

Sermon Title: The God Directed Protection of a Called Church

Sermon Text: Romans 16:17-24

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to understand the need and nurturing required for protection from false teachers.

Sermon Proposition: There are 4 God directed practices for protecting the church and members.

- I. God directed protection requires the church to practice awareness. V.17a**
- II. God directed protection requires the church to practice avoidance. V.17b-18**
- III. God directed protection requires the church to practice abounding. V.19-20**
- IV. God directed protection requires the church to practice appreciation. V.21-24**

I. God directed protection requires the church to practice awareness. V.17a

To truly love someone is to strive for what is good for them and to oppose whatever harms them. The maturing Christians are to keep an eye out for those who would strive to cause dissension and hindrance among the flock locally and universally.

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

2 Timothy 2:23 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

The greetings of love displayed by Paul, also carry with it, a love based warning of protection against harmful, destructive, divisive, teachings and lifestyles that undermine the truth and reality of Christianity. Real Christian love will always be aware of evil, while being ready to forgive those who repent of their evil, but we must never condone or ignore evil in teaching or practice. Those who truly love Christ, love other believers, and will warn them of sinful, dangerous teaching and teachers.

1 Corinthians 13:6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

Therefore, Paul exhorts us to "keep an eye on and out for such people." The Greek word *skopeo* (keep an eye on), means to mark them as false teachers who are to be opposed and avoided. The word also carries the idea of looking at or observing with intensity. We get our English word "scope" or micro "scope", used to examine and scrutinize carefully.

The areas to examine and scrutinize are doctrinal falsehood and lifestyle. (**Acts 20:27-32**)

Matthew 24:24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Galatians 1:6-8 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, **7** which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. **8** But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Ephesians 4:14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

This does not imply that believers have a right to do physical harm to false teachers or heretics. (**Romans 13:1-4**)

Luke 3:17 "His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

Luke 9:54-56 And when His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" **55** But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. **56** "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save *them*." And they went to another village.

Matthew 26:52 cf But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

John 18:10-11 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. **11** So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

II. God directed protection requires the church to practice avoidance. V.17b-18

Paul warned the church at Rome to be aware of and to avoid false teachers. This illustrates the familiar theme throughout Romans of both/and relation between divine sovereignty and human responsibility to choose, we therefore must be diligent in the battle against darkness (**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**), but ultimate victory is assured and guaranteed (**v.20**).

Christians and churches are not to provide a debate, dialogue, or provide a platform for discussion, instead we turn away from, avoid, reject, and protect fellow believers, especially new converts and immature members. (**Acts 20:27-32**)

Ephesians 4:14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

Matthew 7:15-16 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. **16** "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?"

Matthew 24:24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

A. Reason #1 for avoiding is their motivation for serving is selfishness. V.18a

"Many false teachers devote their lives to the study of Scripture, but because they have never trusted in Christ for salvation and because they view the Bible as man's idea about God, rather than God's revelation to man, they distort His Word and twist it to fit their own sinful dispositions."

[John MacArthur, New Testament Commentary, Romans 9-16, p.375.]

"Even the rare false teachers and leaders who live modestly and spend their lives sacrificially helping others actually live for themselves. They seek to please God by their works, rather than faith in obedience to His Word." [Ibid. 375]

This means they are driven by their own self-interest and selfish desires often reflected in a pretentious, extravagant, and immoral lifestyle. (**2 Peter 1:20-2:3, 10-19**)

Philippians 3:18-19 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: **19** whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* their belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame-- who set their mind on earthly things.

2 Timothy 3:7-8 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. **8** Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;

Jude 12-13 These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving *only* themselves. *They are* clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; **13** raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

2 Peter 2:21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

B. Reason #2 for avoiding is their method of serving is speech. V.18b

1. by smooth words

Polite, plausible, persuasive, winsome, kind is used as a disguise for denying or manipulating the central truths of the Christian faith, they often promote unity at all cost, and ecumenism is usually the goal.

2. by flattering speech. V.18c

Job 32:21-22 Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; Nor let me flatter any man. **22** For I do not know how to flatter, *Else* my Maker would soon take me away.

1 Thessalonians 2:5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness-- God *is* witness.

Psalms 5:9 For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part *is* destruction; Their throat *is* an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue.

Psalms 12:2 They speak idly everyone with his neighbor; *With* flattering lips *and* a double heart they speak.

Ezekiel 12:24 "For no more shall there be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel.

Proverbs 20:19 He who goes about *as* a talebearer reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips.

Proverbs 4:5 Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.

3. in order to **deceive** the hearts of the simple. V.18d
The "simple" refers to the unsuspecting or naïve person.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. **14** And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. **15** Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

III. God directed protection requires the church to practice **abounding**. V.19-20

- A. Reason #3 for avoiding is the believer's sincere **obedience**. (Reputation) v.19

The greatest protection against falsehood is God's truth rightly divided, taught, and lived out. (**Romans 1:8**)

Is it necessary to sift through or play in the trash to recognize it for what it is? Because if we do, you eventually develop the stench of the trash you sift through!

1. The #1 result is leaders will be able to rejoice. V.19a
2. The #2 result is people will be wise in what is good. V.19b
3. The #3 result is Christian's ought to be simple in what is evil. V.19c

- B. Reason #4 for avoiding is the guaranteed **victory** of true believers. V.20

(**Hebrews 13:20; Romans 15:33; Genesis 3:15; Acts 12:7; 22:18; Revelation 22:7, 12, 20**)

IV. God directed protection requires the church to practice **appreciation**. V.21-24

v.21 Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius

1. Possibly a native of Cyrene one of the prophets and teachers in Antioch who participated in Paul and Barnabas' commissioning (**Acts 13:1-3**)
2. another form of "Luke," the author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts

Jason

One of the first converts in Thessalonica, who evidently let Paul stay in his home (**Berea Acts 17:5-10**)

And Sosipater, my kinsman, greet you

He was a Berean (**Acts 17:10-12**) who joined other believers in meeting Paul at Troas after He left Ephesus. Possibly a Jewish relative of Paul.

v.22 I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord

Paul's secretary, scribe, who wrote this letter as Paul dictated it, followed by a personal greeting.

v.23 Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church greets you

This is one of Paul's converts as Corinth (cf. 1 Corinthians 1-14). His full name was most likely "Gaius Tertius Justus (**Acts 18:7**). Possibly the host of the house church.

Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you

A common name in the New Testament times but found in Acts 19:22 or 2 Timothy 4:20. Held a prominent position with political power in the city

And Quartus a brother

A brother of Erastus or brother in Christ