

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Separation: No Compromise" (Colossians 3:16-17, Psalm 106:35-41)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 2/1/2015

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Let me call your attention once again to the theme passage of Scripture for this series of messages on the Biblical doctrine of separation, which is found in Colossians chapter 3 verses 16 and 17. If you are able to do so, I encourage you to turn to this passage, and to others that we are going to be considering together today, in your own copy of God's Word. We begin at Colossians chapter 3, verse 16:

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

What are these verses telling us? The Holy Spirit is telling us that if you are truly a Christian, you must develop a unique attitude toward this present world: The world is not your authority. Scripture must be your authority, and Christ must be your authority, in all things.

### **The World's Attitude vs. The Separated Believer's**

That attitude, that way of thinking, is the diametric opposite of the unbeliever's attitude. The unbeliever loves this present evil world and the things of this world. The unbeliever has no love for the Word of Christ. The Word of Christ is not welcome within him.

Now sometimes an unbeliever will say that Christ is his model for living. But as

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he lives his life the unbeliever demonstrates that in reality he wants nothing to do with the genuine Christ of the Bible. He wants nothing to do with Christ's holiness and holy demands. The unbeliever is in bondage to this present evil world, and to Satan, the god of this world.

But as we have seen, God commands you, as a believer, to stop loving this present evil world. God commands you to put on display before this present evil world the holiness and the redeeming love of Christ, by living a spiritually separated life before all men.

Dear friend, you cannot do that through compromise. Scripture tells you repeatedly that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. "What fellowship" – Second Corinthians 6 –

[W]hat fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord [or agreement] has Christ with [Satan]? Or what part [what share] has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. (2 Corinthians 6:14-16)

### **The World's Inherent Antagonism**

In our last message I began to present four things that the Bible tells us are the distinguishing marks of the separated attitude. We saw, first of all, that the separated Christian must cultivate a *realistic attitude* toward this present evil

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world. What does God mean by that?

We saw that our Lord Jesus Himself tells us what it means. It means that you as a Christian must understand that this present world-system is inherently antagonistic toward Christ, and the Christian, and the Bible. You must recognize that those who live under the sway of Satan in this present evil world are by nature the enemies of the one true and living God.

That antagonism and that hatred for the things of God manifests itself in a continual effort on the part of the world to pollute the Christian and to undermine the true church. We saw that our Lord Jesus tells us in Matthew chapter 10 that we must be "wise" about this reality. We must understand where our best interests lie. We must understand that our best interests are not situated in a position of compromise with this present evil world.

We saw that the Lord Jesus tells us repeatedly that those who live lives that are separated from this present evil world and separated unto God will experience opposition and even suffer persecution.

Jesus spoke of how far this opposition can go. He said it will often pit one family member against another. It can pit the Christian against ungodly authority. It can even take the Christian to the extreme of being put to death. That has been true for many Christians through the running centuries of the church, and it is true for some Christians in our day.

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And it can be true in a so-called "Christian nation" like America just as much as in an ungodly place like North Korea or Saudi Arabia. When I was young, a lady who was a member of my home church in Baltimore was brutally murdered by her own husband because of her stand for Christ. Her husband then took his own life.

Dear friends, Satan, who is called "the god of this world," is very rightly also called "the Destroyer" in the pages of Scripture. But he cannot destroy the Christian. That man, so antagonistic toward the things of God that he murdered his own wife, and then took his own life, immediately lifted up his eyes in the flames of Hell. We have God's own word on that.

But that dear Christian lady, despite paying the ultimate price for her stand, immediately went into glory with her Lord. We also have God's word on that. Romans chapter 8 declares to us that nothing, not even physical death, can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Dear friend, you may not experience the world's hatred in its severest forms. But I submit to you that if you have taken a separated stand for Christ and His Word, and you have not experienced the world's hatred in its severest forms, it is because of the mercy of God.

If you take a separated stand, you will experience the world's opposition in some form. You will even experience the opposition of people within the church who have come under the bondage of worldliness.

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But if you take a separated stand in this world, and you do not experience the most intense forms of opposition, even physically violent opposition, it is above all a matter of the restraining hand of God. It is because God often prevents the unbelieving world from doing its worst, from doing what it would do to the Christian if it there were no Divine restraining hand.

### **The Test**

But the critical test is this: What happens when you begin to speak of Christ and His Word as the sole authority in all of life and all of ministry? What happens when put that into practice? What happens when you take a separated stand? When the world and even many in the church are confronted with a Biblically separated stand on the part of a Christian, they will of necessity react. Scripture tells us that, and experience bears it out.

This world is at war against Christ-likeness – and true Christ-likeness as we find it in the pages of Scripture is, in fact, another term for separation. The more and more that you are conformed to the image of your Lord, dear friend, the more you will be spiritually separate from this present evil world. And if you do experience opposition, whether it is mild or severe, you should welcome that as an indication that you are pleasing God and not pleasing sinful men.

And this brings us to a second distinguishing mark of the separated Christian. The separated Christian must have a realistic attitude toward this present evil world. We must recognize the condition of the world as it truly is. And therefore

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we must, secondly, have *an uncompromising attitude* toward this present evil world. I want to put this before you by calling your attention to both Old Testament and New Testament examples.

### **The Compromise of Israel**

First of all, turn with me in your Bible if you are able to Psalm 106 beginning at verse 35. The 106th Psalm, beginning at verse 35. The psalmist is giving us the history of the compromise of Israel. He is writing about Israel's history of repeatedly refusing God's command to be separate *from* the surrounding pagan nations and to be separated *unto* His holiness. Beginning in verse 35 we read that the people of Israel

mingled with the Gentiles [that is, they mingled with the unbelieving nations around them] and learned their works; they served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. Thus they were defiled by their own works, and played the harlot by their own deeds.

Therefore [verse 40] the wrath of the Lord was kindled against His people, so that He abhorred His own inheritance. And He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles, and those who hated them ruled over them. (Psalm 106:35-41)

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## **A Corrupt Bargain**

The word that is translated "mingled" in verse 35, in the original language denotes having fellowship by entering into a corrupt bargain. Dear friend, for the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, any compromise with this present evil world is a corrupt bargain. It can only lead to worse things.

Never think that you can enter into compromise with this present evil world in order to win the world over. That is impossible. It is impossible because this present evil world lies under the curse of sin. It is under the sway of Satan, the evil one, the one that the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter 2 describes as the one who now controls

the course of this world... The spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (Ephesians 2:2-3)

The passage before us in Psalm 106 tells us that because the people of Israel entered into that kind of a corrupt, compromising bargain with the unbelievers surrounding them, that they "learned their works." In the original language this describes a downward progression that began with compromise.

We read in the pages of the history of Israel that when they entered into these compromises, they always thought that it was an advantageous thing to do. We

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know better than God. God has said that He will protect us if we maintain strict obedience to His Word. But that is the hard way. We don't want the hard way. We want to take the easy way. And so we will seek spiritual friendship with our spiritual enemies – and not only that, our mortal enemies in the flesh.

It began with thoughts like this: "Oh, there's no harm in marrying this man or woman who is an unbeliever. In fact this will make the pagans more friendly toward me. They don't like this strict attitude of adherence to the God of Israel. They're not comfortable with that. So this marriage will be an advantage. It will help us gain peace and protection."

Solomon thought that way when he married the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt. But then before long that first step opened the door to this: "Oh, let's just bring this small idol into the house. It's a harmless thing really. It won't hurt to have it here. And my unbelieving wife and her family will be pleased."

But before long, we find that Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. And we read in the 11th chapter of Second Kings that these wives turned his heart away after other gods, turned him away from the Lord his God, and he went after many foreign gods and all of the abominable practices that were associated with those pagan religions.

That is the same thing that we read of here in Psalm 106. And so we read, verse 39, that "thus they were defiled by their own works, and played the harlot by their own deeds." The sins of the unbelieving world became their own sins.

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## **The Nature of Compromise**

Dear friend, you must understand the nature of compromise. You can never keep compromise at a distance. You can never contain compromise. The illustration for compromise that we have repeatedly in the Word of God is the picture of the consuming influence of leaven.

In Matthew 16 verse 6, Jesus told His disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." The Pharisees were the religious conservatives of their time. The Sadducees were the religious liberals of their time. But, Jesus said, both of them are teaching falsehood. Have nothing to do with either one. Both are unbelievers. Obey My words, not theirs.

In First Corinthians chapter 5 verses 6 and 7, the Apostle Paul reproved the Corinthian church for their compromise with the unbelievers around them. Like the children of Israel, the Corinthians had entered into spiritual compromise because they thought that it was the advantageous thing to do. They were proud of it. But Paul said this, First Corinthians chapter 5 beginning at verse 6:

Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven...

Again, when the Apostle Paul reproved the Galatian church for going into compromise with those who said that you had to add works to faith in order to be saved, he said this, Galatians chapter 5 beginning at verse 7:

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Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you [that is, it does not come from God]. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

And what do we find happened in the history of Israel, as it is summarized for us in Psalm 106? What happened when Israel learned the works and the ways and the thinking of the surrounding pagan nations? Psalm 106, beginning at verse 36:

They served their idols, which became a snare to them.

The force of the original language is that the idols of the pagans were like the bait in a trap. And what began with seemingly harmless idolatry ended in the worst kind of tragedy. Verse 37:

They even sacrifice their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood.

### **Sacrifices On the Altar of Compromise**

Now dear friends, in our time, professing Christians are not physically sacrificing their children on altars to pagan idols. But they are doing so in many ways spiritually. And the visible church is certainly doing this today. The visible church is sacrificing its children on many different altars, spiritually speaking.

Much of the church today is sacrificing its children on the altar of compromise by introducing and promoting entertainment. Entertainment dominates many so-

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called church services instead of the Word of God. Worldly entertainment is brought in and Biblical preaching is pushed out. Sensory experience and emotionalism takes the place of objective Biblical truth. And so our young people confuse truly begin saved for eternity with merely feeling good for the moment.

Much of the church today is sacrificing its children on the altar of compromise by promoting mysticism. This generation is being told that it must seek some "higher truth" or "higher life" through mystical practices such as "contemplative meditation" and so-called "centering prayer" that have their roots in pagan Eastern philosophies, not the Word of God.

Much of the church today is sacrificing its children on the altar of compromise by promoting politics. Churches are encouraging this generation to become involved in political and social activism as a substitute for the proclamation of the one true Gospel. And the fact is that many who are being led down this path today have never truly been saved, but they are being led to believe that there is some sort of "salvation" in political and social change.

Much of the church today is sacrificing its children on the altar of compromise by promoting materialistic success. The false Christ who is preached is held up as someone who will help you to be successful and prosperous in this present life, without realistic regard for the life to come.

Much of the church today is sacrificing its children on the altar of compromise by promoting worldly philosophy. With few and precious exceptions, the vast

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majority of the present generation in what is called the evangelical church is starved for Biblical preaching. In our time, false prophets have brought worldly philosophies into the church and substituted them for the Word of God.

That is the focus of the Purpose Driven Church movement. That movement is nothing more than a web of compromises with this present evil world. The movement is rooted in the substitution of humanistic management philosophy for Biblical truth. It is dragging down thousands of churches that once had some grasp of the truth. And it is launching thousands more that have the name of "church" – but in fact they are nothing more than weekly social gatherings. They bear no resemblance to the New Testament model of the meeting of God's people to be built up in sound doctrine and to worship the one true and living and holy God of Scripture.

In all these ways and many more, parents and churches today are sacrificing their children just as surely as the Israelites of old did. No, they are not shedding their blood on a physical altar or burning them in a physical fire, but their blood is just as surely on the hands of their parents and their church leaders who have led them down this path of compromise, and they are just as surely leading this generation to the fires of hell.

### **Scripture Permits No Compromise**

Dear friends the eternal souls of our children are at stake. Those who are truly the blood-bought separated saints of God must have, and maintain, and cultivate

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an uncompromising attitude toward this present evil world. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them," Ephesians chapter 5 verse 11. No compromise. "Friendship with the world is enmity with God," James chapter 4 verse 4.

It is for this reason that we shall, the Lord willing, in our next message see a third hallmark of the attitude of Biblical separation, and that is that it must be a soldier's attitude. We are in a warfare. We must recognize that. We must not shrink from it. We must stand firm in it. And so we must take upon ourselves the equipment that God has put at our disposal in order to wage the warfare of a separated believer in this present evil world.

#### **About the Broadcast**

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