

## What Makes A Great Church, Part 8 - Romans 16:20 – December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013

- Today's teaching will be part eight of a series titled, "What Makes A Great Church."
- This is the fourth week in a row we've only taken one verse at a time, in a chapter that would arguably be considered as inconsequential.
- By inconsequential I mean that as the last chapter at the end of the book it reads like the scrolling credits at the end of a movie or TV show.

- It's for this reason many a Bible believing Christian, will quickly read through it without realizing the valuable truths that are contained in it.
- The problem with this is, believers are robbed of the much needed equipping that comes vis-à-vis the reading and studying of God's Word.
- And, it's done under the banner of certain passages of scripture not having personal application to the life of the believer in today's world.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, (17) so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- Actually, I'll take it a step further and suggest, it's for this very reason that Satan is able to deceive the naïve when it comes to God's Word.
- This is why we're only taking one verse today, such that, this is exactly what Paul has been warning them about commencing in verse 17.
- Paul turns a corner of sorts and begins warning them, even begging them, to watch out for those who cause divisions contrary to the Word.

- He then expounds on these false teachers in verse 18 saying how they, by smooth talk and flattery deceive those naïve about God's Word.
- Then, in verse 19 we're told we won't be deceived if we're wise about the Word and naïve about the world, instead of the other way around.

- Paul echo's the words of the Savior Himself where in Matthew 10:16, Jesus says we need to be as wise as snakes and innocent as doves.
- The truth of the matter is, that unless we're taught the Word of God, and know the Word of God, we don't stand a chance up against Satan.
- It's the truth teachers, (v17), that makes grounded Christians, (v18), and wise Christians, (v19), which leads to victorious Christians, (v20).

### **13. Victorious Christians (Verse 20)**

(20) The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

- v20 He says the God of peace will soon crush Satan under our feet, then he tries to close saying, "the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."
- There are two key words that I would like to draw your attention to, the first of which is the word, "soon," and the second of which is, "your."
- Here's why, knowing it's soon, and that it's our feet doing the crushing vis-à-vis His victory over Satan, gives us hope to remain steadfast.

- I suppose it should come as no surprise that the Apostle Paul would seek to encourage them in their faith, with these, his parting words.
- However, it's important to note that Paul's encouragement comes packaged with the exhortation to not be naïve about the Word of God.
- In other words this victory presupposes that I'm grounded and wise concerning the Word of God, so as to resist the Devil that he might flee.

Henry Morris - "There is a clear allusion here to the promise of Genesis 3:15, anticipating the final victory of Christ over Satan, when the Seed of the woman will crush the head of that old serpent, (Revelation 20:2,10). In the meantime, believers, who also in a sense are the woman's seed, (Revelation 12:17); can achieve local victories over Satan and his wiles by resisting him 'steadfast in the faith', (1 Peter 5:9). He will 'flee from you', (James 4:7), just as he did from Jesus 'for a season' (Luke 4:13) if we resist him with Scripture, as Jesus did, testing and refuting his enticements, (Matthew 4:4,7,10). Such local victories can be obtained over these dangerous teachers shortly in this manner, but we need to be continually alert to recurrent attacks. The ultimate victory over Satan will be won only by the Lord Jesus Christ when He returns."

- It's for this reason the armor listed in Ephesian's 6 consists of only one offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.
- All the other parts of the armor are to protect us from spiritual attack, but the Word of God becomes the deciding factor determining victory.
- We need look no further than to the Savior Himself, Who, wielding the sword, quoted the scriptures, when He was attacked and tempted.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the biggest mistakes, if not the biggest mistake Christians make, this would have to be it.
- Let me explain, the biggest mistake Christians make is basing life decisions on how they feel or what they see and not on the Word of God.
- There are two examples of this in the Old Testament, the first of which is found in Joshua chapter 9 where we see this very thing play out.

- The account is recorded beginning in Joshua 9:3 where we see how that the inhabitants of Gibeon were able to deceive the men of Israel.
- Because they feared the Israelites, they pretended to be ambassadors from a far country in order that Israel would make peace with them.
- To do this, they take old sacks, mended wineskins with patched sandals, and old garments, and even moldy bread as if they traveled far.

- **Joshua 9:14** Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD.

- This was their mistake; because they were naïve, they were also deceived, such that they did not seek counsel from the Word of the Lord.
- Here's what I'm thinking, their decision was based on what they saw, felt, and even tasted, instead of being based on the Word of the Lord.
- The second example of this is in the book of Genesis where Isaac, like Joshua, makes a decision based on feelings and not God's Word.

- It's recorded in Genesis 27, and as you're turning there I'll give you the back-story in order to better understand how all of this goes down.
- Isaac is blind, near death, so he seeks to give his blessing to his son Esau before he dies but Rebekah catches wind of it and tells Jacob.
- In order to deceive Isaac into giving the blessing to Jacob instead of Esau she makes venison like Esau, and dresses Jacob up like Esau.

**Genesis 27:18-27 NIV** He went to his father and said, "My father." "Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?" (19) Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing." (20) Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?" "The LORD your God gave me success," he replied. (21) Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not." (22) Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." (23) He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he blessed him. (24) "Are you really my son Esau?" he asked. "I am," he replied. (25) Then he said, "My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing." Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. (26) Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son, and kiss me." (27) So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed.

- Even though the word he heard sounded like Jacob, the feelings he felt, the smells he smelt and the provisions he sampled were like Esau.
- In other words Isaac went against the word he heard, Jacob's voice, and made his decision based on that which he had felt, Esau's arm.
- The common denominator between Joshua and an Isaac is that they had based their decisions on their physical senses, not God's Word.

- Would to God that we would be numbered amongst those found seeking the will of God in the Word of God so we make decisions of God.
- Would to God that we would resist the Devil when tempted to make life decisions based on our feelings and our emotions of the moment.
- This because, it's the only that way we can be the victorious Christians in the church and as such, be those who will make it a great church.