

Series: *Biblical Separation*

Title: "Today's Crisis of Compromise" (Colossians 3:16-17, James 4:4)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 6/15/2014

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If you have been listening to these broadcasts for any length of time, you have probably noticed that we always begin in the Scriptures. There is a very good reason why I do that, and the reason is that God commands it. If I do not expound the Word of God to you, then I have nothing to say that is worthwhile for you to listen to. It is not my job to preach my own word, to give you my own thinking, but to give you God's thinking. The minister of the Word is just that. To be a minister means to be a servant.

Dear friend, I fail God and I fail you if I ever fail to be a servant of the Word of God. Along with the Apostle Paul, I say to you that I am an ambassador of Christ. The job of an ambassador is not to speak his own words, but to communicate the words of the One who has sent him.

And so that is why we begin each message in the Word of God. It is the only place that we can legitimately begin. This is our authority. As our announcer said at the beginning of this broadcast, the church of Jesus Christ must be the Scripture-driven church, relying on God's inspired and inerrant Word as our sole authority and our infallible critic in every area of life and ministry.

And that is why at the present time we are focusing on the Biblical doctrine of separation. This is a doctrine that we find throughout the Word of God. And so as we begin today I want to call your attention once again to the passage that has been the theme passage for this series of messages, Colossians chapter 3, beginning at verse 16:

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching

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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.

Solomon's Compromise

In the last several messages we have been examining the life of King Solomon of Israel in the light of these two verses in Colossians, and in the light of many other commands to be separate from the world and separate unto the Lord that are to be found from the very earliest chapters of the Old Testament.

We've seen that Solomon failed to let the Word of God dwell within him richly. He failed to allow the Word of God to have unrestricted influence within his own life and within his own household.

God had given Solomon great wisdom, but Solomon failed to exercise that wisdom righteously. He compartmentalized his life. There were many things that he did, many things that he instituted, and many relationships that he entered into that could not be done in the name of the one true and living God. But he did them anyway because he followed his own wisdom rather than the wisdom of God.

The problem began in Solomon's own heart, and it spread from there to his own household, and it spread from there to the eventual downfall of the entire nation of Israel. What may seem a small and isolated compromise is never small

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and never isolated. And in order for us to understand why this is true, I want to call our attention to a number of Scriptures today that help us to understand the true nature of compromise.

Why is there no such thing as a harmless compromise when it comes to the things of God? Why is it that there is no such thing as an isolated compromise? Why is it that there is no such thing as a "good" compromise – the pragmatic kind of compromise that will supposedly eventually produce a godly result? Let us begin to examine these questions together.

All Compromise Is Sin

The thing that we must understand, first of all, is that all compromise with the world is sin. Let me repeat that: All compromise with the world is sin. No exceptions.

Let me point you to several Scriptures that speak of this. And if you are not able to turn to them, I hope that you will write down the references, or perhaps go to our website after the broadcast and download a full transcript of this message. Or, you can write to us at the address we'll give at the end of this broadcast, and we will send you a copy of today's message.

And so, let me now point you to several Scriptures that declare to us that all compromise with the world is sin. First of all, James chapter 1, beginning at verse 14. James chapter 1, beginning at verse 14:

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But each one [that is, each person who opens himself to compromise] is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. (James 1:14-16)

And this was certainly true of Solomon, was it not? He was deceived. He was drawn away by his own desires, not the desires of God. He permitted himself to be enticed by this present evil world. And the result was that small, seemingly isolated, seemingly harmless compromise grew and grew and grew, and when it was full-grown, it brought forth death in the nation of Israel – both physical death and also spiritual death.

What is the lesson that we must learn from this? We find it in the verses that follow in James chapter 1. James chapter 1 beginning at verse 21. We must not be deceived. This is what we must do, verse 21:

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness [notice that word "all" – it means all without exception] and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

In other words, as we've seen in Colossians, let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, let it have unrestricted influence within you. James 1, verse 23:

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For if anyone one is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

In other words, the Word of God does not change that man who is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, who does not let the Word of Christ dwell in him richly. But, verse 25,

He who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:21-25)

Notice the words, dear friend: "He who *looks into* the perfect law of liberty." He who "looks into" the Word of God. The idea in the original language is that someone who "looks into" the Word of God is someone who wants to understand it carefully, wants to understand it fully, wants the Word of God to have that unrestricted influence within his mind and his life.

And notice also that the person who does this in a way that pleases God is a person who "continues in it." The idea of those words in the original language is that someone remains in close proximity to something, and that something remains in close proximity to him.

In order to live lives and to think thoughts that are separated from this present evil world and separated unto our holy God we must remain in the Word of God,

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and the Word of God must remain within us. And that can only happen if we are continually and systematically reading and studying and absorbing and applying the truth of the Word of God.

It is not that we will never have questions about the Word of God. But we must never harbor an attitude of *objection* to the Word of God. That is where compromise begins. That is why compromise is sin. Compromise is, by its very nature, opposition to the truth of the Word of God.

God Opposes the Compromiser

Let me next call your attention to the very strong and unequivocal statement that we find in James chapter 4, verse 4. And keep in mind, dear friends, that James is writing to those who profess Christ. And he says this:

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:4)

This is the nature of compromise. It is spiritual adultery in the eyes of God. The words that are translated "friendship with the world" in the New King James translation are actually better rendered in the original King James. The accurate meaning of the words is not "friendship with the world" but "the friendship of the world." Dear friend, this passage is telling us that when we seek the friendship of the world, as Solomon did, we incur the enmity of God. The

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hostility of God. The antagonism of God.

Let me remind you of something that I said in a previous message. You are either separated from the world, or you are separated from God. It is a matter of the will. You are either seeking to be separated from the sinful influences of this world and its ways, or you are in fact seeking to be separated from the holy influence of God and His Word. And that is why, in the verses that follow in James chapter 4, the Holy Spirit declares to us that

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Therefore submit to God. Resist the Devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. (James 4:6-8)

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." Is it any wonder that the spiritual lives of so many Christians and so many churches are so weak today? Is it any wonder why so much of the church is so spiritually ineffectual today? Is it any wonder why so many Christians and so much of the church today are wealthy in the things of this world but in poverty concerning the things of God?

Pride has entered in. Man's word, not God's Word, has taken preeminence. God will not let this stand. God will not let this go unchallenged. He will not bless it. All compromise is sin in His sight. Matthew chapter 6, verse 24: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other."

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That is what the sin of compromise brings about. What we see in the lives and thinking of many Christians, and in many Christian homes, and in many professing Christian churches today, is the idea that it is such a bother to be loyal to God. It is such an inconvenience. It is such an obstacle to what men want.

Because many who profess to be Christians, many who profess to be Christian parents, and many churches that profess to be Christian churches, are not loyal to the Word of God and the holiness of God, they have in fact in their heart of hearts come to despise God and to despise His Word, because it gets in the way of their agendas.

It gets in the way of what the individual thinks that he should be able to do with his own life. It gets in the way of what parents think that they should be able to do in their own homes. It gets in the way of how the church thinks that it should operate in order to be acceptable to the unbelieving world. But all of that is enmity with God. All of it is rooted in the pride that God opposes and resists.

"God resists the proud..." In the original language, the words literally mean that God places Himself in battle array against the proud. God places Himself in battle array even against the Christian who has decided to go the way of compromise instead of abiding in the way of separation.

Recognizing the Crisis of Compromise

In Galatians chapter 2, the Apostle Paul speaks of those who came into the

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church who sought to bring the influences of the world into the church at that time. He says, Galatians chapter 2 beginning at verse 4, that they were trying to "bring us into bondage." But, he says, Galatians chapter 2 verse 5, "we did not yield submission [to them] even for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue..." No compromise. No attempt to gain the friendship of the world. No sacrifice of the truth. Not "even for an hour."

When someone attempts to bring the influences of the world to cause spiritual compromise in our minds, in our homes, and in the church, we must recognize it for what it is: It is a grave spiritual crisis. It is a critical test of our loyalty to Christ and His Word. We must not fail. We must not compromise. We must not allow such things to have a foot in the door, no, not "even for an hour."

So many people in so many churches today are not being told that there is a crisis of compromise. Jeremiah chapter 8 verse 11 speaks of the false prophets in Israel who glossed over the great sin of the people of Israel and said "'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace." They encouraged the people to lift up their hearts in pride rather than to recognize and to be ashamed of the fact that they, by their compromise, had committed abomination in the eyes of God.

Jeremiah chapter 8 verse 12 says that because of the work of false prophets among the people, they did not even "know how to blush" in shame over their sin. That is the state of so much of the church today. That is the state of so many post-evangelical pulpits today. That is the state of mind of so many individual Christians

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and so many Christian parents today. There is no shame. They are at peace with the world, so they think that they are at peace with God. But the fact is that they are at enmity with God because of their spiritual friendship with the world.

Many Christian parents are effectively sacrificing their children on the altar of compromise by remaining in a church that engages in worldliness in its worship, worldliness in its approach to evangelism, worldliness in its preaching, worldliness in so many other things. Many a young person in this present generation who is raised in a Christian home, and professes faith in Christ, forsakes that faith as an adult by choosing an unbelieving spouse.

Many a Christian family still sends its children into the pagan hellhole of secular education. And I use the word pagan advisedly. The entire agenda of government-sponsored education, not only in the United States, but in any country we may name – the agenda is a humanist agenda, the preeminence of man, not the preeminence of God. The agenda is the destruction of faith in the Word of God and in the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Dear friends, God's standards have not changed. God's righteous demands have not changed. The work of the true and faithful preacher of the Word has not changed. It is the same as it was in the time of Israel. What was that work? It was not the work of saying, "Peace, peace!" when there is no peace. The work of the true and faithful preacher of the Word today is the same as it was in Isaiah's time. Isaiah chapter 58, verse 1 – the Lord commanded this:

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Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. (Isaiah 58:1)

Dear friends, there is precious little of that happening in our churches today. There is precious little of that happening in our homes today. Pastors are not pointing people to the righteous standard of the Word of God so that they may see their sins and repent of their compromise. Christian parents are not upholding the standard of the Word of God, the standard of separation, in so many homes today, and so we see young people compromising and departing from the true faith in growing numbers.

We need not wonder why so many professing Christian homes and so many professing Christian churches are in the condition that they are in today. There is a crisis of compromise today just as there was in the time of Solomon. Solomon's compromise began in his own heart. It spread to his own household. And then it spread to the throne room of the kingdom of Israel, and from there into every corner of the nation of Israel.

What may have seemed to be small and isolated compromises in the beginning, temporary compromises, pragmatic compromises, seemingly harmless compromises – those compromises were none of those things. They led to the spiritual downfall of the entire nation. That, dear friends, is the true nature of compromise. It is sin. It is a little leaven that leavens the whole lump. It begins in isolation, but left to grow it will bring forth widespread spiritual death.

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And so let me close this message with the reminder and the exhortation that we find in Second Corinthians chapter 10, beginning at verse 3:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

May it be so with every one of us. Amen.

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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