

Subject: *Dealing with False Teachers*

Scripture: *1 Timothy 6:3-5*

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to deal with problems and situations in the local church. One of the problems was false teaching (1:3-7; 4:1-3; 6:3-5, 20-21). False teaching is like a disease, a deadly plague such as the Black Death that killed millions in Europe during the 14th century or like malaria, diphtheria, or AIDS in modern times. False teaching is even worse than all these because it kills the soul and not just the body.

False teaching is dangerous because it comes from inside not outside the church. Paul had warned the church about false teachers in **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.*

False teaching is often hard to diagnose since it is masquerades as truth. We need spiritual discernment to see it for what it is. **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**¹³ *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*¹⁴ *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*¹⁵ *Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*

DESCRIPTION OF A FALSE TEACHER (vs. 3-5)

Truth matters. The truth of God's Word matters most. In order to separate truth from error you have to define both. One of the reasons why we are not defeating Islamic terrorists is that many government officials are not willing to describe it and call it by its name.

The early church did not hesitate to define truth and error because there is too much at stake. The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is responsible to define truth and error. The church is to respect and listen to teachers who are committed to the truth of God's Word, but whenever a teacher rejects the truth, the church is to reject him, no matter who that person is (vs. 3, "if any man teach otherwise").

- **A false teacher teaches error** – This is not an isolated, one-time event, but an ongoing practice. A false teacher teaches something different from truth of Scripture. To "teach otherwise" is a compound word that means to teach something that is not right or correct. We should remember what Paul wrote in **Galatians 1:6-9**⁶ *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:*⁷ *Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.*⁸ *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*⁹ *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.* Paul said that it doesn't matter who is the source of false teaching, let that person be accursed (condemned to hell).
- **A false teacher rejects truth** – Consent means to come to or accept. He knows the truth, but will not accept it. The truth is described three ways: wholesome words (healthy words, sound doctrine – from which we get the English word "hygiene"); the words of our Lord Jesus Christ; the doctrine which is according to godliness (leads to a godly life). Truth is healthy, holy, and practical.

- A false teacher is arrogant and ignorant – This describes his attitude. He has such a large ego that he places himself as judge of the Bible. A false teacher is not teachable, but thinks he knows everything when in fact he knows nothing. The word proud has the idea of being puffed up or full of hot air.
- A false teacher focuses on useless questions and word battles – He majors on minors. He is obsessed with endless questions and debates over trivial issues.
- A false teacher causes disunity and trouble – False teaching always feeds the flesh and brings out the worst in people. **James 3:13-18** ¹³ *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.* ¹⁴ *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.* ¹⁵ *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* ¹⁶ *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* ¹⁷ *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.* ¹⁸ *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*
- A false teacher has a depraved mind and does not understand the truth – Destitute means to be robbed or deprived of something. A false teacher once had the truth, knew the truth and seemed to believe it, but they openly and completely rejected it. A false teacher does not value the truth. He does not heed what the Bible says in

Proverbs 23:23 *Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.*

John MacArthur summarizes the real problem: “False teachers are not committed to Scripture. They may speak of Jesus and the Father, but the heart of their ministry will not be the Word of God. They will either add to it, take away from it, interpret it in some heretical fashion, add other ‘revelations’ to it, or deny it altogether” (1 Timothy, 240).

DESIRE OF A FALSE TEACHER (vs. 5)

- A false teacher is motivated by money – He thinks financial gain is the reward of godliness and godliness is the way to financial gain. He serves and worships a false god whose name is money. Like Balaam in the Old Testament, he is a prophet who is out for profit. **2 Peter 2:15** *Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.* **Jude 1:11** *Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.*

DETACHMENT FROM A FALSE TEACHER (vs. 5)

- A false teacher must be rejected along with his teaching

Romans 16:17 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

2 Thessalonians 3:6 *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.*

Truth is more important than any personal relationship in the church because truth is the basis of our relationship with God. If we don't please God it doesn't matter whom we please, but if we please God it doesn't matter whom we displease.

The church needs discernment and determination. We should be able to discern false teachers and we must be willing to detach ourselves from them no matter who they are.