what he accomplished on Calvary to completely and eternally save us from our sins. Any other gospel is a false gospel and we are to take heed lest any many deceive us.

How do we do it? Let’s go by God’s Word. Let’s stay with God’s Word.

All right.