

Some Dangers We Face

Sunday, FEBRUARY 14th, 1988

Acts 20:29-30

“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

I would like you to open your Bible today to the Book of Acts. I am going to bring you a message on this subject: “SOME DANGERS WE FACE.” I will be reading from the 20th Chapter of Acts. You find the place in your Bible; I want you to do that, because I am going to have you refer to several verses of Scripture.

The Apostle Paul knew that his days were numbered. He knew that he would soon be martyred. He knew he would at least be going to prison, and then he would be a martyr for Christ’s sake.

Knowing this, he gathered the elders of Ephesus about him and preached the sermon, which is recorded in the 20th chapter of the Book of Acts. This is the message, the last message that Paul preached to these elders of Ephesus.

Beginning with verse 19, the apostle Paul told these men, *“Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews.”* He served the Lord with many tears, much tribulation and in sincere humility. Yet He said, *“I’m not one wit behind the chief apostle, yet I am nothing, I obtained mercy.”* The Lord gave him mercy. Every believer knows this; what I am, He made me and what I have, He gave me, and what I know, He taught me.

He asked this question of the Corinthian church, *“Who maketh thee to differ? What do you have that you didn’t receive?”* The Apostle Paul first establishes this; he said, *“I’ve served the Lord among you, (not with pride and boasting) in sincere humility.”*

In verse 20 he said, *“I’ve kept back nothing profitable unto you,”* for whatever reason I have kept back nothing. I have preached to you the Gospel of Christ; I have preached repentance toward God; I have preached faith in Jesus Christ and I have preached Christ and Him crucified. I have kept back nothing, which God was pleased to reveal, and in which you needed to hear. I have kept back nothing.

In verses 22, 23-24 he said; *“I go to Jerusalem.”* I know that prison, persecution, fetters, yea, even death awaits me, but these things do not frighten me, these things do not move me, and these things do not cause me to quit, because I do not consider my life dear unto

myself. I will finish the task that God gave me to perform. I will finish my course and the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I fully intend to the day of my death to preach the Gospel of His glory and the Gospel of His grace.

Then, he says in verses 25, 26 and 27, *“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”*

In verse 33 he says, *“I have coveted no man’s silver or gold.”* I have not coveted anything that you possess. I have provided my own way in most cases. God has abundantly met my needs by His grace without my appealing to the flesh, looking to the flesh, or leaning on the arms of the flesh.

Here is what I want you to notice; turn back to verse 29, *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves, enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”*

He said, “After I leave, after I depart, you will see my face no more. False teachers, false apostles, and false preachers are going to rise up among you.” He calls them grievous wolves. He says in verse 30, *“They will rise up speaking error and they will rise up and speak perverse things.”*

Their motive is not the glory of God at all. Their motive is to draw away disciples after themselves. These false teachers and false preachers are going to rise up even from among you. Their desire is not your good and God’s glory, but their desire is to draw disciples and followers after themselves. *“Therefore, watch and be warned.”* You will face grave dangers from these false preachers and these false apostles. They have neither the glory of God at heart, nor do they have your good in mind.

In fact, he said; “They are nothing but merchandisers of souls.” They are hucksters making merchandise of you. God has His true preachers. The Lord has His true witnesses; He always has had men who speak for God. How can true preachers and true believers deal with error, and false religion that is rampant in the name of God?

Not long ago, there was a television special exposing many covetous, greedy preachers who are doing what they are doing as con men in the name of God. The name of the television special was: “In the Name of God.” Here were men taking advantage of people, and all manner of things in the name of God.

There is so much false religion in the name of God. How can we combat this false religion? How can we help men and women? How can we help men and women of our day to see the truth, the truth as it is in Christ Jesus? The Scripture says, *“You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.”* I am talking about the truth of God. *“We worship God in Spirit and truth.”* How do we make men and women to see the truth? Let me give you four things:

First of all: We can preach the Word of God. This is what Paul said to young Timothy, *“Preach the Word.”* Do not preach philosophy, education, or intellect; *“Preach the Word of God.”* Preach the Word of God as it is, to men as they are. Preach it line upon line, precept upon precept, and verse upon verse. Make much of the Word of God.

“Preach the Word of God.” The Word of God is not in our quarterlies, our denominational literature, some current event, or some book. Preach the Word of God, verse by verse.

You know that I love my children. Now read with me carefully and do not misunderstand me. I love my children and my grandchildren. I want them to have a good education, the best education that they can possibly get. God did not call His preachers to organize, promote, or run schools and colleges. He sent them to preach the Gospel.

I love my country; I served in World War II. My brother served in World War II, my father served in World War I. My son was killed in Vietnam. I love my country as much as you do. I hate communism. I am against communism. I am against crooked politicians. God did not call me to preach capitalism; He called me to preach Christ.

God did not call me to clean up the government. The government has never been cleaned up and it never will be. The Lord God calls His preachers to preach the Gospel; He does not call them to run for office. He calls them to preach the Gospel of Christ.

That is what we can do to help men and women of our generation. They need to hear the truth and to preach it. They need to quit dabbling in side issues, chasing rabbits, going off on tangents and trying to straighten the world out in its business. Let us just preach the Gospel!

I am against abortion as much as anyone else is. I am against the violence on TV. I am against pornography, but God called me to preach Christ. I am to preach *“Christ and Him crucified,”* not to clean up a crooked generation. That is nothing more than making the outside of the cup clean and neglecting the inside. If the Gospel of Jesus Christ ever

affects a man's heart, it will clean up his life. Without the Gospel in his heart, you cannot dictate morality for him by threats or promises of rewards.

I suspect that we might be in the last days. Paul called it the *"last days."* I suspect that something unusual is going on in the Near East, but I am telling you this; God did not call me to speculate about prophecy. He did not call me to speculate about the part that Russia, Israel, and the United States, Great Britain, Turkey and all of these other countries are going to play in the Millennium.

I am more interested in the reign of Christ in your heart right now, than I am in the reign of Christ in future years. Preach the Word. *"The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."* I am talking about the Gospel of Christ, not the philosophy, education, legislation, or morality. God said, *"My Word will not return unto me void; it shall accomplish that whereunto I have sent it."*

Now, that is how we can help our generation. That is how preachers can help their churches and their people. Most people are ignorant of what the Word says. They know all the clichés; they know all of the religious sayings.

They know that every tub must sit on its own bottom. They know to rob Peter to pay Paul, or some foolish thing like that. They do not know anything about the Bible and the reason is that the preachers and teachers are doing everything under God's sun, but preaching the Word of God. That is what we need to get back to, preaching the Word of God.

Second: I will tell you something else that we can do; we can preach doctrine. Listen to me; I know that there is nothing wrong with the word, doctrine. I hear people say, "Don't preach doctrine, preach Jesus." My friend, you cannot preach the King and ignore His decrees. You cannot preach the Great Teacher and ignore His teachings. You cannot preach Christ as the Prophet and ignore His message. You cannot preach Christ the Priest, and ignore His work.

We must preach doctrine. We just cannot keep crying, "Believe, believe, believe." That is what is wrong now; we are not telling men what to believe. They do not know what they believe. Peter said, *"Be ready always to give a reason for every man that asks you a reason for your hope."* Be ready to answer him.

Paul said this in 1 Timothy 4:13, he said; *"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."* In 1 Timothy 4:16, being inspired by the Spirit of God, he

said; *“Take heed to yourself and to your doctrine, for in so doing you will save yourself and them that hear you,”* if you pay attention to your doctrine.

In 1 Timothy 5:17, he said; *“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honors, especially those who labor in the Word and in doctrine.”* In 2 Timothy 3:10, Paul says; *“You have fully known my doctrine.”* 2 Timothy 3:16 says, *“All Scripture is (God breathed, God inspired) given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine.”*

We do not preach doctrine for the sake of doctrine. We preach *“Christ and Him crucified,”* as He is revealed in the doctrine. Do you see what I am saying? Now listen, God either created this world, or He didn't.” Both cannot be so. That is a doctrine, the doctrine of creation. You cannot believe the Bible, and believe evolution; it is impossible.

God is infinitely sovereign and almighty, infinitely powerful in all things such as creation, providence and salvation or He is not; it is just that simple! You cannot talk about God being an Almighty God and then turn around and say, “God wants to do this, but can't do it.”

There is nothing that God Almighty cannot do, except lie. He can do what He wills to do. He said, *“Can I not do with My own what I will?”* The Scripture says, *“Who can stay the hand of God or say unto Him, what doest Thou?”* Is God sovereign; if God is not sovereign, then He is a weakling and is not God.

“Man was created in the image of God,” and he fell. Some say that he did not fall, but it is true Adam sinned, and fell. I have heard people say, “Let it alone; we are all going to the same place.” We are not, when we are traveling in the opposite direction. *“God created man in His own image”*, and man fell.

“Sin and death came upon all men.” Is that what the Word teaches? Then, it is so! That is doctrine. That is original sin, and that is what man has to straighten out or he will be messed up all the way through in his doctrine.

What happened in the fall? What happened in the fall, determines what happened on the cross. What happened on the cross, determines what happens in a sinner when God saves him. What happens in a sinner when God saves him, determines where a man is going to spend eternity.

God is a Covenant God. The word Covenant is mentioned 300 times in the Bible. God in a Covenant of grace, elected a people to salvation or He did not. Now, which one is

true? Both cannot be so. How do you tell if election is true or not true? It is either true or not true. The Bible says it is true.

Christ's death is effectual to save all who believe, or it was effectual for no one. Christ became a man (the God-Man), or He is an imposter. He said, "*I and My Father are one.*" That is true and that is doctrine. That tells us who Jesus Christ is, and what He came to do, and where He is now. He is the God-Man. If He is not the God-Man, then He is the biggest liar that ever walked on this earth. His body is in Jerusalem and His soul is in hell. Is that too clear?

This is what we need to do; we need to tell people the truth. He is the only way, truth and life. That is what He said, "*I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me.*" Is that so? If it is not so, He lied to us.

The Holy Spirit effectually calls men to Christ or He calls nobody. "*There is a resurrection to life and a resurrection to death*" or this Book is a pack of foolishness. It is time to deal in absolutes. The Bible does. "*To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.*"

There is no purgatory of soul sleep taught in the Word of God; that is an invention of men. This is just an invention to squeeze money out of silly people who do not know anything about the Bible. If that is not true about the believer when he dies being in the presence of the Lord, then the books of 1 Corinthians and Philippians, are a farce.

Salvation is by Christ alone, grace alone through faith alone or you can throw your Bible away. That is what it teaches all the way through. "*Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*" It starts with Noah.

Righteousness before God is through the obedience of Christ. Regeneration is by the power of the Spirit, using the Word of God. Justification before God is by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. "*Christ enables a Holy God to be Just and Justifier.*" That's right! Do you know anything about that? "*Take heed to your doctrine.*"

The reason that people today have no knowledge of God is that they haven't heard about God. They have no assurance, confidence, rest, or peace because they have no confidence at all in the Word of God. They haven't been taught the Word of God. "*Take heed to your doctrine; in so doing, you will save yourself and them that hear you.*"

If a man preaches God, he will have to preach a sovereign God. If a man preaches Christ, he will have to preach the Christ of the Bible. He is the Christ of eternal Deity, the Christ

of incarnation, the Christ of perfect obedience, the Christ of effectual substitutionary suffering. He is the Christ of the open tomb, and the Christ exalted and seated at the right hand of God. If a man preaches salvation, he will have to preach "*Salvation is of the Lord.*"

Third: How can we serve our generation? We must exercise strong, pastoral leadership. We must exercise strong preaching. The Lord God has been pleased to send His Word through preachers. It has always been that way. "*There was a man sent from God whose name was John; God spake to our fathers by the prophets.*"

God has always sent His Word through preachers, pastors, and teachers, under shepherds and overseers. He said, "*He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the maturity of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*"

But, we have departed from that position today. This seems to be a day of sharing. This is a day when there is no voice of authority. This is a day of personal influence. This is a day of discussion. This is a day of the round table discussion. This is a day when every man is his own teacher, every man is his own pastor, and every man is his own instructor.

Preachers and pastors today assume the position no more than an executive, promoter, or an errand boy. Did you know that? If they don't like their job, they will be fired. You can't hire one of God's preachers, let alone fire him.

We need to return to a strong ministry, to a strong pastoral leadership and strong directions. Paul said, "*If I seek to please men, I am not the servant of Jesus Christ.*" Pastors need to be overseers of the church. The pastor needs to be the leader of the church, not a deacon, or a businessman. God Almighty's Kingdom is not a business run by businessmen; it is a spiritual kingdom run by God.

The people who are the leaders, are men of faith. They are rich in faith. If a man cannot boldly, fearlessly, plainly preach the Word, pastor a church, stand for the truth, lead the church as he is led by the Spirit of God, he needs to find himself something else to do.

We don't need lords over God's heritage. We do need leaders. We need leaders like Moses, David, Paul, and John the Baptist. We don't need doctors of intellectualism. We are not doctors. We don't need promoters and con men like we have so much of today, but we need some preachers of the Gospel of the glory and grace of God. Oh how I wish God would raise up some bold, fearless preachers.

Fourth: I will tell you what we can do if we want to help our generation. We have to *“Preach the Word of God.”* We have to get back to the Bible. We can preach doctrine. We need to teach our people. Don’t back up and don’t compromise. We need to teach them what God says. *“I kept back nothing profitable to you.”*

Don’t be afraid of the words: sovereignty, election, particular redemption, predestination, effectual call, original sin, justification, sanctification, regeneration, repentance, and faith. These are Bible terms! The average person has not heard of them. They have never been taught. The pastors are afraid to touch it. God’s men are not afraid, they fear no man. They must exercise strong pastoral leadership. Take the reigns and lead God’s people in the Word of truth.

Now, I will tell you something else that we can do. We can preach the Word of God, sow the Seed, and wait for God to save sinners and quit trying to save them ourselves. Now, that is what we can do.

I will tell you this, *“From Alpha to Omega, salvation is of the Lord.”* Redemption is not a work that you do for yourself; it is not a work that your momma does for you, or your pastor does for you. Redemption is not a work that some high-toned evangelist does for you. Redemption is something that God does for you. I mean from beginning to end, from Alpha to Omega, from regeneration to resurrection, *“Salvation is of the Lord.”*

I think about the old faithful farmer who goes out there on the North 40. He plows the ground. He is faithful to plow the ground. He doesn’t know whether he is going to get a stalk of corn in the fall or not. He plows the ground and he goes out and sows the seed. He sows the good seed. He waters the ground and fertilizes it.

God is the Lord of the harvest. God makes the seed to bare fruit. That farmer doesn’t go out there and try to make the seed grow by his own strength, persuasion, power, and effort. He plants it, covers it up, and waits on the Lord.

That is what faithful preachers do. They bust up the stumps, they bust up the clods, and they bust up the new ground. They go in there and preach the Word of God. They preach it faithfully. They sow the good seed of the Word of God. They water it with prayers and tears.

They know this, they know that God has to save a sinner, that God must be the one to give the increase. They know that God must open the heart; they know that God must convict a man of sin, and that God must grant repentance toward God and God must give faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am telling you today, all of this is pressure for decisions, all of this is psychological aisle dragging, and invitations, is not of God. They are calling people to walk the aisles, over persuading men and getting them down the aisle to raise their hand and make decisions to be in the church. They are giving them things to read to keep them saved. They have them pray the sinner's prayer.

I will tell you this, "*If God doesn't build the house, they labor in vain who tries to build it.*" Salvation is a heart work. Until you can open a heart, until you can break a heart, until you can convict a heart, until you can make blind eyes see, until you can give life to dead sinners, you better let salvation stand in the hands of God.

Salvation is a heart work. Salvation is not walking an aisle. It is a heart faith. It is not a public decision. I will tell you this, all that we have today is competition, contests and coercion, and that is not of God.

If you save a man, you have to keep him saved. You have to keep him saved and you have to keep him busy, and working. You have to keep threatening him, promising him different rewards, if he will do or perform certain duties.

If God saves a man, he is given a new heart, a new Spirit, and a new nature and family. He'll have a new motive and direction. You will not have to keep him saved. He belongs to the Lord.

Do we dare trust the Holy Spirit of God to do the work of God? Do we? Do we dare just preach the Gospel and wait on God to save His sheep? Do we dare? I do! Do we dare to believe that a man can actually love God, believe God, and walk with God without threatening him with hell? Do we dare promise him rewards and organize all kinds of different activities to keep him faithful to the church?

Do you believe that a man can just walk with God, love God and believe God because God Almighty is his Father? He may have a personal relationship without a preacher getting in between him and whipping him with the whip of the law. He may have a personal relationship without a preacher promising him a crown, or promising him that God will bless him if he does this. I believe this. I believe that if a man knows God, he will walk with God.

Do we dare believe that the work of God can be supported by the gifts of God's people without begging, selling, and lying? I do! I have heard people say, "You never ask

people for money.” I’m not going to next week either, God willing. The Lord God pays His bills. When we talk about faith, we tell God, we don’t tell people.

We can preach the Gospel and wait on the Lord.