

What Makes A Great Church, Part 6 - Romans 16:18 – November 24th, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part six of a series titled, "What Makes A Great Church."
- For the benefit of those who weren't with us last week, I'm including verse seventeen because it's germane to our understanding eighteen.
- It's important to note that beginning in verse seventeen, the Apostle Paul goes from sending a greeting to his friends to warning about foes.

- More specifically, he begs them to be on their guard for false teachers, as wolves in sheep's clothing, who wouldn't spare the flock of God.
- So serious and dangerous are these wolves, this matter would rise to the level of Paul praying and weeping for them as he says in Acts 20.
- The reason he so urgently warns them is because he knows he must protect them from false teachers, and direct them to truth teachers.

10. Truth Teachers (Verse 17)

- v17 He urges them to watch out for and stay away from the divisive putting obstacles in their way, contrary to the teaching they had learned.
- This seems to indicate that they had been taught the truth, by teachers of the truth, and as such, could spot a contrary and false teaching.
- Preaching and teaching the truth in a church makes a great church, such that Christians will be well taught, and grounded in God's Word.

11. Grounded Christians (Verse 18)

(18) For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naïve people.

- v18 Paul says divisive people serve their own appetites, not Jesus, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naïve people.
- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is, it's not the grounded Christians that are deceived, it's the naïve ones.
- Naïve people, or as some of your translations render it, simple people, is referring to those who are naïve and ignorant of the Word of God.

As one commentator so aptly wrote, The word "simple" does not mean "dumb." It means "sincere." What's being said here is that there are sincere people who are being deceived by those who preach another Jesus Christ. Therefore, in your sincerity to want to learn more about the Lord or to be students of the Word, don't allow those who teach a different Jesus to come into your home. Don't engage in discussions with them. Don't spend time arguing with them. Mark them and avoid them.

Henry Morris - These two problem areas mean literally 'dissension and scandal' (the Greek for 'offenses' is skandalon). These would be caused by deviations from sound biblical doctrine and behavior, respectively. The church has been under attack by Satan with these two weapons ever since its beginning and Paul was warning the Roman Christians to watch out for these before they appeared. ...Those who cause such dissensions and scandals in the church often appear to be pious and talented followers of Jesus Christ, while in reality they are self centered and ambitious seekers of personal prestige or power. Paul says, 'Mark them ...and avoid them.' ...Those who promote doctrinal tangents or worldly morality in the church often have charismatic personalities and are attractive in speech, able to 'beguile' (more accurate connotation than 'deceive') those who are naïve in their attitude toward Scripture and toward smooth-talking teachings. Christians need to learn to test all teaching by Scripture, taken in full context with other Scripture."

Acts 17:11 KJV These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

- One of the biggest problems for Christians concerning the Word of God is, often times, we know what we believe, but we don't know why.
- Whenever we are asked we're able to give to every man an answer of "what" we believe about the Word of God but not "why" we believe it.
- The problem with this is that unless one is grounded in the Word, rightly dividing the Word of truth, they become susceptible to the false.

- By way of illustration, it's akin to the training of bank tellers. They teach them the basics of genuine currency in order to detect counterfeits.
- They do this by having them rightly handle genuine currency, and in so doing, they become so familiar with it they can spot the counterfeit.
- So too is this true for us rightly handling the genuine Word of God, and in so doing, we become so familiar with it, we can spot counterfeits.

- If you were to ask me what the most important part of what I do as the privileged pastor of this extraordinarily great church this has to be it.
- Namely, the teaching and preaching of God's Word so as to quoting Pastor Chuck, "make you the best-fed and best loved sheep on earth."
- Nothing would break my heart more than finding out Satan was able to pick you off, and draw you away, from the truth of the Word of God.

- What parent among us wouldn't be devastated if one of our naïve and innocent lambs were picked off, and taken out, by a deceitful wolf?
- How much more does this break the heart of God when one of His naïve and innocent lambs is deceived because they weren't grounded?
- You'll forgive the oversimplification but the bottom line is, absent being grounded in God's Word, we are susceptible to Satan's deception.

- It's for this reason that the scriptures are replete with warnings about the paramount importance of hearing and heeding the word of God.
- Time doesn't permit me to talk about Psalm 119 or Romans 10:17, which says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.
- Be that as it may, I'll bring my sermon to a close by sharing with you the words of the Savior in Matthew seven, which sums it up perfectly.

Matthew 7:24-27 NIV "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (25) The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. (26) But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. (27) The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."