



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon Sermon Series
Supports Session 9: The Gospel's Forgiveness
Sermon Title: The Threat of False Teachers
Passage: Colossians 2:4,8

Connection to Colossians 2:4-15

False teaching was rife in the first century and is a threat to saving faith today. False teachers undermined the heart of the gospel—forgiveness by faith in Jesus. The empty philosophy of false doctrine attacked the incarnation and forgiveness of Jesus.

Introduction/Opening

Deception consists of mixing nine parts truth with one part error. The deceiver “spins” facts and doctrines to create an illegitimate emphasis or priority. Internet users are warned of ever-present scams. Email messages with clickable links can be just as dangerous. We are also to be diligent in our spiritual lives, being on the lookout for false teachers that carry the “mark” of deception.

Outline

1. Deceivers are common.
 - a. Paul addressed false teachers in Galatians that shifted discipleship from grace to works of the law. He corrected false teachers in Corinth who denied the resurrection. These deceivers then denigrated Paul personally. He defended himself in 2 Corinthians. In Thessalonica false teachers claimed the return of Jesus had already occurred and the disciples there had missed the blessed hope. Throughout his epistles, Paul addressed the false doctrines that aimed to diminish the truth Paul had shared with the churches.
 - b. Peter also cautioned of false teachers in Colossae. He warned that these false prophets who were fueled by greed would secretly introduce destructive heresies and exhibit shameful ways. This would foster poor reputations in the church (2 Pet. 2:1-3).
 - c. We guard our computers against malware, and we are alert for scams seeking our personal financial information, yet we are not always alert to the threat of false teachers!
 - d. We must respond with a simple presentation of the majesty of the gospel. Paul writes that in the fullness of time God sent His Son to fulfill the faith of Abraham (Gal. 4:4) that we might live in the freedom of grace (5:1). To the Colossians, Paul wrote that believers are reconciled to God and are to be holy before Him (Col. 1:22).

2. Deceivers are persuasive.
 - a. The false teachers in Colossae utilized the popular Greek idea that matter or physical life was evil and that God would not lower Himself to become human. The false teachers used popular ideas and employed them with a Christian spin. The result was a philosophy (Col. 2:8) empty of the gospel's saving power.
 - b. As the Colossian heresy struck at the identity of Jesus, so today's false teachers detract from the unique magnificence of Jesus. We must be aware.

3. Defeating deceivers
 - a. Paul and Epaphras contended for the spiritual health of the Colossians through fervent prayers (Col. 1:3; 2:1; 4:12) and patient teaching (1:23). They were successful.
 - b. Congregations must be wary of false teachers. Christians need not be suspicious and lacking in trust, but they must be prepared for deceivers. The apostle John warned his children that they must test the spirits as many false prophets were in the world (1 John 4:1). The church must do so today.
 - c. When Jesus warned of false prophets, He taught that the identity of the teacher would be obvious by the fruit of their lives. Believers should become familiar with their teachers. Supporting a stranger by financial contributions is a sure snare.
 - d. Believers must grasp that there is a received faith—a body of doctrine that must be treasured and adhered to. If a teacher emphasizes something else and fails to stress the magnificence of Jesus, they must be rejected.
 - e. Believers need not feel compelled to debate the unbelieving world, but they must intercede for and witness lovingly to the lost in our society.

Conclusion

To prevent counterfeiting money, special features like multicolor watermarks are printed on the special paper. These special markings are widely publicized by the Treasury Department so counterfeit bills may be detected with ease. To detect counterfeits, merchants only need to hold an authentic note up to the light and the distinctive markings will be obvious. For detecting false teachers, there must be a test. These leaders and their teachings must be held up to the Light to see if there is alignment. If a teacher fails this simple test of being held up to the standard of the gospel, they must be dismissed as counterfeits.

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