

I. INTRODUCTION.

-  A. Scripture text: **1Corinthians 1:10-12** (from Tom Moore).
Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. [11] For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people*, that there are quarrels among you. [12] Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."
-  B. We have been discussing the idea of Moving the Church Forward.
- The church needs to be thinking about the future:
 - Looking forward, thinking forward, planning forward, and moving forward.
 - This is critical! The church's future depends on it!
 - See Phil. 3:12-14.
Not that I have already obtained *it*, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. [13] Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
-  C. In our past lessons we discussed:
- Challenges to accept:
 - Making a difference in the world.
 - Evangelizing our local community.
 - Developing leadership.
 - Abiding in God's word.
 - Enemies to defeat:
 - Ignorance.
 - Apathy.
 - Unbelief.
 - Sin.
- D. In this lesson we are going to discuss **dangers to avoid**:
- What if, after you entered the building today, I discovered that we had a rattlesnake loose in the building.
 - Now, I could keep quiet about it, since I wouldn't want anyone to get upset, and I wouldn't want people to get hurt trying to get out.
 - However, it must be handled, I think all would agree that if a rattler was loose under your pew, you'd want to know about it.
 - This is the reason we must discuss dangers that lie before the church, for they will stop, or kill our ability to move forward into the future.

II. THE DANGER OF FALSE DOCTRINE.

-  A. Definitions:
- "False" means that which untrue - a lie.
 - "Doctrine" is teaching - that which is taught.
 - If a doctrine is false is cannot produce what it claims.
- B. The Bible has many warnings about the dangers of false teachers who dispense false doctrine or teaching (Mt. 7:15; Ac. 20:28-30; 1Tim. 4:1-4; 6:3-5; 2Tim. 4:3,4).
(Mt 7:15) "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."
(Ac 20:28-30) "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. [29] "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; [30] and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."
(1Tim 4:1-4) But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, [2] by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, [3] *men* who forbid marriage *and* advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. [4] For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude;

(1Tim 6:3-5) If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, [4] he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, [5] and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

(2Tim 4:3-4) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; [4] and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

- C. There are at least a couple of ways we might deal with this problem:
1. We could try to identify every false doctrine, flag them, and then avoid them:
 - a. This would be a very cumbersome task and virtually impossible.
 - b. Besides, if we spend all our time with the bad, we will fail to learn the good.
 2. Or, we could identify that which is true, focus on that truth, learn and practice that truth, and thus detect and eliminate all that is false.
 - a. God gives us the truth so that we can know how to please Him in our faith, our worship, our service, the way we live our lives, and etc.
 - b. Doesn't it make sense to focus on that truth?
- D. The Bible is our source book of truth (2Tim. 3:16,17; 2Pet. 1:3).
- (2Tim 3:16-17)** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; [17] that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
- (2Pet 1:3)** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.
- E. We must focus on the truth to overcome error.

III. THE DANGER OF DIVISION.



- A. Division among believers has plagued the church since after it began (Rom. 14:1; 16:17,18; 1Cor. 1:10-12; 11:17,18).
- (Rom 14:1)** Now accept the one who is weak in faith, *but* not for *the purpose of* passing judgment on his opinions.
- (Rom 16:17-18)** Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. [18] For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.
- (1Cor 1:10-12)** Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. [11] For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people*, that there are quarrels among you. [12] Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."
- (1Cor 11:17-18)** But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse. [18] For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part, I believe it.
- B. Jesus knew that even Satan could not accomplish his work if his forces were divided (Mt. 12:25). Division will destroy every effort regardless of its merit, and it will also destroy the work of God.
- C. Jesus prayed specifically that His people would be united (Jn. 17:20,21).
- "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; [21] that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, *art* in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.
- Our unity is a determining factor in the world's acceptance of Jesus.
- D. Let us determine that we will move forward in the future as a unified body of people, and that we will do all within our power to avoid the dangers of division.
- E. NOT unity in diversity, but unity based solely on God's word.

IV. THE DANGER OF EXTREMISM.

-  A. Now the next two dangers are, in many ways, extensions of the two that I have already discussed (false teaching and division) -- “Extremism.”
1. That is, the tendency of some to go to extremes with what they believe, practice, or teach.
 2. It was very much a problem of the Pharisees.
 3. One of their stated goals was to live the letter of the law to the very best of their ability - **now that is a noble** desire, but extremism caused them to become unbalanced and unpleasing to God.
- B. Jesus told them:
1. They were concerned about small matters, but left vital things unattended (Mt. 23:23,24).
“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. [24] “You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!
 2. They were dead on the inside; hypocrites (Mt. 23:27,28).
“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. [28] “Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
- C. We need to be very concerned that we do not swing too far to the left (liberal) or right (conservative):
1. There is an old saying, “You can fall off a log on either end” (see Jo. 1:7).
“Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.
 2. We need to balance out the whole will of God, rather than over-emphasizing one aspect (Ac. 20:20,27).
(Ac 20:20) how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,
(Ac 20:27) “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.
 3. Extremism is frequently the root cause of both false doctrine and division, therefore, let us beware of the danger.

V. THE DANGER OF OVER-REACTION.

-  A. Over-reaction is similar to extremism, except here we are talking about how people react to things and not just how they act of their own accord:
1. Over-reaction comes in response to something that someone else does.
 2. Over-reaction often comes in the guise of things that will repair false teaching or division.
- B. Balance is the key, with our eyes always fixed on the word and will of God, determined to know and practice those things that are both true and unify us.
-  C. I believe that truth always lies between extremes. Stay in the “middle of the road:”
1. Find the right road (Mt. 7:13-14).
“Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. [14] “For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.
 2. Keep yourself stable (Eph. 4:14,15).
As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; [15] but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ,
 3. Walk in holiness (Isa. 35:8,9).
And a highway will be there, a roadway, And it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, But it *will* be for him who walks *that* way, And fools will not wander *on it*. [9] No lion will be there, Nor will any vicious beast go up on it; These will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk *there*,

4. Don't use your privileges as a license (Jude 4).
For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.
5. Live sensibly (Ti. 2:12).
instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

VI. CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

-  A. If the church is to move forward into the future we must realize the following dangers:
 1. False Doctrine.
 2. Division.
 3. Extremism.
 4. Over-reaction.
- B. We must avoid these dangers, or the work of the church will be destroyed.
- C. Are you doing your part?
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.