

## THINGS THAT BRING DEPARTURES FROM THE FAITH

### INTRODUCTION:

1. My subject matter in this meeting is not pleasant; I take no joy in the things I will say, but I will say them because it is necessary that they be said -- "*for you it is safe*" that I say them (Phil. 3:1).
2. God's people have never been faithful to Him for many years at a time; we can see this by studying the Old and New Testament.

(1) II Thess. 2:7 -- 53 A.D. -- 20 years from Pentecost

3. The generation after Joshua is a good example of how fast apostasy can come among God's people.

(1) Israel, under Joshua, was faithful to the Lord (Josh. 24:31): "*And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel.*"

(2) But the next generation "*knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done in Israel*" (Judges 2:10).

(3) The characteristics of this apostasy:

1. They were ignorant of God's ways (Judges 2:10).

(1) "*They turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so*" (Judges 2:17).

(2) "*But every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" (Judges 17:6).

2. They forsook the God who had saved them: "*And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth*" (Judges 2:13).

4. The preceding generation had failed in their responsibility.

(1) Priests were to read the Law to the people every seven years (Deut. 31: 9 -13).

(2) The elders of the people.

1. They were the governing body (Numbers 11: 16 - 17).

2. The Law was delivered to them (Deut. 31:9).

3. They were to see that it was taught and observed.

(3) Parents:

1. Were to teach their children at home (Deut. 4: 9, 10; 6: 7 - 9).

2. Failure to teach would produce ignorance.

(4) The people themselves should have desired that the Law of God be read (Psa. 1: 1, 2; 119: 97).

1. They followed their own impulses instead.

5. God's people apostatized in the "last days" just as Israel did:

(1) I Tim. 4: 1 - 6; II Tim. 4: 1 - 5; II Thess. 2: 1 - 12; Acts 20: 28 - 31

6. Let us notice some things today that bring apostasy.

#### I. A LACK OF BIBLE STUDY AND BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

1. God said through Hosea: "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*" (Hosea 4:6).
2. The Hebrews were rebuked for a failure to study (Heb. 5: 11 - 14).
3. Peter said, "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*" (I Pet. 2:2).
4. Peter said we are to be able to give a reason for our hope (I Pet. 3:15).
5. Paul told the Ephesians to "*understand what the will of the Lord is*" (Eph. 5:17).
6. Paul told Timothy to study ( II Tim. 2:15).
7. Every member of the church needs to be informed on:
  - (1) The church and its Organization.
  - (2) The work of the church.
  - (3) The plan of salvation.
  - (4) Worship.
  - (5) Bible authority and how it is established.
  - (6) Marriage, divorce and remarriage-- Matt. 19:9
  - (7) Worldliness--I John 2: 15 - 17
  - (8) What is wrong with denominationalism, Calvinism, Instrumental music, institutionalism, and Premillennialism.

#### II. WHEN PREACHERS QUIT PREACHING THE GOSPEL IN ITS FULNESS

1. When preachers quit preaching the gospel in its fullness, a departure from the faith is not long in coming.
2. Simple, straight-forward, distinctive gospel preaching will save the church from error and set it apart from every other religious institution on earth.
3. Gospel preaching not only sets forth the truth in a positive way, but it refutes sin and error wherever it is found --in the church or out of the church--II Tim. 4:2
4. Gospel preaching is based upon truth; time cannot change the nature of gospel preaching (I Pet. 4:11).
5. Let us look at the distinctive characteristics of gospel preaching in the first century:
  - (1) Inspired preachers did not deal in generalities.
    1. Sin was pinpointed and condemned.
      - (1) Peter on Pentecost (Acts 2: 22 - 23).
      - (2) Paul to the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1: 6 - 9 ).

(3) Paul rebuked Peter -- Gal. 2: 11 - 16

6. **Foy E. Wallace** said: "The strength of the church is found in the truth, and the defense of it."

(1) The disposition of tolerance and compromise will ruin the church of the Lord.

(2) There can be no compromise with false teachers, institutionalism, false doctrine on divorce and remarriage, Calvinism, denominationalism or any other "ism".

(3) All error and "isms" must be met with the force of gospel and the determination to "put it down" (II Cor. 10: 4, 5 )

7. Today many preachers have been influenced by the positive thinking philosophy.

(1) They say preach "positive sermons" and "let error alone".

(2) The impact of this philosophy on preaching:

1. It eliminates doctrine from preaching.

2. It eliminates all forms of controversy.

(1) In the Lord's church today there is a great wave of indifference toward false teachers and false doctrines.

(2) Many brethren don't want error exposed -- Eph. 5:11; I Tim. 1:3; II Pet. 2: 1 - 3; Acts 20: 29 - 30; Matt. 7:15

3. It is preaching with little reference to the Bible.

(1) Positive preaching is filled with "testimonials" and illustrations of men who have achieved success.

(2) It is preaching that sounds more like a "fireside chat" than a gospel sermon.

### III. THE WRONG ATTITUDE TOWARD TRUTH

1. Departures from the faith always begin with the wrong attitude toward truth (II Tim. 4: 2 - 4).

2. Paul said, "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine*" (I Tim. 4:3).

(1) They won't listen to the truth.

(2) They have a thirst for "novelties" in teaching.

(3) They want preaching that will offer peace to a troubled conscience, yet will allow them to go on with their old self-indulgent life.

3. They don't love the truth -- II Thess. 2:10; Psa. 119: 104; 119: 97, 128

(1) They don't love the truth on:

1. The church and its work.

2. How Christians are to live -- Titus 2: 11 - 12; James 1:27

3. On worship.

4. The plan of Salvation.
5. On Divorce and Remarriage (Matt. 19:9).
6. Unity and Fellowship (I Cor. 1:10; II John 9 - 11; Eph. 5: 11).

#### IV. A DUAL CONCEPT OF THE GOSPEL -- THAT IT IS SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL

1. Many in the church have bought this concept.
2. They no longer believe that preaching the gospel to the lost and edifying the saved is the primary function of the church (Luke 19:10; Matt. 28: 19 - 20).
3. They believe that the church must provide man's material and social needs. Churches provide:
  - (1) Relief programs for all the poor.
  - (2) Day-care centers for working mothers.
  - (3) They give to secular educational institutions to provide secular education.
  - (4) Special buildings with "fellowship halls", kitchens, rooms for showers, and gyms (etc.).
4. The social gospel is "*another gospel*" (Gal. 1: 6 - 9).
5. The purpose of the gospel of Christ is the salvation of the souls of men (Mark 16: 15, 16; Rom. 1:16; Luke 19:10).

#### V. MANY DEPART BECAUSE THEY DRIFT FROM THE TRUTH

1. We are warned about drifting from the Truth -- Heb. 1:1; Eph. 4:14
2. The causes of drifting:
  - (1) We drift when our mind is not anchored to the Truth -- Luke 8:13; Matt. 13: 20 - 21; Prov. 23:23
  - (2) The word is not mixed with faith in the hearts of many -- Heb. 4:2; 3:12
  - (3) Some drift from the truth because they do not love it -- II Thess. 2:10; Psa. 119; 47, 113
  - (4) Some drift from the truth because they feel no obligation to know the truth -- John 8:32; Acts 17:11; Heb. 5: 12 - 14
  - (5) Some drift because of neglect -- Heb. 2:3
    1. They neglect to attend Bible Study -- Matt. 28:20; II Tim. 2:15
    2. They neglect to attend all the assemblies -- Heb. 10:25
    3. They neglect to pray -- I Thess. 5:17; James 5:16
    4. They neglect personal Bible study -- II Tim. 2:15
      - (1) When issues arise you must study them.
  - (6) Some drift because of evil influences -- I Cor. 15:33
    1. Family and social ties have strong influence on all of us -- Matt. 10: 34 - 37

## VI. MANY DEPART BECAUSE OF COWARDICE AMONG THOSE CLAIMING TO BE GOD'S PEOPLE

1. God has never had any use for a coward -- when Israel went to battle He did not want them to be afraid -- Deut. 20:1
2. Men who were fearful and fainthearted were to be let go and returned to his house lest he make others fainthearted -- Deut. 20:8
3. God told Gideon, as he fought against the Midianites, to let the fearful and afraid go home -- Judges 7: 3, 7
4. John said the fearful would be lost -- Rev. 21:8
5. The coward will not stand for what he knows to be right -- John 12: 42 - 43
6. Peter said we are to add courage -- II Pet. 1:5
7. Many today are too fearful to stand and be counted when error is taught.
8. They say, "Let us have unity" --If you teach the truth you will stir up trouble -- II John 9 - 11

## VII. SOME HAVE NO REAL DESIRE TO BE NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANS

1. Many don't want all the truth -- John 8:32; 17:17
2. They don't want all the truth on the church and its work
3. They don't want all the truth on how Christians are to live -- Tit. 2: 11 - 12
4. They don't want all the truth on how Christians are to worship -- John 4:24
5. They don't want all the truth on the plan of salvation.
6. They don't want all the truth on what a child of God must do to get forgiveness when he sins -- Acts 8:22; I John 1:9
7. They don't want all the truth on Unity and Fellowship -- Eph. 5:11; II John 9 - 11; John 17: 20 - 21; I Cor. 1:10

## CONCLUSION:

1. I hope this lesson will help us all to be more aware of things that cause departures from the faith.
2. Let us all be watchful for these things that can bring departures.
3. Let us **HOLD FAST** to the Truth -- II Tim. 1:13