

Keeping the Lord's Charge:
Lesson Two: Keeping Watch for False Teachers

Intro:

A. Began last Sunday by looking at a relatively unknown group of people called the

Rechabites:

- i. Their story was found in Jer. 35, and while brief in the amount of verses it takes to tell, the amount of applications from their good example is quite lengthy.
- ii. Their dedication to keeping the command of their forefather to abstain from wine and live a life that promoted that abstinence stood in stark contrast to the Israelites, whose dedication to the Lord was neither as strong, or as constant.
- iii. As also mentioned, their zeal to keep the charge of their father can be a very stinging contrast for God's people today
- iv. The application that we made in our first lesson was trying to apply that same dedication to the charge to always teach God's Law, and by doing so not only fulfill the command, but avoid the consequences of failing to do so.
- v. It seemed natural that since we began our study with our responsibility to teach God's law, our next lesson should be about the charge we've been given to Guard God's law:

B. Another lesson about false doctrine? We've just finished 2 Peter and Jude!

- i. Last week made the statement that their could be no *greater* pursuit than to diligently teach God's law
- ii. But *equal in importance* is the pursuit to diligently strive to keep it from being changed, diluted, and perverted
- iii. *Illus. of Irvan Lee's quote on false doctrine:*
- iv. Briefly use the rest of our time this morning to examine the scriptures, and point out a few characteristics of false doctrine and false teachers, that we will do well to keep in mind as we seek to diligently keep this charge as well.

i. False Doctrine is Never Benign: (*Matthew 7:15-23, Acts 20:28-31*)

a. **Think carefully** on these two passages: How did Jesus and the inspired Apostles carefully choose to describe the nature of both the teachers, and the effects of their teaching?

i. Those who seek to teach a message contrary to God's word are described as wolves: Savage, ravenous, predatory, wolves:

ii. This is not an accident, not the first illustration to pop into their heads: these words were chosen carefully to make specific points

1. The Lord compares these men as opportunistic feeders; those who look to pick off the easiest target possible:

a. That means they are looking for the spiritually sick, the weak, and the young and then targeting those Christians as a sheep to be torn apart and devoured.

2. In both Paul's admonition to the Ephesian elders, and Christ's message, they make it clear that their will always be casualties: spiritual deaths

a. In Matt. 7:19, the Lord makes it clear that the end of a false teacher that continues in their ways is destruction: a worthless tree to be cast into the fire

b. However, like the Devil whom their teaching serves, they are not going to go alone: Paul makes it clear in Acts 20:30 that disciples will be drawn away from the fold as well to their own destruction.

b. **It is not** content to be ignored; it must be confronted: (*illus. of Owen, Tyler, Mike*)

i. False doctrine is not a mildly pesky insect that just needs to be brushed away

ii. It is common advice that in order to survive a predator attack one should just play dead-- which is a good way to wind up dead:

1. The useful advice given by those in the wildlife profession is to calmly stand your ground: Isn't that exactly what James tells us to do: *James 4:7?* Resist!

2. The same is true to the devil's teachings: They must be resisted, confronted

c. There has never been nor will there ever be a scenario where teaching that is contrary to God's word has a place in the Church: it will always destroy, cause damage

2. It is Always a Message Without True Substance: (*Matt. 7:24-27*)

(This illustration as application in all areas of our lives: Any part of our life not built on a foundation other than the Lord has no foundation at all. One of the truest examples of this is false teaching: It is never built on the Lord, and when exposed by His Word, it cannot stand)

a. It is often a message that people want to hear at that time:

i. Jude warns of those who speak arrogantly in *Jude 16*:

1. First note that he says the sole purpose of their message is to flatter and enchant their audience.
2. But what sort of arrogance does he speak of? It is not in the sense of someone who is overly self assured, but the word literally means an empty wind:
3. In other words it is just a loud bloated message that is empty on the inside:
Peter Describes it best: (*2 Peter 2:17-19*)

ii. Paul also Warns of the consequences of their message: (*Romans 16:17-18*)

1. Not guarding against false teachers and their teaching will bring dissension in the Church, Hinder people in running their race, and will enslave Christians to something other than the Lord: (see Rom. 6 for how great that is)

iii. Again: notice the common traits in these passages:

1. A message based on empty, flattering speech
2. Targeting an audience who is not prepared to guard against it

b. It wants to imitate a true foundation, but it cannot stand (*Illus. of replacing deck boards*)

i. It was with great sadness that John had to report that the anti-Christ he was warning of were threats who had come out of the Church (*1 John 3:18*)

ii. Paul said that we shouldn't be surprised when a false message comes to use packaged in half truths: (*2 Cor. 11:13-15*)

1. *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.*

iii. The old saying about medicine and a spoon full of sugar is true: False doctrine is dangerous because it is what you want to hear, and it is easy to swallow

3. False Teaching is Custom Built: (*Illus. of signs on redeveloping lots, car salesmen...*)

- a. Whatever your problem is with Scripture, it can be solved with the magic eraser of “restudying the issue”-- *dangerous, dangerous words*
 - i. Problems with what Matthew 19:9 has to say about marriage? Restudy!
 - ii. Do you have friends or family lost in sin, but want to keep those relationships? Restudy?
 - iii. Commitment to services, personal responsibility to study, etc...
- b. False teaching constantly rebrands itself to be more appealing:
 - i. The swine flu? H1N1
 - ii. Radio Shack? The Shack
 - iii. Fast food? 6 dollar burgers
 - iv. etc

4. False Doctrine Never Goes Away; It waits for a Comeback (*Illus. of Shingles*)

- a. Consider the Gnostic teaching that was being addressed in 1 John 2:3-6
 - i. While there were many pieces to this false doctrine, perhaps the appeal for many was the idea that your spirit couldn't be affected by the actions of your body: In other words, this was a doctrine that handed our licenses for lasciviousness:
 - ii. Have you heard of many calling themselves Gnostics today? Did they all just go away?
 - iii. Have you heard people essentially teaching the same lies as the Gnostics?
 - iv. Consider the many forms this teaching has taken over the years:
 1. First Century Gnostics: permissiveness of bodily actions
 2. 16th Century Council of Trent: Issuing of indulgences: Don't worry about how you or your relatives live, because that debt can be paid off with money after you die.
 3. Abuses of John 3:15-17 to teach once saved always saved:
 4. Calvin: Don't worry about it, because God chooses those who will be saved anyway!

Conclusion: Must always be on guard for the destruction of a flared up doctrine: Many charges to keep: this one will serve us well to pursue