

FROM SUCH WITHDRAW THYSELF

1 Timothy 6:3-5

INTRODUCTION

- In the spiritual warfare that we are engaged in, our enemy, the subtle, deceiving, father of lies – the devil – has his agents who will infiltrate by stealth the Lord's churches, and seek to destroy them.
- Note the secretive nature of these enemy agents (Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:29-30; Galatians 2:4; 2 Peter 2:1-2)
- Gnosticism and Judaism were drawing many away from the truth, and so a significant portion of the NT epistles are devoted to refuting false teaching, eg. Galatians, Colossians, 2 Peter, 1 and 2 John.
- One of the characteristics of these false teachers is that they can be difficult to identify.
- As the devil is transformed into an angel of light, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).
- In our text today, Paul lists the characteristics of these men.
- It is, in a sense, the negative counterpart to the qualifications of a bishop in chapter three.
- These verses also show the solemn responsibility that pastors have in guarding the church against false teachers. (Acts 20:28-31)
- False teaching is a prominent theme throughout 1 Timothy (1:3-11; 4:1-5; 6:20-21).
- This ought to show us how prominent the exposure of false teaching should be in the churches of Christ today.

In these verses we are shown three truths about false teachers:

I. THEY ARE CONTRARY TO SCRIPTURE

- A. Heterodoxy – doctrine which is contrary to the Scriptures

1. The Greek verb for “teach otherwise” *heterodidaskalei* is also used in 1:3
2. In the immediate context, this applies to teaching contrary to vv. 1-2 regarding the proper attitude of servants to their masters.
3. Antinomianism teaches that believers are under no law and have a license to sin
4. There is clearly a broader application to any teaching that is contrary to the word of God (Isaiah 8:20)

B. Wholesome words

1. Note the importance of “words”, not “ideas” or “thoughts” (Matthew 4:4)
2. God’s word imparts life and health to the soul (John 6:68)
3. In contrast, false teaching brings spiritual sickness (2 Timothy 2:17)

C. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ

1. These include the words recorded in the gospels
2. The entire Bible contains the words of Christ

D. The doctrine which is according to godliness

1. Sound doctrine promotes godly living
2. Right belief produces right behaviour

II. THEY ARE CORRUPT IN THEIR SOULS

A. Heterodoxy emanates from a conceited heart

1. They are puffed up with knowledge (1 Corinthians 8:1)
2. They are wise in their own conceits (Romans 12:16)
3. They are ignorant of spiritual truth (Proverbs 1:7)
4. They morbidly seek to argue over words

5. The Greek word for “doting” means properly to be sick; to languish, to pine after.
- B. The fruit of heterodoxy is sin
1. Their fruits demonstrate their ungodliness (Matthew 7:16-20)
 2. Envy and strife (Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:20; Philippians 1:15; James 3:14-16)
 3. Railings – evil and abusive speaking
 4. Evil surmisings – wicked opinions
 5. Perverse disputing – time-wasting, unprofitable discussions
- C. Heterodoxy comes from a corrupt mind
1. Their corrupt doctrine demonstrates the depravity of their hearts
 2. They are destitute of the truth (John 9:41)
 3. The mind must be submitted to the obedience Christ(2 Cor 10:5)
- D. They suppose that gain is godliness
1. False teachers desire filthy lucre (cf. 3:8; Titus 1:11)
 2. These people used religion to pursue worldly betterment and encouraged others to do so as well.
 3. The so-called “prosperity gospel” is prevalent in our day

III. WE ARE COMMANDED TO SEPARATE

- A. The last part of v. 5 is omitted from the critical Greek text used in in modern bible versions
- B. The doctrine of separation is neither taught nor practised in most churches today
- C. The Scripture teaches separation sin, the world, the unbelievers, and believers who err (1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Thess 3:6; Matt 18:15-18)
 1. Christian fellowship is not determined according to whether someone is saved or not

2. Christian fellowship is not determined by five “fundamental” doctrines
 3. Christian fellowship is determined by obedience to all the teaching of Scripture (Romans 16:17-18)
- D. The following doctrines are grounds for separation
1. The ordinances – baptism & the Lord’s Supper (Ephesians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 11:18-34)
 2. Spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 13:8)
 3. Women preachers (1 Timothy 2:12)
 4. Contemporary worship (Ephesians 5:15)
 5. Dress standards (Deuteronomy 22:5; 1 Timothy 2:9)
 6. Eschatology (Revelation 20:6)
 7. Creation (Exodus 20:11)
 8. Bible versions (Psalm 12:6-7; Matthew 24:35)
- E. Unity at the expense of truth is not Biblical unity
1. Those who engage in ecumenism demonstrate that their love of unity is greater than their love of God and holiness
 2. Ecumenists love the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:43)

CONCLUSION

1. In these last days, evil men and seducers grow worse and worse (2 Timothy 3:13)
2. We must be vigilant, lest we too fall victim to their errors (1 Corinthians 10:12)
3. The Christian must carefully study the word of God in order to identify false teaching and false teachers
4. Those who reject the truth of Scripture must be removed from the church and separated from (1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 3:10-11)