



Oct. 8, 2006 (Vol. 6)

The Effects Of Error

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Sometimes it seems that we do not think about the consequences of the things we believe, fellowship, say & do. As the Lord says through Peter, we can be "blind, seeing only what is near" (2 Pet. 1:9). But as it is written, "If the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit" (Mt. 15:14).

Does this sound harsh? Does this strike you as mean spirited? Remember that Jesus said this concerning someone's son, someone's husband, someone's friend, etc. Jesus spoke of real people, in real circumstances, who were committing real sins and who were really spiritually blind.

It is, in fact, in this very same context of speaking of blindness that Jesus was asked by the disciples, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying?" (Mt. 15:12). Jesus' reply was, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up" (14:13). Jesus did not let the fact that people were offended hinder Him from saying what needed to be said. But let us consider for now the consequences of error. That just as one pebble dropped in the water produces ripples in all directions, and a little leaven leavens the whole lump, so also the blind leading the blind results in many falling in the ditch.

(1) Those who believe error are in sin. Many times people fail to see that when we believe falsehood, we are not right with God. Oh we may recognize it in "major" doctrinal issues, but what of opinions? What if someone thinks that men **MUST** be circumcised in order to be right with God? Are they correct? Do they believe Truth? Circumcision is, after all, a matter of liberty (cp. Acts 16:3). So what harm is it if someone teaches it is essential for salvation and you **believe** that? Its just circumcision... or is it? When it is presented (and accepted) **as Truth** - it becomes more than just an opinion, it becomes a **false doctrine!** While Paul had Timothy circumcised when no one made it an issue of "the faith" (Acts 16:3); Paul absolutely refused to allow Titus to be circumcised when some tried to make it an issue of "the faith" (Acts 15:1-2; Gal. 3-5). Paul stated in Galatians 2 that if he had given in to this teaching, Truth would have departed from them. They would therefore be in error, darkness, sin - spiritually separated from God.

So, is it harmless to believe false teaching in areas of opinion? After all what harm is there in wearing the veil, abstaining from war, abstaining from pork, refraining from work on Saturday, or abstaining from the

Lord's Supper Sunday evening, etc.? In and of themselves, these things are not sinful. But when couched in terms of "this is Truth, God's will, this is right/wrong, no authority to do differently," etc. - then these things take on a whole new context. They become the instrument of spiritual darkness, tools of Satan that deceive and defile. Brethren, we need to see this for what it is.

(2) Those who defend error are in sin. It is almost unbelievable how many times brethren end up defending those who are in sin. I have seen parents defend the immodest attire of their children. I've seen an elder defend his son's unscriptural divorce. I've seen children defend their "sincere" (but denominational) parents. I've seen some malign sound brethren in order to stop them from pointing out error in a friend or loved one.

God's word is filled, Old Testament & New, with warnings against allowing earthly affections & bonds to hinder our stand for the Truth. Deut. 13 warns: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, that is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him:" (v. 6-8).

Matthew 10 warns: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (v. 37-39).

After Jesus' resurrection, He asked if Peter loved Jesus "more than these" (John 21:15-17). Jesus did this even though the result was that "Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, 'Lovest thou me?'" (v. 17). Interestingly, it is on this same occasion that "Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following... saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, **what is that to thee? Follow thou me.**" (John 21:20-22).

Jesus saw that Peter's concern about others was out of balance. This was not appropriate brotherly love, but rather an inappropriate desire to follow or be acceptable to men. Jesus emphasized throughout this occasion the absolute necessity that Peter follow Christ, and put away this care & worry for what men thought of him.

The Holy Spirit gives further evidence of this in Gal. 2:11-12. Here, Peter allowed his fears of what Jewish men would think of him to cause him to separate himself from the Gentile brethren. Peter sinned through fear & seeking the approval of men. Thus, Paul opposed him (2:11, 14) so that Peter would repent. And it seems Peter must have repented, since years later Peter wrote fondly of Paul as a "beloved brother" (2 Pet. 3:15).

But let me ask you this - since Peter was wrong in fearing men, what of all those (including Barnabas) who followed Peter's example (Gal. 2:13)? Were they right for

following Peter? Would they have been right to defend Peter? Could they not point out that Peter was converting people while Paul was killing them? But surely we can see how foolish that would be. Peter was in sin. Thus, to defend him would also be a sin (2Jn 9-11).

(3) Those who are silent when sin needs to be opposed, are in sin. Think also of all the admonitions about speaking the Truth (Ezk. 3, Eph. 4:15; 5:11; 2 Tim. 4; etc.). What if, in Galatians 2, Paul saw the sin committed by Peter & the sin committed by those who went along with Peter - and Paul had just remained silent. Would that have been alright? Would that please God? Would not this mean that Paul had sinned also? As Paul said elsewhere, he was free from the blood of all men **because** he had spoken all things that were profitable, the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20, 26-27). Paul admitted by this that there is a responsibility to speak Truth - or else you share in their condemnation. As the saying goes, "All it takes for evil to progress is for good men to do nothing." That is an indictment against "good" men who neglect to stand for Truth.

It must also be noted here, that not everyone comes immediately to the same conclusions on things. Sometimes, people who are sound in the faith are not fully aware of all the evidence that others are. When such occasions arise where brethren are yet unsure where to stand, not yet sure who is standing for the truth or who is covering things up - it can be a very trying time. No one in their right mind enjoys controversy. But that does not mean it should be avoided when it comes. It must be faced, facts examined, patience is needed, questions must be asked & verified, etc. It is not that we hope to find error in anyone, but we must at the same time be aware that, as Paul said, error can arise even from among ourselves (Acts 20:28-30). External error is, in many ways, easier to fight than internal error. We do not typically have all the attachments, friendships & ties that come from working together locally for the Lord. But even so, we cannot wink at sin in the camp. For if we do, then we have been leavened by its influence. Even if we do not agree with and practice the particular error a friend holds, if we fellowship him in spite of his error then we are not in

fellowship with God (2 Cor. 6:14 - 7:1; 1 Cor. 5; 2 John 9-11; etc).

Error, like a rock in the water, sends out many ripples. It corrupts & blinds the one who believes it; tempts friends & family to defend the one in error; and it intimidates those who should speak Truth to be silent. It also unsettles & discourages those who were not aware of any problem. I used to wonder at how the ever bold Paul could pray for **more** boldness. As time has progressed I no longer wonder. Now I ask, as Paul did, that you pray: "...on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:18-20).

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Men's & Ladies Classes** - Every 2nd Sun. @ 5pm.
- **Door to Door** - Every Tuesday @ 6pm.
- **Home Bible Study** – Sat., Oct. 14 & 28.
- **Business Meeting** – Sun. Oct. 29 @ 5pm.
- **Gospel Meeting** - Ron Roberts, Oct.15-20, 2006.
- **GM in Knoxville** - Doug Hill, Nov. 17-19, 2006.
- **GM** - Jeff Smith, April 15-20, 2007.
- **GM** - R. McPherson, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - TBA April 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

PRAY FOR

Mag Bumbalough, Thelma Cunningham, Mary Cox, Monie Petty, Dave Poteet, Joshua & Misty Poteet, Rose Taylor, Dorris Williams, Robert England, Johanna Fletcher, Ed Williams, Joe Smith (cancer), Lydia Poe. Also **Jachie Tindle & Ann Hasty** (Both have cancer, relatives of Jo Miller & the Sims), **Quannie Garrett** (Lynn Regan's mother), **Holly Jernigan** (Joyce Gardner's niece), **John Ross Key** (Mary Cox's son), **Marci Miller** (Alisa Fletcher's mother), **Ocia Bell Jones** (Doris William's mother), **Ruth Williams** (Betty England's niece), **Pauline Hickey, Nanny Witaker, Dylan Roberts** (grandson of Marilyn's friend), **Debbie Gibbs** (relative of Thelma Klein).

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