

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "A Household In Compromise" (Colossians 3:16-17, Proverbs 3:33)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 6/8/2014

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In this series of messages on the doctrine of Biblical separation, we have been focusing on one particular passage of Scripture as our theme passage. This particular passage has led us to so many other places in the Word of God that speak to us about the command that God has given, to believers individually and to His church as the body of Christ, to be spiritually separated from the world and to be separated unto the Lord.

Let me begin today by calling your attention to that passage once again, and then from there we are going to be looking at a number of other passages of Scripture. So I hope that if you are able to do so that you will open your own copy of God's Word and follow along with me today. Let us begin, once again, in Colossians chapter 3, beginning at verse 16. Colossians chapter 3, verse 16. Let us hear the inspired, infallible, inerrant, Word of God:

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 Makes Us Capable of Honoring Christ?

In our last several messages we have focused our attention in particular on the opening words of verse 16: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." We have seen that in the original language of the New Testament these

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words more literally mean, "Let the Word of Christ have unrestricted influence within you."

This is the key to Biblical separation – the unrestricted influence, the unrestricted authority of the Word of God in the life of the individual Christian and in the life of the church as a body of believers in Christ. Only when there is this unrestricted influence of the Word of God is it possible for a Christian or for the church to do what is commanded of us in verse 17: "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."

It is only as we are thinking and acting and speaking under the unrestricted influence of the Word of God, illuminated for us by the indwelling Spirit of God, that we are capable of thinking and living and acting in such a way that it honors – and does not dishonor – the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In our last three messages in this series, we have been examining what is, in fact, the opposite of Biblical separation. The opposite of Biblical separation is compromise with this present evil world.

The Pattern of Compromise

Three messages ago in this series, we saw that there is a pattern of compromise in the church today. We have seen that there are many warnings about this pattern in the pages of Scripture, and we are also given a number of examples of it in the

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pages of the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. And we also find this same pattern of compromise many times in the history of the church over the running centuries.

We saw that we also find this same pattern manifesting itself in a particular way in many churches today. A man comes in as the new pastor of what has been a sound, Bible believing church. And this man comes into the church, and into the pulpit, talking the talk that the congregation has been accustomed to hearing.

But over time, usually over the course of one or two years, things begin to change. The new man begins to change the worship of the church to make it more acceptable to the unbelieving world. The new man begins to change the emphasis in the pulpit away from expository preaching and in the direction of the use of Scripture texts, taken out of their context, to support a new and un-Biblical agenda in the church.

The new agenda may be the purpose driven church agenda. It may be the emergent church agenda. It may be a health and wealth agenda. It may be a material success or psychological wellness agenda. Or, increasingly in our own time, it may be a social justice agenda. But none of these agendas for the church are sanctioned by God.

We also saw that the man who does these things may not be a new man. In some cases these changes may be brought in by a man who has been the pastor of a church for many years, but now he has come under ungodly influences and he

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brings those ungodly influences into the church. The Word of God no longer has that unrestricted influence in the man's thinking. And so the church ceases to be a separated church and becomes a church that is in friendship and in compromise with this present evil world.

The Tragedy of Compromise

In our second-to-last message we saw not only the pattern of compromise, but also the tragedy of compromise. We saw that there is no such thing in the eyes of God as a harmless compromise with the world, or a small or temporary compromise in order to gain a supposedly godly result.

And as we began to study this particular aspect of the issue of separation versus compromise, we began to focus on the tragic history of King Solomon of Israel, who started out seemingly well in a spiritual sense, but ended up in personal spiritual ruin, and ended up leading the nation of Israel into spiritual ruin.

The Pride of Compromise

And then in our last message in this series, we saw not only the pattern of compromise, and the tragedy of compromise, but we also saw the pride of compromise. We saw that refusal to separate from the world and to separate ourselves unto God involves pride – the pride of compromise. In our time many Christians and many churches have adopted the attitude that compromise with the world actually demonstrates humility.

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But God's Word tells us that compromise with the world actually involves pride on the part of the Christian or a church. It involves thinking that we know better than God. It involves thinking that we can substitute our own fallible reasoning for the clear imperatives that are given to us in the infallible Word of God. The fact is that the path of separation – separation from the world and separation unto God – is the path of true humility.

The Two Aspects of Solomon's Compromise

This brings us today to an additional aspect of the problem of compromise, and this has to do with the evil fruits of compromise. Compromise always bears evil fruit. Now why is that? It is because of the simple fact that compromise is sin. Compromise is evil in the eyes of God. Compromise is rebellion against God. And so that rebellion will produce its evil fruit.

We find in the Word of God that even in cases where men compromised and then repented, they were not always able to undo or even to mitigate the effects of the sin that they had already committed. Sometimes God in His mercy does that for us. But in other cases God in His sovereign plan permits compromise to bear its full fruit.

And often that fact in itself becomes a test for a succeeding generation, a test of whether or not that generation will be loyal to God, will be separated unto God, or will compromise with the world.

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It is with these things in mind that I once again want to call your attention to the life and history of King Solomon of Israel. The things that Solomon did during his own lifetime affected the nation of Israel not only in Solomon's own time but for hundreds of years to come, many generations to come.

By all outward appearances, the early years of Solomon's reign, and the construction and dedication of the temple of God in Jerusalem, were the pinnacle of the history of the ancient nation of Israel. But even in those days, Solomon was already entering into compromises that his father David had avoided because his father David was uncompromisingly loyal to the God of Israel and never went after any other gods.

If we are to truly benefit from an understanding of the kind of compromise that Solomon entered into, we need to understand that there were two aspects to this compromise. The first aspect of the compromise of Solomon was family compromise – compromise regarding the things of God within his own household. Compromise within his own family.

The second aspect of Solomon's compromise was corporate compromise. Solomon led the nation of Israel in compromise with this present evil world.

But today I want to focus our attention on the first kind of compromise that Solomon entered into, compromise within his own household. That is where Solomon's compromise first manifested itself. It manifested itself in Solomon's disobedience of God's command to be separate from this present evil world and to be separated unto Him in his own household, his own family.

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God's Warning Against Compromise

We read in First Kings chapter 9, beginning in verse 25, that Solomon in the early days of his reign kept the three great commanded feasts of God – the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of the firstfruits, and the feast of ingathering. He made sacrifices to God at those times. He led Israel by example in the worship of God at those times.

But Solomon's observance of the commanded ordinances of God was not wholehearted. It was not done with singleness of heart. And that is where the seeds of the evil fruits of compromise were planted.

In First Kings chapter 9, we read of God's second appearance to Solomon. This was after the dedication of the temple. And God warned Solomon to walk in the integrity in which his father David walked, chapter 9, verse 4, "in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I [God] have commanded you," and to "keep My statutes and My judgments."

The Bloody Dowry of a Pagan Wife

But we read just a few verses later, in chapter 9, verse 16, that Solomon had married the daughter of Pharaoh king of Egypt as part of his compromise in order to gain political and military advantage with this pagan nation. And Solomon had received Pharaoh's daughter as his wife at the price of a bloody dowry.

Pharaoh had taken the city of Gezer, and he had burned it with fire, and he had killed the Canaanites who dwelled in that city, and he had given that ruined city as

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a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife, as a gift to Solomon – a bloody dowry.

Now there is great irony in this. We read in the book of Joshua chapter 16, 400 years before the time of Solomon, that God had commanded the children of Israel to destroy the Canaanites who were in the city of Gezer. They were commanded to destroy them because if they were not destroyed they would be a spiritual snare among them.

God said it would be so – Judges chapter 2, verse 3 – He said, "they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you" – literally, their gods shall entrap you. And in fact that is what happened.

And we also find in the subsequent history after the time of Solomon that this city of Gezer, which was rebuilt by Solomon after Pharaoh gave it to him, this city became an administrative center for the nation of Assyria, to enforce its dominion over the northern kingdom of Israel, and to enforce the carrying off of the people of the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity in Assyria.

And so this bloody dowry given by Pharaoh with his daughter to Solomon became an instrument in the subsequent captivity of the northern kingdom of Israel because of their continuing spiritual compromise and spiritual adultery in the eyes of God. Solomon facilitated that, but the problem had its roots in his own household.

Rehoboam: Son of a Forbidden Marriage

We also find that Solomon's successor Rehoboam was his son by marriage to a

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woman named Naamah, who was an Ammonite. The Ammonites were one of the pagan nations with whom God had forbidden the people of Israel to intermarry. Deuteronomy chapter 23 verse 3 tells us that Ammonites were forbidden by God to enter the assembly of the Lord, the worship of the Lord, even to the tenth generation.

And in Second Chronicles chapter 12 verses 13 and 14 the Word of God connects the fact that Solomon's wife Naamah, Rehoboam mother, was an Ammonitess, a pagan – God's Word connects that compromise on the part of Solomon, with the fact that Rehoboam "did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord." He "did not prepare his heart" – once again, in the original language this speaks of a failure to be loyal to God alone, without compromise.

"Do As I Say, Not As I Do"

But Rehoboam not only had a mother who was from the pagans. He also had the tragic example of his own father's failure to be loyal to God alone. In many respects, with Solomon it was a matter of saying to his own son, "Do as I say, not as I do."

In the opening chapters of the book of Proverbs, Solomon instructed his son to seek and to value wisdom, to shun evil counsel, to keep the commandments of God. In Proverbs chapter 3, beginning at verse 3, Solomon said to his son,

Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem
in the sight of God and man.

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Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.

And then in Proverbs chapter 3 verse 33 Solomon wrote this to his son:

The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the home of the just.

God's Curse Upon the Compromiser

Solomon said these things, and Solomon began his reign in this kind of wisdom. But not wholeheartedly. Not with singleness of heart. Not with undivided loyalty to God. Solomon compartmentalized his own life, and he led Israel to do the same. And he led his son to do the same. And that compartmentalization first took root in his own household. Solomon talked the talk of separation, but he walked the walk of compromise.

Dear friends, what Solomon wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Proverbs chapter 3, verse 33 is undeniably true even if Solomon did not heed those words: "The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the home of the just."

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"The curse of the Lord" – in the original Hebrew of the Old Testament, the word that is translated "curse" in this passage is a special word that is only used five times. Now there are several other words that are translated "curse" in the Old Testament that have to do with spiritual condemnation, with eternal damnation. But the word that is used in this verse is not one of those words.

This Hebrew word has a different significance. It has to do with being robbed of power. Literally, it has to do with being spiritually immobilized. It has to do with being bound and limited and ensnared by the consequences of disobedience toward God and compromise with the world.

How Is It With Your Household?

This, dear friends, is the lesson of the life of Solomon. It is a lesson that every one of us who names the name of Christ must heed.

As we confront the issue of Biblical separation, we must first of all confront it in our own hearts and in our own households. Is your own household spiritually separated from the world, and separated unto God? Are you letting the Word of Christ dwell richly within your own household? Are you letting the Word of God have unrestricted influence in your own home? Or are there areas of your personal life and your family life over which you have effectively placed a "No Trespassing" sign for the Word of God and the Spirit of God?

How is it with you as a Christian parent? How is it with your children? How is it for

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you as a Christian grandparent, or aunt or uncle, with those in the family who look to you for an example, those for whom God has given you spiritual responsibility?

Are you leading them, by your own example, in separation from the world, and separation unto God? Do they see, in the expressions of your own heart, of your own thinking, in your own walk and your own talk, that the Word of God has unrestricted influence? Or do they see compromise?

Is your family, your household, bound and limited and ensnared spiritually by the effects and consequences of spiritual compromise? Or are you living in freedom from compromise?

Much Is At Stake

Spiritual compromise can happen in many different ways, and Satan is a very subtle tempter, dear friends. But a great deal is at stake. The spiritual life and death of your own family members is at stake.

Solomon had great material wealth, and great political and military and economic power. Great personal glory. But he had great poverty and weakness and bondage and dishonor when it came to the things of God. You can have prosperity in the things of this world in your household, dear friend, but you may have it at the cost of poverty in the things of God. Prosperity in the things that are perishing, but poverty in the things that count for eternity.

How much is this present evil world influencing your home? Will the next

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generation of your family be spiritually separated – strong in the things of God, wealthy in the things of God, unbound and un-impooverished by compromise – or will your children live their lives in the weakness and spiritual frustration of compromise with this present evil world? Or will your children perhaps turn away from God entirely because of your compromise? Will they be lost for eternity?

These are vital questions, dear friends, and as we continue this series in our next message, the Lord willing, we are going to look further at this vital aspect of the Bible's command for Christians and families to be separated from the world, and separated unto God.

About the Broadcast

The Scripture-Driven Church airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is that of the Great Commission: to preach the Gospel to the world, and to equip believers to stand upon and live by the sole authority of God's Word, to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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