

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



THE LENEXA EDIFIER



John 8:32

"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

March 31, 2019

WILL YOU BE DECEIVED ALSO?

Jim Stauffer

"But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth." (1 Timothy 4:1-3)

As we read a text such as this, the seriousness of the matter strikes home. Listen to the portions of this text that carry the warning Paul gives to Timothy the evangelist. First, the Holy Spirit is the source of this information. That means, according to the same apostle in **1 Cor. 2:10-13**, this message is from the mind of God. He tells us the Holy Spirit is the only One Who knows the mind of God and it is His role to reveal it. Second, the Spirit warns there will come a time when men will leave the faith (**Jude 3**) and give attention to doctrines of demons. They will do this by means of lies. Lies chosen from the ideas presented to them by demons or those opposed to God, angels or servants of Satan (**2 Cor. 11:13-15**). The final piece in this warning is these doctrines of demons will be such that they will forbid things that God deems good and appropriate to be shared by those who believe and know the truth.

I confess to you this frightens me. When men who have the power over the thoughts of other men will lie and deceive simply to lead others away from God to practice things THEY deem better than what God has authorized, they have the power to bring condemnation on others. At the same time, they with their lies interfere with the evangelist such as Timothy as he tries to teach the simple message of the gospel of Christ.

It is far too easy for us to look at a passage that speaks of a false doctrine of forbidding marriage and abstaining from foods designed by God for the sustenance of His creation and think of the Catholic and other doctrines that make a show of not eating certain foods at times specified by the church. And further a

doctrine that forbids those they have installed as leaders of the religion from taking a wife and rearing a family. This makes everyone but that denomination wonder if their priests were allowed to be married men with a happy family life, would that profession be as attractive to the multiple pedophiles they have installed.

Yes, it is simply amazing how the doctrines of demons can have truly devastating consequences. But then what does one expect when he challenges the will of God with his own?

But this warning was and is not limited to just this one very obvious application. It is a general principle that will continue to manifest itself in the deceitful and cowardly decisions by men who profess to preach and teach for God and Christ.

How about the religious leaders who openly deny the biblical teaching on homosexuality? See how they have followed the pattern of the Spirit's warning. They have first fallen from the faith, led by deceitful doctrines of demons and then propagated them with lies of their own. Will there be serious consequences from these choices? Of course! **Hosea** said in **8:7**, *For they sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind....*

While men have for years perverted the gospel of Christ by altering its message, we are now in an age when the alterations are over issues of morality. God has always demanded His children comport themselves with integrity concerning His revelation of righteousness. Men have altered the word to make the worship and the work of the church more pleasing to themselves. Now they are altering the very fibre of righteousness and in the words of Isaiah the prophet, they now *call evil good and good evil;... (Isa. 5:20).*

Is there a hidden blessing for the faithful in these newest denials of truth? It is possible the contrast is sharper for the world to truly see the *light of the world* and the *salt of the earth (Mat. 5:13-16)*. It just may be the ones deceived by this latest message are only those who would prefer living among such degradation.

Boldness in the Book of Acts by Shane Scott

The book of Acts begins and ends with bold proclamation of the gospel. Though our translations often obscure this, the word translated “boldness” elsewhere in Acts is the same word Peter uses in his sermon at Pentecost: *“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried” (2:29; the old Geneva Bible renders it, “I may boldly speake unto you”).* And at the end of Acts, Paul is in Rome, *“proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance” (28:31).*

This term had a special connotation in the first century. It “described the right of citizens to say anything in the public assembly, openness to truth, and the courage of openness or candour” (David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* p. 194). In our culture we cherish a similar right to freedom of speech. The reason such rights are protected is because speaking so freely is not always popular. But it was a hallmark of the preaching of the apostles.

The fourth chapter of Acts gives us an account that features the boldness of the apostles.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished (4:13).

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness (4:29).

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness (4:31).

What made the apostle so bold? How can we follow their example of boldness?

In the first place, we preach a message that inspires boldness. The account in **Acts 4** is triggered by the effort of the apostles to proclaim *“in Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (4:3).* This message, combined with the miraculous healing of a man who had been born lame, *“greatly annoyed”* the Sadducees (who of course did not believe in the resurrection at all, much less that Jesus was raised). But Peter and the apostles were undeterred.

“Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:8-12).

Peter and the apostles were witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection. They were recipients of the Spirit and

enabled through that Spirit to perform miracles in the name of Jesus. And they were now following Jesus’ example in their ministry just as they had followed him personally during his ministry. The resemblance was striking even to the Jewish rulers, who saw the boldness of these men who were untrained in the rabbinical schools (just like Jesus, **John 7:15**).

This is what fired the passion of the apostles. They were convicted about their message, and that conviction inspired boldness. The same message should motivate us to speak with boldness. The historical bedrock of the resurrection of Jesus and the living presence of God in our lives should prompt us to share the gospel with determined courage.

And such courage is needed because we face opposition that requires boldness. At this point of the narrative, the early Christians are still very popular among the people generally (**4:21**). But they face increasing scrutiny from the Jewish ruling class, which will eventually turn into widespread hostility culminating in the murder of Stephen. Speaking openly and freely about the gospel carried risks, risks the apostles were willing to take.

So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, *“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:18b-20).*

There are places in the world today where openly preaching Christ can lead to arrest, imprisonment, or even death. Here in America, we do not face that kind of violent government resistance, but we do live in a culture that is increasingly antagonistic toward those who profess the Lordship of Christ. We need boldness to face this opposition with cheerful courage.

But we don’t have to face it alone. We serve a God who desires boldness. When the Christians in Jerusalem heard about the release of the apostles, they prayed in gratitude for God’s deliverance and in supplication for God’s encouragement.

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus (Acts 4:29-30).

And because God desires boldness, he answered their prayer: *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).*

You and I must serve the same God and preach the same message. We can call upon him just as Paul requested the Ephesians to pray for him, *“that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel” (Ephesians 6:19).*

We may not always feel up to the task (just as Peter

and the other apostles didn't). But God is always up to the challenge, and that is why we can do our duty with conviction and determination.

I've often heard sermons that call attention to patterns in the Book of Acts, such as the pattern in the accounts of conversion, or the pattern of the work done by the churches in Acts. But I have never heard a sermon about this pattern of boldness. To paraphrase something Jesus once said, *this we should do without leaving the other undone.*

LIVING AS GOD WOULD HAVE US LIVE

The way people conduct themselves falls under the category of *ethics*. Ethics refers to a set of moral principles, or, a system of moral values by which a person lives his or her life. You might have a guiding philosophy by which you live your life; your ethical decisions are made in accordance with this philosophy. Ethics is not peculiar to Christianity. The Apostle Paul argued that pagans, those who had no outward knowledge of God's law, still had some kind of inner, ethical sense. **Romans 2:14-15** says: *"For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them."*

Your perspective or worldview is the beginning point for the way you live your life. A humanist lives life differently than a Christian. An Islamic Jihadist lives his life differently than a Buddhist. An atheist (there is no God) lives life in a way that is different from a theist (there is a God). The ethics of your life are formed by how you view the world. Ethical actions begin with how you view your place in the world you live in.

A biblical ethic begins with God's word. *"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path"* (**Psalms 119:105**). How we act is based on what the Scriptures say to us. While the Bible is sixty-six books, it is really only one book. *"If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)"* (**John 10:35**). God's word is true, it cannot be broken, it is normative for true believers. All scripture is profitable; it rebukes, corrects, trains, and guides the Christian into all that is good and right (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). This includes moral and ethical living that pleases the Lord.

How, though, does one begin to make decisions about what is normative—that is, what is the norm? The word *norm* comes from the Latin word *norma* which originally meant a *carpenter's square*. The carpenter's square is used to make a straight line. It determines where the corner is to be, or which line is square, or which line is wrong and needs to be corrected. God's word can guide us, it can guard us, it can point out the way to go, and it acts as a principle.

Which route should we take? The Bible provides the right way to go. Is this decision a wrong decision? The Bible guards us against making wrong decisions. Are we lost in this world? The Bible acts as a compass, pointing out the right direction. Principles from God's word encapsulate examples; abstract ideas are fleshed out in the lives of men and women, some of whom acted right and some of whom acted in wrong ways. This is what true knowledge is all about. *"Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart"* (**Psa. 119:34**).

Randy Harshbarger

What I Learned by Fasting, Conclusion

The final thing I will mention having learned with my experiences fasting intermittently for the last six months or so is that you have to be willing to take the road less traveled. Those of you who know me, some of my AHS Classmates are regular readers; know that I have no real problem with being different. I'm about as different as they come, but that's just me. I wasn't an outcast, far from it. Many of you, on the other hand were probably part of a larger group and you should be thankful for that for it gave you many blessings over the years

BUT, and this is an important BUT, and it is where the spiritual aspect of this article comes to the forefront, there will come a time when you are faced with the need to choose between "fitting in with the group" and doing something "different". It may be something as innocent as trying a new way of looking at food, like me, or it may be starting your own business (That makes you different where I came from.) or it may be that you have come to the conclusion (gasp) that the religion your ancestors taught you wasn't the one you read about in the Bible (double gasp and faint!). Your spiritual and emotional maturity will be tested and revealed by your willingness to come to such a conclusion and then stick with the necessary consequences in spite of popular disapproval. Remember what Jesus said: *"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."*

Cleveland R. Reddinger Jr.

"If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain." (**1 Tim. 6:3-5**)

Let us be reminded to pray for those we support who are preaching in other areas of this country and also of the world. Remember to pray for Kyle Bennett in Boston Ma., Matt Hodge in Marshfield, Mo. and Cleveland Reddinger in El Dorado, Ks. Overseas we need to remember, Wilfredo Pelino and Jonathan Sapitula in the Philippines as well as Moses Tivane in Mozambique.

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10