



The Harvester

*Preparing Souls
To Serve The Lord!*

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External Threats to the Church

Hiram Kemp

The church is comprised of both a human and divine element. The church is divine in that it was begun by Jesus Christ and purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28). The church is a part of the eternal plan of God. Yet, the church is made up of people and has a human aspect to it. When Jesus said, “the gates of hell” would not prevail against His church, He was referencing the designed plan of God (Mt. 16:18). The fact that Jesus was going to the cross would not prevent Him from building the church He promised. While there is no threat that can harm the divine side of the church, the human aspect of the church should be warned against ruin. There are threats to the people of God that can hamper our faithfulness to God. We should be on guard against them.

Worldliness

The church cannot be stripped of any of the power that God provides for her, but she can surrender it. The word “worldly” appears twice in the New Testament (KJV). Worldliness means mundane or having the character of this present corrupt age. In one passage, it is comparing the tabernacle of the Old Testament, with the better and heavenly tabernacle erected by Jesus (Heb. 9:1). In Titus 2:12, Christians are reminded that the grace extended to us in Christ should be the motivating factor in rejecting worldliness and ungodliness. The church should be on guard against becoming like the world

in ways that compromise our distinct identity. We do not need to reject relevance, but we should refuse to forfeit godliness in order to become more like those we are trying to reach.

Jesus spent time with sinners to reach them, but He did not adopt sinful practices to fit in with them (Lk. 15:1-2). The church must engage with people from various walks of life and in loving kindness invite them to enjoy the grace of God and come up to the righteous standard of God. We should not lower the standard of God’s righteousness to make our claim more appealing. The way we talk, dress, and think must not be conformed to the world but transformed as our minds have been renewed by God’s word. Worldliness effects the church in subtle ways. Many congregations of the Lord’s people never intend to become worldly. What we laugh at and are entertained by should be of constant concern for Christians. We should not find enjoyment in the same things that sent Jesus to the cross (Eph. 5:2-6). Our mission is to win the world for Christ, not to be won over by the world. If the church begins to look more like the world, we should not be surprised when the world rejects our offer of salvation. If what

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we offer looks like what they already have, there is no need to give up anything.

Sin

Sin destroys every life it enters; the life of the church is no different (Jas. 1:14-15). The church needs to maintain a vigorous opposition to sin. We must inform the world about their sin while also not tolerating it among ourselves. Paul warned the Corinthians that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6). The influence of accepted and tolerated sin is far reaching in the damage it can cause God’s people. Sin is not something that comes from within the church. No one comes into the church with sin. Sin is brought into the church from the outside. We must hold one another accountable and not allow sin to go unchecked within the body of Christ. Christians should be against prejudice and the ostracizing of any in society, as such is contrary to the faith we possess (Jas. 2:1). Those who are guilty of such behavior should be corrected. We should not make excuses for their behavior (Gal. 2:11-14). When Christians are rude, sarcastic, and condescending toward others, we cannot excuse these attitudes away as merely being a part of one’s personality.

While none of us are sinless, we must fight against the temptation of making sin acceptable. The church is a place where God places the redeemed so they might be encouraged and uplifted on their way toward heaven. Church discipline is instituted by

God to keep the church pure. In fact, the first person to exercise church discipline was God himself (Acts 5:1-11). Church discipline does not serve the purpose of kicking anyone out of the church, but it does keep the church from being destroyed from the inside out. Church discipline says to those who live in habitual, unrepentant sin that we are standing with God, and we will not support those in error as they throw their soul away (2 Thes. 3:14-15). Church discipline should not be practiced hastily, but it should not be refrained from altogether either. The church has been described as a hospital for sinners, not a museum for the saints. However, the church must never become a museum for sinners either. God has cleansed our sins with the blood of his Son. We should not return to sin and trample His grace.

False Doctrine

There is nothing joyous about the fact that there are false teachers in the world, but we must accept it as a reality (2 Pet. 2:1). The church can be destroyed by false doctrine if it is not refuted and if truth is not defended. Christians must be acquainted with their Bibles so that we are not carried away with every new idea some theologian dreams up and puts in a devotional book. The Bible provides all that we need to be pleasing to God, it is the book that is given to us by God and we need to use it in protecting ourselves against the myriad of false ideas in the religious world. Congregations that are overrun with error

The Harvester

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God-Breathed Scripture

Monday

9:00 Inspiration and Inerrancy

9:40 "Prophecy of Scripture"

10:20 BREAK

10:50 Ascertaining Bible Authority

Forum: Up-Word Growth

1:30 Arguments Against the Bible Answered

2:00 How to Get in the Bible and Stay There

2:30 How Does Culture Affect Doctrine

3:30 **Ladies Class:** "They Helped Them Understand" Brittani Kemp

3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 Psalm 119: Words for God's Word

7:45 Cheerful Words: John 16:33

Tuesday

9:00 Canonicity: Which Books Belong?

9:40 "Scripture" and Second Timothy 3:16-17

10:20 BREAK

10:50 The Word of God Under Fire (Jer. 36)

Forum: Interpreting the Bible

1:30 Bias in Bible Interpretation

2:00 Sound vs. Unsound Hermeneutics

2:30 Jesus' Application of Hermeneutics

3:00 BREAK

3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 Psalm 119: Wisdom for Life's Direction

7:45 Calming Words: Philippians 4:6-8

Doug Burleson

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Terrance Brownlow-Dindy

Jody L. Apple

Larry Williams

Jimmy Clark

Wednesday

9:00 From Original Text to Translation

9:40 God's Word for Preachers

10:20 BREAK

10:50 God's Word for Leadership

Forum: Challenges to Evangelism

1:30 Preach the Preaching (Jonah)

2:00 Possibility of Obedience (Deut. 30:14)

2:30 Reintroducing the Bible (Josiah)

3:30 **Ladies Class:** "Think Not Above What Is Written" K. Pollard

3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 Psalm 119: Wisdom for Times of Distress

7:45 Comforting Words: Second Corinthians 1:1-6

Thursday

9:00 False Views of the Bible

9:40 Why Is the Bible So Difficult to Understand?

10:20 BREAK

10:50 Sincerely Disbelieving God's Word

Forum: Word Problems

1:30 "I Will Send a Famine in the Land"

2:00 "Destroyed for a Lack of Knowledge"

2:30 "Mistaken ... Not Knowing the Scriptures"

3:30 **Ladies Class:** "As It Is in Truth"

3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing

7:00 Psalm 119: Wisdom for Youth

7:45 "I Commend You to God ..."

Stephen Atnip

Gale Nelson

Jimmy Clark

Brandon Baggett

Jack Pinckert

Guyton Montgomery

K. Pollard

Kyle Butt

Carlton Hyde

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All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ... that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2Tim. 3:16-17

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usually do not start out that way. Normally, some doctrine is taught that is unfamiliar and unbiblical; no one says anything; and then before we know it, the congregation is led off into apostasy. False doctrine can be kept from hurting the church by testing the things we hear and holding to the truth we have (1 Thes. 5:21-22; 1 Jn. 4:1). False doctrine always promises more liberty than it can deliver. May Christians never view truth as imprisoning them or keeping them from having fun. The truth, when taught properly, is the most liberating thing on earth (Jn. 8:31-32). If the church would refrain from being corrupted by the external threat of false doctrine, we need to become familiar with the truth so that falsehood is easily identified. When it comes to how individuals are saved, how we are to worship God, and the nature of the church, the Bible is clear. Let us continue to speak the truth without fear.

(Rom. 8:38-39). There will always be threats to the church but so long as we remain vigilant and clothed in the armor of God, we will not be overcome. The divine side of the church is perfect and faces no threat, but the human side must remain on guard. God has equipped us with what we need to be successful. We should use the resources He has provided wisely. A love for God and His grace that rejects worldliness, a knowledge of the reality of sin and its consequences, and a love for truth that withstands false doctrine will keep the church from succumbing to these external threats. 🙏



Conclusion

There is nothing that can destroy the church of Christ if we walk in line with God

A Day in the Life of FSOP ... celebrating George Beals' birthday with his hermeneutics class. Front row: Jagie, Robert, Gavin, Marion, Eric, Matthew. Back row: Brian, Daniel, Edward, George, Zach, Wadi'. Without your support, we would not be able to operate as we have since 1969. THANK YOU for your support! Great things to the glory of God continue happening. Thanks for your continued support!